Ezekiel Hopkins Episcopus
DERENSIS.

THE

WORKS

Of the Right Reverend and Learned

Ezekiel Hopkins,

Late Lord Biſhop of

London-Derry in *IRELAND*,

Collected into one Volume:

CONTAINING:

I. The Vanity of the World.

II. A Practical Expoſition on the Ten Commandments.

III. An Expoſition on the Lord's Prayer; with a Catechiſtical Explication thereof by way of Queſtion and Anſwer.

IV. Several Sermons and Diſcourſes on divers Important Subjects.

With an Alphabetical TABLE to the Whole

The Third Edition.

LONDON:

Printed for *Jonathan Robinſon*, *Awnſham* and *John Churchill*, *John Taylor*, *John Wyat* and *Daniel Midwinter*, in St. *Paul's* Church-Yard, and *Pater-Noſter-Row*. M.DCC.X.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

P.D.

THE PREFACE.

THE *Writings of this* Right Reverend Prelate *have found ſo General Acceptance both among the* Clergy *and* Laity, *that now Encouragement is given to put them altogether into one entire Volume.*

The Author, tho' he was a Perſon of Great Natural Parts and Excellent Learning, yet was endowed with ſo Great Modeſty and Humility, and had ſuch very mean and low Thoughts of Himſelf and his own Performances, that the World, while he lived, had very little Knowledge of him from the Preſs; he having publiſhed nothing but what he was conſtrained to, either by the reſtleſs Importunity of Friends, *or the Commands of thoſe who were ſome time his Superiours.*

What was publiſhed by himſelf the Reader will find placed at the beginning of this Volume, and conſiſts of that incomparable Tract, Entituled, The Vanity of the World. A Sermon preach'd at the Funeral of the Honourable Algernoon Grevil, *Eſq; which in the Opinion of very good Judges is equal with, if not exceeds, the moſt celebrated Pieces that have been Printed on* Funeral *Occaſions. And his* Sermon Preached at Chriſt-Church Dublin, *which, as is mentioned afterwards, occaſioned his being promoted to a conſiderable Station in the Church in the Kingdom of* Ireland.

The other Pieces contained in this Volume were all publiſhed ſince his Death. And tho' it cannot be expected that what is Poſthumous *ſhould in every Sentence and Paſſage thereof be as Exact and Accurate as if the Author had put his laſt Hand to it, yet theſe Diſcourſes are Written in a* Style *and with an* Exactneſs *Peculiar to his* Lordſhip; *which, by comparing them with what he publiſhed himſelf, beyond all Controverſie denote them to be his* own.

But for farther Satisfaction that the World is not impoſed upon, nor any Injuſtice done to the Author's Memory by the Printing of theſe Diſcourſes; it may not only be ſaid that there are many Perſons yet alive who with great Delight and Benefit heard him preach all the Sermons that have been publiſhed under his Lordſhip's Name, and who, if Occaſion be, can and will atteſt that they are Genuine: *But the Reader is hereby aſſured that the greateſt part of them were by his Permiſſion, at the deſire, and for the ſake of ſome Particular Friends, Tranſcribed from his own Manuſcripts, and Corrected by him. The reſt were taken from his Mouth by the* Pen of a Ready Writer, *with great Exactneſs, inſomuch that they being committed to his Lordſhip's Review after they were tranſcribed, he could not but commend the Writer's Dexterity, and permitted him to keep them upon this Condition (which we may preſume were the Terms upon which he ever granted a Copy of any of his Diſcourſes)* That nothing might be Printed while he Lived. *Which Expreſſion, by the way, may be interpreted a tacit* Allowance *for the Printing of them after he was* Dead.

Now having, I hope, ſatisfied the Reader that theſe Diſcourſes are his *whoſe Name they bear, there needs nothing, in this Place, to be ſaid in Commendation of them; their own Excellency and Eloquence will Praiſe them beſt. Let that ſuffice then to recommend them to his ſerious Peruſal (which is ſaid concerning another* * *Great Man's Works) viz.* That they are Animated throughout with ſuch a Genuine Spirit of True Piety and Goodneſs, that ſurely he muſt be either a perfectly Good, or a prodigiouſly Bad Man, that Reads them over without being the better for them.

* *Pref. to Dr.* Barrow *by A. B* Tillotſon.

As

The PREFACE.

As for the Right Reverend Author himſelf, his Works will praiſe him, and therefore nothing either needs or can be ſaid more to his Advantage. As he ſought not the Praiſes of Men in doing his Maſter's Work when Living; ſo now he is Dead he is above their Praiſes, and doubtleſs he has received the Euge *of a good and faithful Servant. Indeed it cannot be expected that all that can be ſaid of him could be contained within the narrow Limits of a Preface, neither is it fitting even to attempt* his *Character, concerning whom either* not a Little *or* Nothing at all *ought to be ſaid. It were heartily to be wiſhed, for the Honour as well as Ornament of the* Church *of* England, *that the Picture of this* Great Man *was drawn at its Full Length by ſome skilful Hand; and we are not yet without Hopes that ſome or other of his Friends who knew him beſt, will ſtill Erect ſuch a Monument to his Memory. But whilſt that is done, let us reſt ſatisfied with that* Idea *of him which the Peruſal of his Writings will afford us; and be thankful to a Good Friend for this following* Memorial *of him, which was ſpoken by a Right Reverend* * Prelate, *now in* Ireland, *(a great Admirer, Follower and dear Brother of the Deceaſed) in the cloſe of that excellent Sermon he Preached at his Funeral in the Church of St.* Mary Aldermanbury, London, *where he was Interred on* June 24. 1690. *upon* Col. 3. v. 1, 2, 3, 4. *From which words having ſpoken of Chriſt's and our Reſurrection, he proceeds, ſaying,*

* Biſhop Tenison.

This was the Doctrine of the Apoſtles, and the Faith of the Primitive Chriſtians: And that this Faith did animate them againſt the Fears of Death, and enable them to meet that King of Terrors with Undaunted Reſolutions; and it is this which ſtill Buoys up the ſinking Spirits of Believers; it was this which comforted this Reverend and Learned Prelate, whoſe Funerals we now ſolemnize. This ſupported him in his late Troubles and Afflictions, in his greateſt Pains and ſharpeſt Agonies. He often diſcourſed with me on this Subject. He fixed his Thoughts upon the Glorious Reſurrection, and ſet his Affections on the things above; and with the Joyful Hope and Expectation of them he was enabled to bear the Torments of his Body with great Patience, and wonderful Magnanimity; and was not in the leaſt terrified with the Thoughts of Death. It was not φοβερὸν φοβερπαλὸν to him; he ſpoke of it without Concern, and triumphed over all its Terrors, and welcomed it as a Joyful Meſſenger, calling him to his Dormitory till the Reſurrection. And he died full of this Faith, and did, with *Job*, ſay, Though his Body were deſtroyed with Worms, it ſhould riſe again to a Bleſſed Immortality, and in the ſame Fleſh he ſhould ſee God; and through the Merits and Interceſſion of Chriſt he doubted not to Partake of the Things above.

But you expect I ſhould ſay more of him; and, indeed, he highly deſerves it, and much, very much, is due to the Memory of ſuch an excellent Prelate; who, for Learning and Piety, for Wiſdom and Courage, for Humility and Meekneſs, for Charity and Hoſpitality, was one of the greateſt Ornaments of the Church and Nation wherein he lived: But unleſs I had his own Eloquence, I ſhould not attempt it. A ſorrowful Heart, a thick Pencil, and a trembling Hand, will but overſhade and darken the Lines of ſo fair a Piece; and therefore I muſt beg of you, who knew him in *Oxford*, in *Hackney*, in *Exeter*, and in this City, where he was ſo much followed, applauded, and admired, to ſet him in his true Light to the World, and give him that great Character which he ſo juſtly deſerved, while I only mention the great Honour and Veneration we had for him in *Ireland*, in which Kingdom he ſoon made himſelf famous, and for a Learned and Elegant Sermon, which I heard him Preach at his firſt coming,

ing, (and which was afterward Printed) I ſaw him Embraced by the greateſt Prelates, and courted to ſtay in that Country, and was ſoon after made Dean, and then Biſhop of *Raphoe*, and afterward, moſt deſervedly, tranſlated to *Derry*. In the firſt of which Biſhopricks (as I am informed) he ſpent about a Thouſand Pounds in Buildings and other Improvements: And, in the laſt, he was at a very great Expence to Beautifie and Adorn his Cathedral, and in Furniſhing it with Organs and Maſſie Plate; and, in both, he was a great Precedent of Piety and Holineſs. He was a burning and a ſhining Light. He knew that μόνος ἐστὶ πειθῶν τῶ λέγοντι τρόπος καὶ μὴ λόγος, and did therefore preach loudly by example. His Actions were Inſtructive Sermons, and his Strict Life and Unblameable Converſation had great Influence on all about him.

At his Table he was piouſly pleaſant and religiouſly ingenious, and doubly feaſted all who did eat with him; for he had a clear Head and ſolid Judgment, a quick Fancy and a flowing Wit, and was every-way accompliſhed for Addreſs and for Diſcourſe, and was ſo Courteous and Affable, ſo Gentle and ſo Obliging, ſo Inſtructive and Communicative, that all who converſed with him, loved and admired him; and though he kept a very Noble and Hoſpitable Houſe, yet was it famous for Regularity and Order. And in the midſt of the greateſt Plenty, Gravity and Sobriety were moſt ſtrictly obſerved. It was indeed a Temple and an Oratory, for in it Prayers and Praiſes, Catechiſing and Reading the Scripture, were never omitted. He conſtantly expounded it to his Family, explained ſome part of the Leſſons, and made ſhort, but rare Obſervations upon them; and beſide the Publick Prayers, he was very often at his Private Devotions, and ſpent much time in Divine Meditations.

Thus did he behave himſelf in his Houſe; thus did he inſtruct his Family, and bring his Children up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord. And, if you follow him to the Pulpit, you'll find him there conſtantly, once a *Sunday*, while his Health permitted it; and ſurely all who heard him will ſay, his Sermons were Learned and Eloquent, Pious and Methodical, and, as his *Motto* was, *Aut ſuavitate aut vi*, he, either by ſweet Diſcourſes and charming Exhortations, or by ſtrength of Reaſon and powerful Arguments, drew many to Chriſt. He never omitted that Duty, but preached in his Throne when he was not able to aſcend the Pulpit: And, for his Excellency in that Noble Faculty, he was celebrated by all Men. He was followed and admired in all Places where he lived, and was juſtly eſteemed one of the beſt Preachers of our Age. And his Diſcourſes always ſmelt of the Lamp; they were very elaborate and well digeſted. He had a Noble Library, and delighted in it, and was, as *Tertullian* ſays of *Iræneus*, *Omnium Doctrinarum curioſiſſimus explorator*. He was a good Linguiſt, and excelled in Polemick and Caſuiſtical Divinity. Many flocked to him to have their Doubts reſolved; and he gave Light and Comfort to clouded and afflicted Conſciences; and was admirably accompliſhed with many other Parts of uſeful Learning.

And, if you conſider him as a Biſhop, you will own, that God had bleſſed him with Wiſdom and Sagacity, with Zeal and Courage, with Temper and Moderation, and all other neceſſary Virtues for a Governor and Ruler in the Church; and ſurely none was more careful of his Dioceſs, being conſtantly reſident, and bringing in learned and ingenious Men into all Livings in his Gift and Patronage: And was a moſt tender and indulgent, yet ſtrict and vigilant Ruler of his Clergy. He always treated them as Brethren and Friends, with all kindneſs and reſpect, and would ſpare

no pains to protect them in their Rights; and uſed all his intereſt to promote them as they deſerved. In a word, he was every way qualified and adorned for that great Charge; and by conſtant Preaching, a wiſe Government, and an even and ſteady Hand; by a winning Temper, an humble Courage and prudent Moderation, he gained upon Diſſenters, and brought many into the Communion of our Church, having fully convinced them, that her Doctrine was Pure and Primitive, Orthodox and Apoſtolical: And did, upon all occaſions, ſhew himſelf a wiſe, a learned, and a pious Biſhop. He every way filled his Chair, and was an Honour to his See, and may deſervedly be enrolled in the Catalogue of his learned Predeceſſors; for with ſuch has that See been bleſſed ever ſince the Reformation. And undoubtedly his Death will be extreamly lamented in that Country; and ſure I am the Poor will have great reaſon to bewail it; for to them he was exceeding generous and charitable, and gave great Sums, every Year, amongſt them, beſides the Tenth of his Revenues, which he conſtantly laid by for ſuch uſes; and did alſo allow good Yearly Penſions to Students in the Univerſity, to Miniſters Widows, and other diſtreſſed Perſons, and did put Children to Trades, and largely contribute to the Building and Repairing of ſome Churches, and deſigned greater things, if God had ſpared him to return. But, alas! he is gon, and our poor unſetled Church has an extraordinary loſs in him: 'Tis a ſharp Stroke, an additional Judgment, to loſe him now. But to God's Holy Will we muſt ſubmit, as he willingly and chearfully did, when Death approached: He reſigned all with great Chriſtian Courage, and diſcourſed Philoſophically and Divinely of the Vanity and Uncertainty of all Sublunary Things, and ſetled all his Deſires upon the Things above; and, not long before his death, he diſcourſed of the Neceſſity and Sincerity of Repentance and Uniform Obedience in ſuch a manner, and inveighed with ſuch an Holy Zeal, againſt the Sins of theſe Nations, as might make the greateſt Debauchees of our Age quake and tremble to have heard him. And then, with reflecting on himſelf, he did, with great Grief and Sorrow, with Sighs and Tears, bewail the leaſt Failures of his Life, and ſpent his Laſt Days in Self-examination, in Repentance and Prayer, and with great Devotion received the Holy Sacrament, in which he found much Joy and Comfort, and had ſuch Inward Peace and Antepaſts of Bliſs, that he longed to be diſſolved and to be with Chriſt, and did very often beg of God to take him: And, on *Thurſday* laſt, his Prayer was heard, and God, in his Mercy, took him out of the Troubles of this Life, and called him up amongſt the Bleſſed, and changed his Fading Mitre into a Crown of Eternal Glory.

What then remains, but that we imitate his Virtue, honour his Memory, and commit his Body to his Dormitory, there to ſleep till the Reſurrection, when he and all who have been diligent and induſtrious, painful and laborious in the Miniſtry, and have been Precedents of Piety and Holineſs, of Juſtice and Integrity, will meet their Flocks with Joy and Comfort, and for turning them to Righteouſneſs, ſhall ſhine as Stars for ever and ever? Which God grant we may all do, *&c.*

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THE

To the Right Worshipful

Sir Robert Vyner,

Knight and Baronet.

SIR,

WEre you one of that sort of Men, who value themselves by the Bag, or the Acre; it might possibly be thought rather an Affront, than a Dedication, to prefix your Name to this Treatise. For since it is purposely intended to beat down the Price of the World, and to expose its admired Vanities to publick contempt, those sordid Spirits, who have no other worth to commend them, but what is summed up in their yearly Revenues, would interpret such an Address, not so much a Tender of Respect and Service, as a Design to undo and beggar them. But, Sir, to you, whom God hath doubly blest with a large Estate, and a larger Heart, I doubt not but this Piece will be very acceptable; if upon no other account, yet at least as the perusal of it may be helpful to you to strip off, and as it were, to sequester all your worldly Advantages, that you may the better take an estimate of your self according to your native and genuine Worth, both as a Man, and as a Christian.

18 JY 64

I am not so much a Cynick, as to plead for affected Poverty, and a disdainful rejecting the Gifts of Divine Providence. Such a morose and sowr Pride, I judge worthy to be chastis'd, not only with the censure of Vanity, but Impiety. We need not shelter our selves under any Monastick Vow; nor fly to Deserts and Solitudes, to hide us from the Allurements of the World: This is to run away from that Enemy whom we ought to conquer. Certainly Religion allows us the possession of earthly Comforts; only it regulates the use, and forbids the inordinate love of them. We may prize them as Comforts, but not as Treasures: And while we employ a due part of our Abundance in the works of a generous Charity, and true Piety, we may well look upon what is left, as a Salary that God gives us for being faithful Stewards of the rest. Thus to use the World for the Interests of Heaven, to make its Enjoyments tributary to God's Glory, it is to convert and proselyte it; and turn that into an Offering, which others make an Idol. By this we give Earth a Translation; and in a nobler sense than the new System of Astronomy teacheth, advance it to be a Star, and a Celestial Body. And by this Method, we change those Helps that Vice had to make it self prodigious and infamous, into the most serviceable Instruments that Vertue can have to make it self conspicuous and exemplary. For Wealth and Honour in a vertuous Person, are like the well-setting of a Gem; which, though it makes it not more precious, makes it it more sparkling.

But, Sir, I forget my self, and instead of writing a Letter, am writing a Treatise. I shall make no other Apology for it, but that the Book being designed against Vanity, I would not have the Dedication of it guilty of that common and notorious One, to be fill'd only with Complements. And I hope you will not think it any thing of that strain, when I shall assure you that my Prayers to God for you are, That you may still enjoy all Advantages of doing good here on Earth, and hereafter receive the Reward of it in Heaven.

Your most humble, and most obliged, Servant,

Exon, *Feb.* 1. 1668.

EZEK. HOPKINS.

THE

THE
Vanity of the World.

Eccleſiaſtes I. 2.

Vanity of Vanities, ſaith the Preacher, Vanity of Vanities, all is Vanity.

THE Preacher here mentioned, is no leſs a Perſon than *Solomon:* and this whole Book is no other than his Recantation Sermon. The Text he preach'd on, is the ſame that I have choſen; and it contains the true and ſevere Judgment he paſt upon all things under the Sun. Certainly, he who had (a) *Riches as plentiful as the ſtones of the ſtreet*, and (b) *Wiſdom as large as the ſand of the Sea*, could want no Advantages, either to try Experiments, or draw Concluſions from them. And yet, when he had (c) employed both in the critical ſearch of true Happineſs and Contentment, and had diſſected and ranſacked the whole World to find it, he returns diſappointed of his Hopes, and tired with his Purſuit, and begins the ſad Narrative of his long Wandrings and Errors, with *Vanity of Vanities, all is Vanity.*

(a) 1 *Kings* 8. 27.
(b) 1 *Kings* 4. 29.
(c) *Eccleſ.* 1. 16, 17.

The whole Verſe is loaden with Emphaſes: And it is firſt obſervable, That he doth not glide into it by any ſmooth connexion of Senſe or Sentences, but on a ſudden breaks upon us, with a ſurprizing abruptneſs, *Vanity of Vanities.* Which ſhews a Mind ſo full of Matter, that it could not attend the Circumſtance of a Prologue to uſher it in. 1.

Again; It is all expreſt in the Abſtract. It ſufficed not to cenſure all things to be Vain, but they are *Vanity* it ſelf. 2.

And this Abſtract hath another heapt upon it, *Vanity of Vanities.* Now this reflection of the ſame word upon it ſelf, is always uſed to ſignifie the height and greatneſs of the thing expreſt, *as King of Kings*, and *Lord of Lords*, denotes the higheſt King, and the moſt abſolute Lord. So here, *Vanity of Vanities* intimates to us the moſt exceeding Superlative Vanity imaginable. 3.

Again; This is not only once pronounced, but doubled and repeated: partly the more to confirm this Truth to our belief; and thus *Pharoah*'s Dream was * doubled: and partly the more to imprint it upon our Conſideration. *Vanity of Vanities, Vanity of Vanities all is Vanity.* 4.

* *Gen.* 41. 32.

But tho' this be expreſt in moſt general and comprehenſive terms, yet it muſt not be taken in the utmoſt latitude, as if there were nothing at all of ſolid and real good extant. It is enough if we underſtand the words in a ſenſe reſtrained to the ſubject matter whereof he here treats. For the wiſe Man * himſelf exempts the *Fear and Service of God*, from that *Vanity* under which he had concluded all other things. God and Religion have in them a ſolid and ſubſtantial Good; the one as our utmoſt End and Happineſs, the other as the beſt proportioned Means to attain it.

* *Eccleſ* 12. 13.

When therefore he pronounceth all to be Vanity, it muſt be meant of all worldly and earthly things; for he ſpeaks only of theſe. And if we inquire what theſe worldly Things are, that have this cenſure of Vanity ſo vehemently paſt upon them, St. *John* hath drawn up a full and true Inventory of all the Goods that are to be found in this great Houſe of the Univerſe, 1 *John* 2. 16. *All that is in the World, is the Luſt of the Fleſh, the Luſt of the Eye, and the Pride of Life. The luſts of the Fleſh*, are the Pleaſures of the World; which are all of them ſuited to gratifie the ſenſual and fleſhly part of Man. *The Luſts of the Eye*, are Riches; ſo called, becauſe their greateſt

ſerviceableneſs is only to make a glittering and dazling ſhew. Which ſenſe *Solomon* approves, Eccleſ. 5. 11. *What good is there to the Owners thereof, ſave the beholding them with their Eyes? The Pride of Life* is Honour and Dignity, that flatulent and airy Notion, that puffs up Mens Pride and Vain-glory, and makes them look upon their Inferiours, as tho' they were not their Fellow Creatures. This is all that the World can ſhew, *Pleaſures, Riches, Honours*; and this is that *All* concerning which the wiſe Man pronounceth that it is *Vanity*.

For theſe things, tho' they make a fair and gaudy ſhew, yet it is all but ſhew and appearance. As Bubbles blown into the Air, will repreſent great variety of Orient and Glittering Colours, not (as ſome ſuppoſe) that there are any ſuch really there, but only they appear ſo to us, through a falſe reflexion of Light caſt upon them: ſo truly this World, this Earth on which we live, is nothing elſe but a great Bubble blown up by the Breath of God in the midſt of the Air where it now hangs. It ſparkles with ten thouſand Glories; not that they are ſo in themſelves, but only they ſeem ſo to us thro' the falſe Light, by which we look upon them. If we come to graſp it, like a thin Film, it breaks, and leaves nothing but Wind and Diſappointment in our Hands: as Hiſtories report of the Fruits that grow near the Dead Sea, where once *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* ſtood, they appear very fair and beautiful to the Eye, but if they be cruſh'd, turn ſtraight to Smoak and Aſhes.

Tacit. Hiſt. lib. 5. *Fumum exhalant & fatiſcunt in vagum pulverem.* Solin. Joſeph. Antiq. l. 5. c. 5.

The Subject which I have propounded to Diſcourſe of, is the Vanity of this World, and of all things here below; that being hereof convinced, we may deſiſt our vain purſuit of vain Objects, and may ſet our Affections on *thoſe things* which are *Above*, which are the alone valuable, becauſe the only permanent and ſtable Good. Whence is it that we are become ſo degenerate, that we, who have immortal and heaven-born Souls, ſhould ſtake them down to theſe periſhing Injoyments? Whence is it, that we, who ſhould ſoar aloft unto God, and were to that end fitted with the fleet Wings of Meditation and Affections, to cut through the Heavens in an inſtant, and to appear there before the Throne of the Great God, that we ſhould lie here groveling in the thick Clay and Muck of this World, as if the Serpent's Curſe were become ours, *to creep upon our Bellies, and to lick up the Duſt of the Earth?* Do we not ſhamefully degrade our ſelves, when we ſtoop to admire what is ſo vaſtly below us, and barter away our precious Souls, Souls more worth than ten thouſand Worlds, only to gain ſome ſmall part of one? Certainly the God of this World hath blinded Mens Eyes, and caſt a ſtrange miſt before them, that they cannot diſcern, what is moſt evident and obvious, even the inſtability and vanity of all ſublunary Enjoyments. That I may therefore contribute ſomewhat to ſcatter this Miſt, I ſhall endeavour to repreſent to you the native and genuine Vanity that is in all earthly things, free from that deceitful Varniſh, which the Devil uſually puts upon them; and ſo to deform, and wound that great Sorcerer, that his Charms may have no more Power to prevail over you.

Gen. 3. 14.

Now, that we may rightly proceed in this, I ſhall premiſe theſe two or three things.

I. *Firſt*, There is nothing in the World vain in reſpect of its natural Being. What ſoever God hath made, is, in its kind, good. And ſo the great Creator pronounced of them, when he took a ſurvey of all the Works of his hands, *Gen.* 1. 31. *God ſaw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good.* There is a moſt harmonious Order and Beauty in all the Creation, and every part of it. And therefore *Solomon* muſt not be here ſo interpreted, as if he diſparaged the Works of God in pronouncing them all *Vanity*. Certainly he doth not libel his Creator, nor upbraid him, as tho' he had filled the World only with vain Toys and Trifles. If we regard the wonderful Artifice and Wiſdom that ſhines forth in the Frame of Nature, we cannot have ſo unworthy a Thought either of the World it ſelf, or of God who made it.

† *Jam.* 1. 17. View the Sun (next unto † God) the great *Father of Lights:* view the numerous Aſſembly of the Stars; obſerve their Influences, their Courſes, and Meaſures. Is it a vain or impertinent thing, to ſpread forth the Heavens, and to beat out a Path for every one of theſe to walk in: The Air, that thin and ſubtile Veil that God hath ſpread over the Face of Nature; the Earth, that God hath pois'd in the midſt of the Air, and the whole Univerſe in the midſt of a vaſt and boundleſs Nothing: The great Sea, whoſe proud Waves God binds in with a Girdle of Sand; and checks its rage by a Body almoſt as unſettled and rolling as it ſelf: The various kinds of Creatures that God governs by a wonderful *Oeconomy*; the great family of brute Beaſts, which God brings up and educates without Diſorder; but eſpecially Man, the Lord

and

and Chief of the World, that knot that God hath tied between Heaven and Earth, that Sacred Band of Time with Eternity: If we conſider the Frame and Compoſure of all theſe things in themſelves, or their uſefulneſs and ſubſerviency unto us, we ſhall be ſo far from branding them with Vanity, that unleſs our Contemplations lead us from natural things to the Great God who formed them, we might rather fear leſt their beauty and Excellency ſhould inviegle us, as it did the Heathen, to look no farther for a Deity, but worſhip them as Gods.

Secondly; There is nothing vain in reſpect of God the Creator. He makes his Ends out of all; for they all glorifie him according to their ſeveral Ranks and Orders; and to rational and conſiderate Men, are moſt evident Demonſtrations of his infinite Being, Wiſdom, and Power. In which ſenſe the Apoſtle tells us, *Rom.* 1. 20. *The inviſible things of God are clearly ſeen, being underſtood by the things which are made, even his Eternal Power and Godhead.* God hath compoſed two Books by the diligent ſtudy of which we may attain to the knowledge of Himſelf; the Book of the Creatures, and the Book of the Scriptures. The Book of the Creatures is written in thoſe great Letters of Heaven and Earth, the Air and Sea, and by theſe we may ſpell out ſomewhat of God. He made them for our Inſtruction, as well as for our Service. The leaſt and vileſt of them read us Lectures of his Glorious Attributes; nor is it any Abſurdity to ſay, That as they are all the Words of his Mouth, ſo they are all the Works of his Hand. Indeed, this Knowledge that the Creatures give us of the Creator, cannot ſuffice to make us happy, tho' it may be ſufficient to make us * inexcuſable. We could never have collected from them thoſe myſterious Diſcoveries of God which the Scriptures exhibit, and which are ſo neceſſary to our eternal Bliſs. For what Signature is there ſtampt upon any of the Creatures of a Trinity in Unity; of the Eternal Generation, or Temporal Incarnation of the Son of God? What Creature could have informed us of our firſt Fall, and Guilt contracted by it? Or where can we find the Copy of the Covenant of Works, or of Grace printed upon any of the Creatures? All the great Sages of the World, tho' they were Nature's Secretaries, and ranſackt its abſtruſeſt Secrets, yet all their Learning and Knowledge could never diſcover that Sacred Myſtery of a Crucified Saviour. Theſe are Truths which Nature and Reaſon are ſo far from finding out, that they can ſcarce † receive them when diſcovered. And therefore God hath manifeſted them to us by the Light and Revelation of the Holy Scriptures. But yet ſo much of God as belongs to thoſe two great Titles of Creator and Governor of the World, our Reaſon may collect from created and viſible Things, running up their Conſequences, till they are all reſolved into the firſt Cauſe and Origine of all. II.

Ἔχομεν ὃ ἔννοιαν θεὸν πρῶτον μὲν ἀπὸ τῶν καλλιστων ἢ δ' ἀφανεστάτων περιλαμβάνοντες· Οὐδὲν γὰρ τῶν καλῶν εἰκῇ, καὶ ὡς ἔτυχε γίνεται. Plut. de placitis Philoſ. c. 6.

* Rom. 1. 20, 21.

† 1 Cor. 2. 14.

Thirdly, Therefore, All the Vanity that is in worldly things, is only in reſpect of the ſin and folly of Man, for thoſe things are ſaid to be Vain, which neither do, nor can perform what we expect from them. Our great Expectation is Happineſs, and our great Folly is that we think to obtain it by the enjoyments of this World. This makes Men purſue Pleaſures, hoard up Riches, court Honours and Preferments, becauſe they look with an over-weening conceit on theſe things, as ſuch as can make them truly Happy. Whereas to ſeek for Happineſs among theſe worldly things, is but to ſeek the living among the dead: yea, it is but to ſearch for Happineſs among thoſe things which are the very Root and Occaſion of all our Miſery. They are all of them leaky and broken Ciſterns, and cannot hold this living Water. (*a*) This is it which makes them charged with Vanity, becauſe in our perverted Fancy, we look upon them as ſtable, permanent, and ſatisfactory, fix them as our Journeys End, which ought only to be uſed by us in our Paſſage, and expect much more from them than they can yield: And ſo indeed the Vanity is not ſo much theirs as ours.

(*a*) Τὰ ἐκτὸς ἀνθρωπίνοις ψυχαῖς γίνεται ἐν τῷ ταῦτα μακαριστὰ δοξάζειν καὶ ἄφθαρτα. *Epic. apud Laert. in vita Epicuri.*

There are ſome things (as (*b*) St. *Auſtin* and the (*c*) *Schools* from him do well diſtinguiſh) which muſt be only *enjoyed*, other things that muſt be only *uſed*. To (*d*) enjoy, is to cleave to an Object by Love for its own ſake; and this belongs only to God. What we (*e*) uſe, we refer to the obtaining of what we deſire to enjoy; And

(b) *Aug. doct. Chriſt. l.* 1 *c.* 3.

(c) *Lomb. l.* 1. *d.* 1. *Aquin.* 1. 12. *q.* 11. 16. *Durand l.* 1. *d.* 1. *q.* 4. *Arim. d.* 1. 4. 3. *Art.* 2. *Altiſſ. l.* 3. *tract.* 10.

(d) *Frui eſt amore alicui rei inhærere propter ſeipſam.* Aug. *doct. Chriſt. l.* 1. *c.* 4.

(e) *Uti autem quod in uſum venerit ad id quod amas, obtinendum referre. Id. ibid.*

this

this belongs to the Creatures. So that we ought to (*f*) uſe the Creatures, that we may arrive at the Creator: We may ſerve our ſelves of them, but we muſt alone enjoy him.

(f) *Utendum eſt hoc mundo, non fruendum, ut inviſibilia Dei per ea quæ facta ſunt, intelligantur, hoc eſt, ut de temporalibus æterna capiantur.* Aug. *ibid.*

Now that which makes the whole World become Vanity, is when we break this order of Uſe and Fruition; when we ſet up any particular created Good as our End and Happineſs, which ought only to be uſed as a means to attain it. All things in the World are in themſelves good; but when we propound them as the greateſt and higheſt Good that we expect ſatisfaction from, this turns them all into Vanity; and ſo every thing beſides God, becomes nothing.

And thus we have a brief account whence proceeds this Vanity of the World, not from the nature of things, but from thoſe vain hopes and expectations we build upon them, for that happineſs which they cannot afford.

It remains therefore to diſplay before you this Vanity of the World, in ſome more remarkable particulars: Whereof take theſe following Inſtances.

I. *Firſt*, The Vanity of the World appears in this, That all its Glory and Splendor, depends meerly upon Opinion and Fancy. It is not ſo much what things are, as what we account them, that makes them Good or Evil: And what can be vainer than that which borrows its worth from ſo vain and fickle a thing as our Eſtimation? And therefore we find the things of the World rated diverſly, according to the eſteem that Men have of them. What were Gold and Silver, had not Mens Fancy ſtampt upon them an excellency far beyond their natural uſefulneſs? This great Idol of the World was of no value among thoſe barbarous Nations, where abundance made it vile. They preferred Glaſs and Beads before it, and made that their Treaſure, which we make our Scorn. They deſpiſe our Riches, and we theirs; and true Reaſon will tell us, that both the one and the other are in themſelves alike deſpicable; and it is only Fancy that puts ſuch an immodeſt and extravagant price upon them, far above their natural worth. Should the whole World conſpire together to depoſe Gold and Silver from that ſovereignty they have uſurped over us, they might for ever lie hid in the Bowels of the Earth, e'er their true uſefulneſs would entice any to the pains and hazard of digging them out into the Light. Indeed the whole uſe of what we ſo much dote upon, is meerly fantaſtical; and to make our ſelves needy, we have invented an artificial kind of Riches; which are no more neceſſary to the Service of Sober Nature, than Jewels and Bracelets were to that Plane-tree which * *Xerxes* ſo ridiculouſly adorned. And altho' we eagerly purſue theſe things, and count our ſelves poor and indigent without them; yet poſſibly right Reaſon will dictate, That they are no more needful to us, than to brute or ſenſleſs Creatures; and that it would be altogether as ridiculous for a Man to be deck'd with them, as for a Beaſt or Plant; were it but as uncommon. Theſe precious trifles, when they are hung about us, make no more either to the warmth or defence of the Body than if they were hung upon a Tree they could make its Leaves more verdant, or its ſhade more refreſhing. * Doth any Man lie the ſofter, becauſe his Bed-poſts are gilt? Doth his Meat and Drink reliſh the better, becauſe ſerv'd up in Gold? Is his Houſe more convenient, becauſe better carved or painted? Or are his Cloaths more fit, becauſe more faſhionable than another's? And if they are not neceſſary to theſe natural Uſes, all that is left them is but Fancy and Opinion. Indeed, Mankind couzen themſelves by compact; and by ſetting a value upon things that are rare, have made many think themſelves poor, whereas God and Nature made all equally wealthy, had they not artificially impoveriſh'd themſelves. It is nothing but Conceit that makes the difference between the richeſt and the meaneſt, if both enjoy Neceſſaries. For what are all their ſuperfluous Riches, but a Load that Mens Covetouſneſs lays upon them? they are but like * Roman Slaves, that were wont to carry heavy burthens of Bread upon their Backs, whereof others eat as large a ſhare as they. Whatſoever is more than barely to ſatisfie the Cravings of Nature, is of no other uſe but only to † look upon. Thy Lands, thy Houſes, and fair Eſtate, are but Pictures of things. The pooreſt that ſees them, enjoys as much

Quantum apud nos indicis margaritis pretium eſt, tantum apud Indos in cura lio. Namque iſta perſuaſione gentium conſtant. Plin. *lib.* 32. *de Gem. Benzoni del mondo nuovo, lib.* 1.

* Ælian. *l.* 2. *c.* 14.

* Ταῦτα πάντα γίγνεται, ἢ μὴ ποικίλων ἱματίων ἁδὲν μᾶλλον θάλπειν δυναμένων; ἢ μὴ ὑ χρυσοφόρων οἰκιῶν ἁδέν τι μᾶλλον σκεπτεσῶν; ἢ ὑ ἐκπωμάτων ἢ μὴ ἀργυρῶν ἢ κ ἀφελήτων ἢ πότον; ἁδὲ ἢ χρυσῶν, ἁδὲ ἢ μὴ ἐλεφαντίνων κλινῶν ἢ ὕπνον ἡδίω παρεχομένων; Lucian. Cynicus.

* *— Ut ſi reticulam panis, venales inter, onuſto forte vehas humero, nihilo plus accipias quam qui nil portarit.* Hor. Stat. 1.

† Eccleſ. 5. 11.

much of them as thy ſelf: Yea, and if Men could be contented with Reaſon, all that they behold with their Eyes, is as much theirs as it is the Owners.

And indeed if we ſtrip all theſe admired Nothings to their naked Principles, we ſhall find them as baſe and ſordid as the meaneſt of thoſe things which we ſpurn and deſpiſe; only Art or Nature put new ſhapes upon them, and fancy a price upon thoſe ſhapes. * What are Gold and Silver, but diverſified Earth, hard and ſhining Clay? The very place where they are bred, the Entrails of the Earth upbraids us for accounting them precious. The beſt and richeſt Perfumes, what are they but the clammy ſweat of Trees, or the mucous froth of Beaſts? The ſofteſt Silks are but the Excrement of a vile Worm. The moſt racy and generous Wines, are nothing elſe but Puddle-Water ſtrain'd thro' a Vine. Our choiceſt Delicates are but Dirt, cook'd and ſerv'd up to us in various Forms. The very ſame things which we contemn under one ſhape we admire in another, and with this, Fancy and Cuſtom have conſpir'd together to cheat us.

* Ὀφαλίζῃ χολάειον ὄζει σαφυλίε καὶ ἡ πειπόρφυρος τειχία περβατὶς αἱματίῳ κόσκης δεδυμένα. Οὕτως δεῖ παρ' ἄλον τ' βίον ποιεῖν, καὶ ὃ πυλιὰν ἀξιοπρόσιτα πρεγματα φανταζεται ἀπογυμνᾶν αὐτὰ, καὶ τῶν δ' τέλειαν αὐτῶν κατδοξᾶν καὶ τὴν ἰσχναν ὑφ' ἣν συμνύεται περιαιρεῖν. M. Anto. de ſeipſo, l. 6. S. 10. Edit. Cas. Τὸ σαπρὸν τῆς ἐκάστου ὑποκειμένης ὕλης, ὕδωρ, κόνις, ὀστάρια, γρὰσσον ἢ πάλιν, πῶρος γῆς, τὰ μάργαρα, καὶ ἀποσάθραι ὁ χρυσὸς, ὁ ἄργυρος, καὶ τειχία, ἡ ἐσθὴς καὶ αἷμα ἡ πορφύρα. Id. l. 9. S. 30. 6.

Think, O worldling! when thou caſteſt thy greedy Eyes upon thy Riches, think, here are Bags that only Fancy hath fill'd with Treaſure, which elſe were fill'd with Dirt. Here are Trifles that only Fancy hath called Jewels, which elſe were no better than common Pebbles. And ſhall I lay the Foundation of my Content and Happineſs upon a Fancy, a thing more light and wavering than the very Air?

Nay, conſider, That a diſtemper'd Fancy can eaſily alter a Man's Condition, and put what ſhape it pleaſeth upon it. If a black and ſullen Melancholy ſeizeth the Spirits, it will make him complain of Poverty in the midſt of his abundance; of pain and ſickneſs, in the midſt of his Health and Strength. 'Tis true, theſe are but the Effects of a diſtorted Fancy; but tho' his Sickneſs and Poverty be not real, yet the torment of them is. It is all one, as to our diſquiet, whether we be indeed unhappy, or only * imagine our ſelves ſo.

* Ταράσσει τὰς ἀνθρώπους ὐ τὰ πράγματα ἀλλὰ τὰ περὶ τ πραγμάτων δόγματα. Epictet. Enchir. c. 10. & diſſert. l. 3. c. 19.

Again; If the Fancy be more merrily perverted, ſtreight they are nothing leſs than Kings, or Emperors, in their own Conceit. A Straw is as majeſtick as a Sceptre; they will ſpeak of their Rags as magnificently as if they were Robes: and look upon all that come near them as their Subjects or Servants. They make every Stone a Gem, every Cottage a Palace; all they ſee is their own, and all their own is moſt excellent. Now what think you, are theſe things vain, or no? I doubt not but you will conclude them moſt extreamly vain; and yet they ſerve their turns as well, and bring them in as much ſolace and contentment, as if they were really what they imagine them. Thus † *Thraſyllus* noted down all the Ships that arrived at the Port of *Athens*, thinking them, and their Merchandize to be all his own. And when cured of that pleaſant madneſs, * confeſt, That he never in his whole Life enjoyed ſo much content, as in that conceited Wealth thoſe Ships brought him. And indeed for my part, I know not whether theſe things are more vain in the Fancy, or in the Reality. Such is the exceeding Vanity of all things in the World, that were it not for the Eternal Concernments of the Soul, which cannot be ſo well regarded under a ſuſpenſion or diſtraction of Reaſon, I ſhould make no difficulty to account and prove them the happieſt Men on Earth.

† Ælian. l. 4. c. 25.

* Ἔλεγεν μηδέποτε ἡδῆναι τοσοῦτον, ὅσον τότε ἥδετο ὅτι τ μηδὲν αὐτῷ περιπεπτώκοιεν ναῦσιν ἀπὸ σωζομένας. Id. ibid.

If then there be ſo great a Power in Fancy, how vain muſt all thoſe things be which you purſue with eagerneſs and impatience, ſince a vain Fancy without them, can give you as much ſatisfaction, as if you enjoy'd them all? And a vain Fancy can, on the other hand, in the greateſt abundance of them, make your lives as wearifome and vexatious, as if you enjoyed nothing. That is the firſt Demonſtration.

Secondly; The Vanity of the World appears in its deceitfulneſs and treachery. It is not only Vanity, but a lying Vanity, and betrays both our Hopes, and our Souls. II.

It betrays our Hopes, and leaves us nothing but diſappointment, when it promiſeth Satisfaction and Happineſs. What ſtrange Confidences do we build upon the falſe flatteries of the World? In our proſperity we ſing a *Requiem* to our ſelves, and are ready to ſay, *Our Mountain is ſo ſtrong, that it ſhall never be moved:* But within a while God 1. Pſal. 30. 6, 7.

God hath ſhaken it, like that of *Sinai*, and wrap'd it about with Clouds and thick Darkneſs.

2. It betrays the Soul to Guilt and eternal Condemnation. For uſually the World intangles it in ſtrong, tho' ſecret and inſenſible Snares, and inſinuates into the Heart that love of it ſelf, which is inconſiſtent with the love of God. The World is the Devil's Factor, and drives on the Deſigns of Hell. The Apoſtle hath told us, 1 Tim. 6. 9. *They that will be rich, fall into temptation, and a ſnare, and many fooliſh and hurtful luſts, which drown men in deſtruction and perdition.* And becauſe of the ſubſerviency of worldly enjoyments to Mens Luſts, it is almoſt as impoſſible a thing to moderate our Affections towards them, or to bound our Appetites and Deſires, as it is to aſſwage the thirſt of a Dropſie by drinking, or to keep that Fire from encreaſing, into which we are ſtill caſting new Fuel. And therefore our Saviour hath pronounced it as * *hard for a rich Man to enter into Heaven, as for a Camel to go thro' the Eye of a Needle.*

* Luke 18. 25.

† Mat. 26. 48. As *Judas* gave a ſign to the Officers that came with him to apprehend Jeſus, † *Whomſoever I ſhall kiſs, the ſame is he, hold him faſt:* The ſame ſign doth the World give the Devil. Whomſoever I ſhall careſs and favour, whomſoever I ſhall heap honour and riches on, whomſoever I ſhall embrace and kiſs, the ſame is he, hold him faſt. Such a darling of the World is too often faſt bound in the ſilken Bands of Voluptuouſneſs, and conſigned over to be faſt bound in Chains of maſſy Darkneſs.

III. As all things in the World are lying Vanities, ſo are they all vexatious. They are infamous to a Proverb, *Uncertain Comforts, but moſt certain Groſſes.*

And therefore the wiſe Man concludes them all to be, not only *Vanity, but Vexation of Spirit.*

There is a four-fold Vexatiouſneſs in all worldly things.

1. There is a great deal of turmoil and trouble in getting them; nothing can be acquired without it. The Sweat of *Adam*'s Brows hath ſtream'd down along upon ours, and the Curſe together with it, * that in ſorrow we ſhould eat of that which Toil and Labour hath providedfor us. Men riſe early, and go to bed late, and eat the Bread of carefulneſs; and ſuch is either their Curſe, or their Folly, that they make their Lives uncomfortable, only to get the Comforts of Life.

* Gen. 3. 19.

2. Whether they get them or no, yet ſtill they are diſappointed in their Hopes. † If they cannot compaſs their Deſigns, then they are tormented, becauſe they fall ſhort of what they laboured for; if they do compaſs them, yet ſtill they are tormented, becauſe what they laboured for, falls ſhort of what they expected from it. The truth is, The World is much better in ſhew than ſubſtance: And thoſe very things we admire before we enjoy them, yet afterward we find much leſs in them than we expected. As he that ſees a falling Star ſhoot thro' the Air, and draw after it a long train of Light, runs to the place; and thinking to get ſome bright and glittering thing, catches up nothing but a filthy Jelly; ſuch is the diſappointment we find in our purſuit after the enjoyments of this World: They make a glorious ſhew at a diſtance, but when we come near them, we find our Hopes deluded, and nothing upon the place but a vile Slime.

† *Ex his triſtitia ſequitur, ſi aut non ſucceſſit, aut ſucceſſus pudet.* Senec. *de tranquil.* c. 11.

3. *Thirdly*; They are all Vexation while we enjoy them. Be it what it will that we poſſeſs of the World, it is but by fits at moſt, that we take any great pleaſure in it: And then, what between Cares and deſigns to ſecure the continuance of it, and fears of loſing it, the comfort of enjoying it is wholly ſwallowed up. * For ſtrong Affections begetting ſtrong Fears, do always leſſen the delight of preſent Enjoyments. This is the unhappineſs of all things in the World, that if we ſet any price and value upon them, we loſe much of the ſweetneſs of them, by fearing to loſe them.

* Ἡ γὰρ σφοδρὰ περὶ ἕκαστον ὀδυνῶμα σφοδροτάτην φόβον ἐκποιοῦσα τοῦ μὴ παραμένειν, ἀδεᾶ τὴν χάριν ποιεῖ καὶ ἀβέβαιον ὥσπερ φλόγα, καταπνεομένων. Plut. de tranquil.

4. *Fourthly*; They are all Vexatious, as in their Enjoyment, ſo eſpecially in their Loſs. Whatever we ſet our Hearts upon, we may aſſure our ſelves, and experience will teach it us, that the pleaſure of poſſeſſing it, will not near countervail the bitterneſs of loſing it. And as if God had on purpoſe ſo ordained it, to take off our Hearts from the World, the better we eſteem any thing, the more Vanity and Vexation ſhall we find in it; for the more will our Care and Perplexity in keeping it, and the more our Grief and Torment in loſing it be encreaſed. That's a third Demonſtration.

IV. *Fourthly*; The Vanity of the World appears in this, That a little Croſs will embitter great Comforts. One *dead Flie* is enough to corrupt a whole *Box* of the World's moſt fragrant *Ointment*. How much will only the aking of a Tooth, a fit of the Stone, or

or Gout, deaden and diſhearten us to all the Joys and Pleaſures of Life? Certainly, the World muſt needs be vain, that cannot bear out the brunt of a little Pain or Sickneſs. The leaſt croſs Accident is enough to diſcompoſe all our Delights. And indeed there are ſo many Ingredients required to make up worldly Felicity, † Riches, Health, Friends, Honour, good Name, and the like; that if any of theſe be wanting, the whole Compoſition is ſpoiled, and we ſhall take advantage againſt our ſelves to conclude we are miſerable. For ſuch is the peeviſhneſs of our Nature, that if we have not all we would, we take no content in any thing we have. And beſides, we are apt ‖ to ſlide off from the ſmoother part of our Lives, as Flies from Glaſs, and to ſtick only on the rougher Paſſages: For neither is Senſe capable to be ſo much or ſo long affected with the Impreſſions of Pleaſure, as of pain, (ſince never could there yet be any Delights invented as piercing as there are many Torments) nor yet is our buſie remembrance ſo officious in calling back the pleaſant Paſſages of our days to our review, as thoſe that have been more gloomy and dolorous. And tho' it be our ſin to look more upon the Croſſes we find, than the Comforts we enjoy; yet here we may likewiſe ſee how vain a thing it is for us to expect Happineſs and Contentment from the World, whoſe Croſſes as they are more, ſo they are more conſiderable than its Comforts.

† Φαίνεται γὰρ ἐκτὸς ἀγαθῶν σφόδρα ἰσχύειν (εὐδαιμονία) Ἐνίων πιπτόντων ῥυπαίνουσι τὸ μακάριον, οἷον εὐγενείας, εὐτεκνίας, κάλλους. Οὐ πάνυ γὰρ εὐδαιμονικὸς ὁ τὴν ἰδέαν παναίσχης, ἢ δυσγενής, ἢ μονώτης, ἢ ἄτεκνος. Arist. E. *l.* 1. *c.* 8. & *l.* 10. *c.* 8.

‖ Τῦπο τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν ὀπισθοφέρεται. ὅταν ὥσπερ αἱ μυῖαι τὰ λείων τόπων ἐν τῆς κατόπτρου ἀπολιδαίνουσι, τὰ δὲ τραχύτησι σφόδρα ἔχονται καὶ τὰ ἀμυχαῖς ὅπως ἄνθρωποι τῆς ἰλαρᾶς καὶ σφοδρῶν ἀπορρέοντες, ἐμπλέκονται τὰ τῶν ἀηδῶν ἀναμνήσεσι. Plutarch *de tranquil.*

Fifthly, Conſider, the longer we enjoy any worldly thing, the more flat and inſipid doth it grow: We are ſoon at the bottom, and find nothing but Dregs there. In all the Pleaſures of Life either our Spirits ſink and fall under the continuance of them, as not able to bear a conſtant tenſion and emotion; or the Delight conſiſts meerly in the novelty and variety of the Objects, which when we are made more familiar with, are but dull, becauſe ordinary: And ſo they either tire our Appetites, or deceive our Hopes. And therefore the moſt artificial Voluptuaries have always allowed themſelves an intermiſſion in their Pleaſures, to recruit Nature, and ſharpen their ſenſual Deſires, without which they would but cloy and ſurfeit, and inſtead of Pleaſures, prove only a waſte and oppreſſion to the Spirits. * *Epicurus* himſelf, the great Maſter and Servant of Pleaſure, who made it the higheſt good and chiefeſt Happineſs of Man, ſet himſelf certain days of Abſtinence in courſe, wherein he would but niggardly ſatisfie his Stomach, well knowing that the pleaſure of Gluttony could never be ſo much enhanc'd as by an interval of Hunger. V.

* *Certos habebat dies ipſe magiſter voluptatis* Epicurus, *quibus maligne famem extingueret.* Sen. *Ep.* 18 *Ep. ad Menæceum apud Diog. Laert in vitâ Epic.* Τὸ συνεθίζειν ἐν ἁπλαῖς καὶ οὐ πολυτελέσι διαίτοις καὶ πολυτελέσιν ἐκ διαλειμμάτων σφοδρουμένοις κρεῖττον ἡμᾶς διατίθησι.

For what is a furniſh'd Table to him whoſe conſtant Meals overtake one another, but only the heaping of Food upon Crudities and Indigeſtion? What the Titles of Honour to a Perſon born Noble? They ſignifie no more to him, than it doth to another Man, when he hears himſelf called by his ordinary Name. What is Reſpect and Honour to a Man long accuſtomed to it? It brings him no great content when he hath it, but torments him when he fails of it. Give theſe things to thoſe that are unacquainted with them, if you would have them valued. Bring a poor Man to a Table of Delicates; inveſt an ignoble Perſon with Honours and Dignities; give Reſpect to a deſpiſed Perſon, and for the preſent you bleſs them. But Time and Cuſtom will wear off this Content: And the † tedioufneſs even of ſuch a Life as this, will make them willing, at leaſt for their Divertiſement and Recreation, to * retire to their homely Cells and Station. For as it is with thoſe that are accuſtomed to ſtrong Perfumes, they themſelves cannot ſcent thoſe Odours, which to others that uſe them not, are moſt ſweet and fragrant: So it fares with us in the long continuance of worldly Enjoyments; our Senſes are ſo ſtuft and even ſuffocated with them, that we cannot perceive them; and unleſs we purchaſe Pleaſures by alternate Sorrow, they are but loſt upon us. Now how vain muſt the World needs be, whoſe Comforts are not valuable while we have them, but while we have them not? And how vain are thoſe Joys for which we muſt pay down as much Grief, as the Joys themſelves are worth? So that upon balancing the Accompt, there remains nothing to us: and it had been altogether as good to have enjoyed nothing.

† —— *Sunt talis quoque tædia vitæ*
Magna. Voluptates commendat rarior uſus. Juven. Sat. 11.

* *Non exiſtimes me ducere te ad modicas cœnas & pauperum cellas, & quicquid aliud eſt per quod luxuria, divitiarum tædio ludit.* Sen. *Ep.* 18.

Again,

Again, Conſider, all the Pleaſure of the World, is nothing elſe but a tedious repetition of the ſame things. Our Life conſiſts in a * round of Actions, and what can be duller than ſtill to be doing the ſame things over and over again? Ask the moſt frollick Gallant, whoſe only ſtudy it is how he may paſs his time merrily, and live happily: What account can he give of his Pleaſures, but that from his Bed he riſeth to his Table, from his Table to his Sports, from them he tumbles into his Bed again? This is the moſt gentile and faſhionable Life. And are theſe the great Joys that a World ſo prized and ſo admired can afford? one half of his pleaſant Life he ſpends in ſleep, a dull ſtate, which we may rather reckon to Death than Life. The other half he ſpends in clogging his Appetite, and tiring his Body, and then to ſleep again. What generous and noble Deſigns are theſe! Fit for high Spirits and high Births? while the contemptible Peaſants are left to do the Drudgery of the World, and to be the only ſerviceable Men in it. Nay, rather what a pitiful Circle is this, ſtill to be doing the ſame things, and things which we have before ſearch'd and often found all that is in them. So that even a Heathen * could ſay, that not only a valiant or a miſerable Man might deſire to die, but a nice and delicate Man, as diſdaining the irkſome repetition of the ſame things.

* Πάντα ὄζ διὰ ἓν ὁμοειδῆ καὶ ἀπαχυκλήμενα, καὶ ἀεὶ ἐν διαφέρει πότερον ἐν ἓκατον ἔτεσιν, ἢ ἐν διακοσίοις ἢ ἐν τῷ ἀπείρῳ χρόνῳ τὰ αὐτὰ τὶς ὄψεται. Antonin. *l.* 2. *S.* 12.

* *Cogita quamdiu eadem facias. Cibus, ſomnus, libido. Mori velle, non tantum prudens & fortis aut miſer, ſed etiam faſtidioſus poteſt.* Sen. *Ep.* 77.

VII. *Seventhly*; The vanity of the World appears in this, That it can ſtand us in no ſtead, then when we have the greateſt need of Support and Comfort. There be two Seaſons eſpecially in which the Soul wants relief and comfort, and they are, in trouble of Conſcience, and at the hour of Death. Now in each of theſe the World ſhews it ſelf to be exceeding vain and uſeleſs.

1. *Firſt*; The World appears to be vain, when we are under trouble of Conſcience. What choice Comforts the Soul then ſtands in need of, thoſe who have felt the ſting and terrours of it, can beſt tell. The torments they then feel, next to thoſe of the damned, are the moſt intollerable, and the moſt unutterable. God ſets them up as his Mark, and ſhoots his Arrows, dipt in flaming Poiſon, into the very midſt of their Souls. He kindles a ſecret Fire in them, that conſumes their Bones, dries up their Marrow, and ſcorches their Entrails; and ſuch is the ſpreading Rage of it, that oftentimes it ſmoaks out at their Mouths in deſpairing Outcries.

The Spirit of a Man, (ſaith *Solomon*, Prov. 18. 14.) *will bear his Infirmity*; i. e. The natural chearfulneſs and vivacity of a Man's Spirit, will enable him to bear up under bodily pains, *But a wounded Spirit who can bear?* When our Prop it ſelf is broken, we muſt needs ſink, and fall under the moſt gloomy apprehenſions that Guilt and Hell can create in a Soul already ſing'd with thoſe Eternal Flames into which with unſpeakable horrour it daily expects to be plunged. O! think what exact torture thou muſt needs endure, when God ſhall make deep wounds in thy Spirit, and let fall great drops of his burning Wrath, on that part of thy Soul that is infinitely more tender and ſenſible than the Apple of thine Eye. Imagine what ſharp and intollerable pains thoſe *Martyrs* ſuſtained, who (as the *Apoſtle* tells us, *Heb.* 11. 37.) *Were ſawn aſunder.* Or ſuppoſe that thou thy ſelf wert now under the ragged Teeth of a Saw, drawn to and fro upon the tendereſt parts of thy Body, tearing thy Fleſh, thy Nerves and Sinews; grating and jarring upon thy very Bones: Yet all the extremity of this, is nothing to what Torments the Conſcience feels, when God cauſeth his Sword to enter into it, to rive it up; when he makes deep and bloody wounds in it, and inſtead of pouring in healing Balm, with an heavy Hand chafes them with Fire and Brimſtone.

Now in ſuch a time of anguiſh and diſtreſs as this, What is there that can relieve the afflicted Soul? The Worldling that heaps up his ill-gotten Treaſures, and wallows in thick Clay, when God comes to ranſack his Conſcience, and to ſet before him the Guilt of his Sins, will then know with terrour and amazement, that there is a Juſtice which Gold and Silver cannot bribe. The voluptuous Perſon will no longer reliſh any ſavourineſs in his carnal Delights, when once *God* * *writes bitter things againſt him.* What is Mirth and Muſick to him that can now hear nothing but the ſcrieches of his own Conſcience? What is a full Cup to him, that can now taſte nothing but the Cup of Fury and Trembling? Little content will the Noble take in his honourable Titles, if all this while his Conſcience call him Reprobate. A Title of Honour will no more abate the Torments of Conſcience, than it doth mitigate

* Job 13. 26.

Belzebub's

Belzebub's Torments to be ſtiled Prince of the Devils. All the World's Hony will not ſerve to allay the invenomed ſtingings of Conſcience. That's a fiery Serpent, a deaf Adder, that will not be charm'd by all the alluring Pleaſures of the World. Theſe are vain and impertinent to one whoſe thoughts are wholly poſſeſt with the fear of Wrath and Hell, from which theſe cannot deliver him. When God makes a Wound in the Spirit, the whole World cannot make a Plaiſter broad enough to cover it.

Secondly; The World is a vain and uſeleſs thing at the hour of Death. Poſſibly, many of us may never conflict with the Terrours of Conſcience, nor have that conviction of the World's Vanity: But yet we muſt all conflict with Death, that *King of Terrours*. Suppoſe therefore (what muſt certainly once be) that we were now gaſping our laſt, our Tongues faltering, our Eye-ſtrings breaking, our Limbs quivering, a dead Cold and Stiffneſs invading us; were our Souls toſt to and fro upon our expiring Breath, and like Wrecks at Sea, ſometimes caſt up, and by and by ſuck'd back again; What could ſtand us in ſtead, and make our paſſage happy at ſuch a time as this? Now the Soul requires the ſtrongeſt, the richeſt Cordials. Prepare it one mingled of the beſt Ingredients the whole World can afford; Caſt into the Cup, Riches, Honour, Pleaſure, the Quinteſſence of all that is here deſirable; yet, alas! What is all this World to a dying Man who is juſt leaving it? 2.

Thy wicked Companions, with whom thou haſt laugh'd and ſin'd away thy freſheſt Years, will in this thy laſt extremity forſake thee: or if they do attend ſo ſad a Spectacle; alas! What miſerable Comforts will they be? They will then prove another bad Conſcience to thee, and bring to thy remembrance, with horrour, the Sins which thou haſt committed by their enticement, or they by thine. Thy Mirth and Jollity, will then be turned into Groans and Howlings: All things will ſtare ruthfully upon thee, and when thou calleſt upon them for help, confeſs their impotency to reſcue thee from the gripe of Death, and from the doom of Juſtice.

Non domus & fundus, non aeris acervus & auri, Aegroto domini deduxit corpore febris, Non animo curas. Hor. Ep. 2.

Sickneſs is uſually a buſie time with Conſcience; and when it is packing up for a Remove into the other World, it will be ſure to gather together all the Sins of a Man's Life, and bind them as an heavy and inſupportable burthen upon his Soul. Can thy ſenſual Pleaſures divert thee now? As they have ſerved thee to paſs away the tediouſneſs of Time, can they ſerve to paſs away the infinite tediouſneſs of Eternity? Nay, how can it otherwiſe be, but that a Mind long ſoak'd and ſoftned by theſe, ſhould be made the more capable of receiving deep impreſſions of Grief, Anguiſh, and Deſpair?

Indeed, while we eagerly purſue any of theſe worldly Enjoyments, we are but running after a ſhadow: And as Shadows vaniſh, and are ſwallowed up in the greater ſhade of Night; ſo when the Night of Death ſhall caſt its thick Shade about us, and wrap us up in deep and ſubſtantial Darkneſs, all theſe vain Shadows will then diſappear and vaniſh quite out of ſight.

Now could we have the ſame Opinion of the World in the time of our Health and Proſperity, as we ſhall certainly have when we lie languiſhing and drawing on to Eternity, we ſhould be able then, with a generous Scorn, to live above it, and deſpiſe it. Shall we prize thoſe Comforts, which will be none to us when we have the greateſt need of Comfort? Shall we glue our Affections to that which either is ſo faithleſs that it will not, or ſo weak that it cannot help us? So vain a thing is it, that it cannot reſiſt the diſgrace that ſleep or only winking doth. Shut but your Eyes, and what becomes of all the Pomp and Luſtre, the Beauty and Splendour, that we ſo much admire in the World? It all vaniſheth into Darkneſs and Nothing. Sleep ſnatcheth us from it; and for the time, we have no more enjoyment of it than if we were dead. Every Night we die in our Beds, and yet every Day are ſo immerſt in the Pleaſures and Buſineſſes of the World, as if we were never to die indeed. Since therefore we have higher and nobler Objects to fix our Affections on, let us not laviſh them out upon theſe worldly Vanities, which can at no time prove real Comforts unto us; and then leaſt of all, when we have moſt need of comfort. That's a ſeventh Demonſtration.

Again; All things in the World are vain, becauſe they are unſuitable. True indeed, they are ſuited to the neceſſities of the Body, and ſerve to feed and cloath that; but he is a Beaſt, or worſe, that reckons himſelf provided for, when only his bodily wants are ſupplied. Have we not all of us precious and immortal Souls, capable and deſirous of Happineſs? Do not theſe crave to be ſatisfied? Do they not deſerve VIII.

to be heard? Shall our vile Bodies, which are but Duſt and Worms-meat, engroſs all our care how to pleaſe and pamper them, and ſhall the neceſſities of our never-dying Souls be neglected? What have you laid up in ſtore for theſe? Alas! That which
Iſa. 5. 8. moſt Men buſie themſelves about, is to heap up temporal Riches, *To join Houſe to Houſe, and Land to Land, that they might dwell alone upon the Earth.* But know, thou doſt but give thy Soul Husks and Swines-meat, when thou ſetteſt the whole World before it.

And therefore *our Saviour* juſtly brands the *Rich Man* in the Goſpel for a *Fool*, that when he had ſtufft up his Barns with Corn, ſaid to his Soul, † *Soul, thou haſt much*
† Luk. 12. 19. *Goods laid up for many Years.* A Fool indeed to meaſure the Soul's Goods by the Barn, or by the Buſhel. The very ſame is the folly of moſt Men, who think they are in all reſpects well provided for, if they can but ſcrape together a great Eſtate, whereas the Soul can no more live upon theſe things, than the Body can upon a thought or notion.

There is a three-fold unſuitableneſs, between worldly things and the Soul.

1. *Firſt*; The Soul is Spiritual, theſe are droſſy and material. Of all things belonging to a Man, his Breath is the moſt ſubtile, inviſible, and ſpiritual. But now the
* Gen. 2. 7. Soul is called the * *Breath of God*, and therefore muſt needs be Spiritual in a high degree. And what then hath a ſpiritual Soul to do with Clods of Earth, or Acres of Land, with Barns full of Corn, or Bags full of Gold? Theſe are too thick and groſs to correſpond with its refined Nature. But rather bring Spiritual Things to Spiritu-
† Heb. 12. 9. al. God who is the † *Father of Spirits*, his Love and Favour, an Intereſt in him, and Communion with him, the Conſolations of the Holy Ghoſt, the Actings of Grace, and the Hopes of Glory; theſe Spiritual and Clarified Eſſences, which a carnal Eye cannot ſee, nor a carnal Judgment value; theſe are moſt ſuitable to the Soul, that is a Spirit, and ought not to be unequally yoak'd to the Dregs and Droſs of Earthly Enjoyments.

2. *Secondly*; The Soul is immortal, but all worldly Things are periſhing, and wear out in the uſing. And therefore it was but ſmall Comfort, when the rich Man ſung his *Requiem*, to ſay, *Soul, take thy eaſe, thou haſt Goods laid up for many Years.* Thou Fool! What is an Eſtate for many Years, to a Soul whoſe duration is not meaſured by Years, but by Eternity? What when thoſe Years of Plenty are expired? How deſtitute will thy Soul be when it ſhall have out-lived all its good things? It may outlive them, even in this World. God may nip and blaſt all that thou ſetteſt thy Heart on, and make all thy Comforts fall off from thee, like ſo many withered Leaves. However, if thou haſt no other than what this miſerable World can afford, thou ſhalt certainly outlive them in the World to come: And what wilt thou do, not in thoſe Years, but in that Eternity of Famine?

As it is with thoſe that are invited to feaſt in ſome noble Family, the Furniture is rich, the Entertainment ſplendid and magnificent; but when they depart, they cannot of all that Pomp and Bravery carry any thing away with them: So is it here; The World is God's great Houſe, richly furniſh'd, and we well entertain'd in it; we have all things liberally afforded us for our uſe; but nothing of all is ours. And therefore God hath ſet that grim Porter, Death, at his Gate, to ſee that as we brought nothing into it, ſo we carry nothing out of it. What a ſad parting-hour will it be to the Soul, when it muſt go into another World, and leave all that it admired and loved, behind in this? How will it protract, and linger? How loth will it be to enter upon ſo great a Journey, and carry nothing to defray the Charges of it? Certainly, dying muſt needs be a terrible thing to thoſe who have gotten nothing but what they can no longer keep, when their Souls muſt be ſet on ſhore in a vaſt and black Eternity, all naked and deſtitute, having nothing to relieve or ſupport them.

3. *Thirdly*; The Neceſſities of the Soul, are altogether of another kind, than thoſe which worldly things are able to ſupply; and therefore they are wholly unſuitable. Natural Things may well ſerve for natural Wants. Food will ſatisfie Hunger; and Raiment fence off the Injuries of the Weather, and Riches will procure both. But the Soul's Neceſſities are Spiritual, and theſe no Natural thing can reach. It wants a price to redeem it; nothing can do this but the precious Blood of Chriſt. It wants Pardon and Forgiveneſs; nothing can grant it, but the free and abundant Mercy of God. It wants Sanctification and Holineſs, Comfort and Aſſurance; nothing can effect theſe but the Holy Ghoſt. Here all worldly things fall ſhort. The Exigencies of the outward Man they may ſupply; but the greateſt abundance of them can never quiet

quiet a troubled Conſcience, nor appeaſe an angry God, nor remove the condemning Guilt of the leaſt Sin: No, *The redemption of the Soul is precious* (more precious than to be purchaſed by theſe poor things) *and it ceaſeth for ever.* Pſal. 49 8.

Poſſibly now in the time of your Peace and Proſperity, you regard not theſe ſpiritual Wants; but when the days of Sorrow and Darkneſs ſhall come upon you, when God ſhall drop into your Conſciences a little of his Wrath and Diſpleaſure, you may as well ſeek to cure a Wound in your Body, by applying a Plaiſter to your Garment, as ſeek to eaſe a wounded Spirit by all the Treaſures, Pleaſures, and Enjoyments of this World. *Riches* (ſaith the *Wiſe Man*) *profit not in the day of Wrath:* For indeed they cannot reach the Soul to bring any true ſolace to it. Prov. 11 4.

Thus you ſee how unſuitable the World is to the Soul. Unſuitable to the Nature of it, for the Soul is Spiritual, but all Earthly Enjoyments are droſſie and material; the Soul is immortal, but theſe are all periſhing: Unſuitable alſo to the Neceſſities of the Soul, which they can never reach nor ſupply.

IX. Again; The Vanity of the World appears in its Inconſtancy and Fickleneſs. God's Providence adminiſters all things here below in perpetual Viciſſitudes. His Hand turns them about like ſo many *Wheels*, (to which they are compared, *Ezek.* 1.) the ſame part is now uppermoſt, and anon lowermoſt; now lifted up in the Air, and by and by grated through the Mire. This is the mutable condition of the World. And therefore we find it compared to the *Moon*, *Rev.* 12. 1. where the Church is deſcribed to be *Cloathed with the Sun, and to have the Moon* (that is, the World) *under her feet.* And well may it bear the reſemblance, for it is ſtill waxing and waning, ſometimes full of brightneſs, at other times ſcarce a ſmall ſtreak of Light to be diſcerned. There are none of us but have had experience in ſome kind or other, of the inconſtancy of theſe ſublunary Enjoyments. When the Sun ſhines bright and warm, all the Flowers of the Field open and diſplay their Leaves, to receive him into their Boſoms; but when Night comes, they fold together, and ſhut up all their Glories: And tho' they were like ſo many little Suns ſhining here below, able, one would think, to force a day for themſelves; yet when the Sun withdraws his Beams, they droop, and hang the Head, and ſtand neglected, dull and obſcure Things. So hath it fared with us: While God hath ſhone upon us with warm and cheriſhing Influences, we opened and ſpread, and flouriſh'd into a great Pomp and Glory: But he only hides his Face, draws in his Beams, and all our beautiful Leaves ſhut up, or fall to the Ground, and leave us a bare Stalk, poor and contemptible.

Or if there have been no ſuch conſiderable Mutations in what concerns us, yet the Revolutions that God hath of late Years brought upon others, ſo beyond Expectation or Example, may well inſtruct us in the Vanity of the World, and make us no leſs contemn it, than admire that infinite Wiſdom that governs it.

It is ſaid of the *Wheels*, Ezek. 1. 17. *That they went upon their four ſides.* For one Wheel interſecting and croſſing another, the whole muſt needs conſiſt of four Sides or Semicircles: and moving upon theſe four ſides, it muſt of neceſſity move very ruggedly, by jolts and jerks. So truly the Providences of God do ſometimes move unevenly, as croſs Wheels would do moving upon their ſides. Great and ſudden changes are often brought to paſs without being ripened by ſenſible Degrees, but happen by the ſurpriſal of ſome unexpected Providence, and, as it were by the ſudden jerk of the Wheel, ſhaking off thoſe who ſate on the top, and cruſhing them in its paſſage over.

'Tis true, theſe Mutations which to us ſeem ſo confuſed and tumultuary, are all orderly and harmonious in the Divine Counſel and Fore-knowledge. There is not a Providence that breaks its Rank, nor a Wheel that moves out of its Track; and there is a deſtined End for them all, the Glory of the Almighty Creator; to which, while every Creature purſues its own Inclinations, he ſweetly, and yet efficaciouſly ſways them. They are all like Arrows ſhot at a Mark by an unerring Hand: Some are ſhot point-blank, and ſome by compaſs, but none ſo careleſly as to miſs it. Tho' Changes may ſurprize us, yet they do not ſurprize God: But as it is a great pleaſure to us, to ſee our Deſigns and Forecaſts accompliſhed; ſo infinite Wiſdom delights it ſelf to look on, and ſee how all things ſtart up into their Place and Order, as ſoon as called forth by his efficacious Decree and Fore-knowledge. Among all the weighty and arduous Cares of Governing the World, it is (if I may ſo expreſs it) the Recreation of Providence, to amuſe Mankind with ſome wonderful Events; that when we cannot find out the Connexion and Dependence of ſecond Cauſes, we may humbly

acquieſce

acquiesce in adoring the absolute Sovereignty of the First: And by observing the Mutations of Affairs here below, may be taught to repose our selves in him who only is immutable. Thus God administers the various Occurrences of the World according to the Counsel of his own Will; and makes the inconstancy of it, serve both for his Delight and our Admonition.

It is in vain therefore to expect Happiness from what is so uncertain. All the Comforts of it are but like fading Flowers, that while we are looking on them, and smelling to them, die, and wither in our Hands. Is it Pleasures we seek? These must vary: For where there is not an intermission, it is not Pleasure but a glut and surfeit. And hence it is that they who are used to hardships, taste more sweetness in some ordinary Pleasures, than those who are accustomed to a voluptuous Life, do in all their exquisite and invented Delights. Do you pursue Honour and Applause in the World? This hangs upon the wavering Tongues of the Multitude: To follow this, is but to pursue a puff of Wind, and of all Winds in Nature the most fickle and changeable. The People's *Hosanna*, and Crucify, are oft pronounced in the same breath. And besides that it is * no great matter that those should think or speak well of thee, who have but too much reason to think ill of themselves; besides this, consider how soon publick Fame grows out of breath. Possibly an Age or two may talk of thee, but this Bruit is but like successive Eccho's, that render the Voice still weaker and weaker, till at length it vanisheth into silence. Yea, could'st thou fill whole Chronicles with thy Story, yet Time or Moths will eat thee out: And the † fresher remembrance of other Mens Actions will bury thine in Oblivion. Is it Riches you desire? These too are uncertain; 1 *Tim.* 6. 17. *Charge them that they trust not in uncertain Riches.* Uncertain they are in getting, and uncertain in keeping when got. All our Treasures are like Quicksilver, which strangely slips between our Fingers when we think we hold it fastest. *Riches* (* saith the wise Man) *make themselves Wings, and fly away as an Eagle towards Heaven*; and it were a most strange folly † to fall passionately in love with a Bird upon his Wing, who is free and unconfined as the Air in which he flies, and will not stoop to thy Call or Lure. How much better were it, since they will fly, for thy self to direct their flight towards Heaven, by relieving the necessitous Servants and Members of Jesus Christ? Then will their flight be happy and glorious, when they carry on their Wings the Prayers and Blessings of the Poor, whose Bowels thou hast refreshed. This is to lay up treasure in Heaven, to remit thy Monies to the other World, where they shall be truly paid thee with abundant Interest. This is to lay up a Stock for hereafter, that thou mayest have whereon to live splendidly and gloriously to all Eternity. And thus to lay out, is to lay up, to lay up uncertain Riches in a safe Repository: God's Promises shall be thy security, and every Star in Heaven, a Seal set upon the Treasury-door which none can break or violate.

* Ἐπαινεῖσθαι θέλεις ὑπὸ ἀνθρώπων τοιούτων τοιούτοις ὑπὸ ὧν καταγέλασται. Ant. l. 8. Sect. 44.

† Ὡς αἱ μὲν ἄλλαι ἐπ' ἄλλαις ὑποφορήμασι χρύπτουσι τὰ πρόσωπα, ἵνα πῶς ἐν τῷ βίῳ τὰ πρόσωπα ὑπὸ τῆς ἐπαινεχθέντων ταχὺ ἐκαλύφθη. Id. l. 7. S. 23.

* Prov. 23. 5.

† Ὥσπερ εἴ τις τῶν ἐν παραπετομένων στρουθίων φιλεῖν ἀρχοῖτο, τὸ δ' ἤδη ἐξ ὀφθαλμῶν ἀπολέλυται. Id. Lib. 6. Sect. 11. The same with that of *Solomon, Wilt thou set thine Eyes upon that which is not?* &c.

Thus you see how mutable and inconstant all worldly Things are. So that we may truly apply that which the *Psalmist* speaks of the Earth in another sense, That Psal. 24. 2. *God hath founded it upon the Sea, and establish'd it upon the Floods.* Such is the waving, and fluctuation of all things here below, that they are no more constant, than if they were meerly built upon the ebbing and flowing of the Tide.

X. *Lastly*; The Vanity of the World appears in this, That it is altogether unsatisfactory. That must needs be Vain, which when we enjoy it in its greatest abundance, can give us no real nor solid content. Such an empty thing is the whole World. You may as soon grasp a bundle of Dreams, or take up an Armful of your own Shadow, as fill the vast and boundless desires of your Souls with these earthly Enjoyments. And therefore the *Psalmist* speaking of prosperous Sinners, sets forth their state by the most thin and empty things imaginable; *Psalm.* 73. 30. *As a Dream when one awakes, so, O Lord, thou shalt despise their Image.* The Images and Representations that a Dream makes, seem very brisk and lively; but when we reflect upon them with our waking Thoughts, we find them confused and impertinent. Such is all the prosperity of this World, it is but as the Image and Fiction of a Dream.

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* As an hungry Man that dreams he is at a furniſh'd Table, and fills himſelf with all varieties of Delicates, how joyful, and how pleas'd is he, how fully ſatisfied, if he were not to wake again! But ſome one jogs or calls him; he wakes, and finds himſelf hunger-ſtarv'd, nothing fed but his Fancy. So is it with us in this World. While the Soul lies under the Coverlet of this Body, it ſleeps: And one thinks himſelf Rich; another, Great and Noble; a third, Learned and Wiſe: But alas! All this is only a Dream: When either Afflictions, or Death, make a noiſe, and call upon him, the ſleepy Soul awakes, and finds it ſelf empty and hunger-ſtarv'd, after all the imaginary ſtore it enjoyed. * Iſa. 29. 8.

Now, the Unſatisfactorineſs of the World, may be clearly evinced by theſe two things.

Firſt; In that the higheſt Condition we can attain unto, cannot free us from Cares and Croſſes. Yea indeed it is ſo far from freeing us, that it rather encreaſeth them. It doth but make us ſpread the wider, and ſtand the fairer mark for trouble. And yet we are like Children, that think the Sky lies on yonder Hill; thither they run, hoping to touch it there: When they come, they find it diſlodg'd to another Hill; after it they run, and purſue it from Hill to Hill, and after all their pains and ſweat, find themſelves as far below it as at firſt: So it fares with us; we think Happineſs and true Content lies in ſome condition above us; thither we haſten, hoping we ſhall reach it there; when we arrive thither, we find the Happineſs we ſought for is diſlodg'd, and ſeems to us to reſt in a Condition above that: But when we attain this too, ſtill we are as far below Happineſs and Satisfaction, as we were in our loweſt Eſtate. 1.

When we change our outward Condition, be it to never ſo great advantage, we do not loſe, but only change our Cares. If we are freed from the Cares and Croſſes of a poor and private Life; we fall into thoſe of a pompous and envied Greatneſs, which are both more numerous, and more oppreſſive. * The Man that lies moſt compacted, and in leaſt compaſs in the World, is like to ſcape beſt: Whereas the great Ones, that take up much room, do only ſhew in how many Places and Concernments they are liable to be wounded. It is not therefore any thing in this World that can give you ſatisfaction. All the Enjoyments of it are to the Soul as Wind to the Stomach; they may gripe it, but they can never ſatisfie it. Indeed ſo vain are they, that they ſcarce have any other proof of their Reality, but the pain and torment they bring with them.

* *Auguſtanda ſunt patrimonia, ut minus ad injurias fortunæ ſimus expoſiti. Habiliora ſunt corpora in bello, quæ in arma ſua contrahi poſſunt, quàm quæ ſuperfunduntur, & undique magnitudo ſua vulneribus objicit.* Sen. de Tranq. c. 8. *Cogendæ in arctum res ſunt, ut telum in vanum cadat.* Id. c. 9.

Secondly; The World appears to be unſatisfactory, in that be our Condition what it will, yet ſtill we deſire change. We can no more reſt in an high Eſtate, than in a low; but ſtill we deſire ſomething farther and ſomething better. † As ſick Men toſs to and fro, from ſide to ſide, thinking to find eaſe by changing their poſture; whereas it is not their outward Poſture but their inward Diſtemper, that is the cauſe of their reſtleſſneſs: So do we endeavour to change and ſhift Conditions in the World, and lie ſometimes in one poſture, and ſometimes in another, but yet are reſtleſs in all; for whereſoe'er we tumble, we carry our Diſeaſe with us; falſe Opinions, and fooliſh Hopes, and impotent Deſires, and fond Deſigns, which make us complain of our preſent State, and wiſh the amendment of that, when nothing wants Cure but our ſelves.

† Ὥσπερ οἱ δεινοὶ νοσοῦντες ἐν τῷ πλεῖν εἶτα ῥᾷον οἰόμενοι διάξειν ἐὰν εἰς γαῦλον ἔξ ἀκάτου; καὶ πάλιν ἐὰν εἰς τειήρη μεταβῶσιν, ἀδιὲν μεταίνυσι, τὴν χολὴν καὶ τὴν δειλίαν συμμεταφέροντες ἑαυτοῖς· ὅπως αἱ τῶν βίων ἀνταλλαγὴ ἐκ ψυχῆς τὰ λυποῦντα καὶ ταράττοντα. Ταῦτα δ' ἐστὶν ἀπειρία τῆς ἀληθείας, ἀλογισία, τὸ μηδύνασθαι, μηδ' ὁπῖσαθαι χρῆσθαι τοῖς παροῦσιν ὀρθῶς. **Plutarch. de Tranquil. Animi.**

* The Servant thinks he ſhall be a happy Man when he is made Free. Is the Freeman happy? No: But he ſhall be, when he hath gotten ſuch an Eſtate. Is the Rich Man happy? No: But he ſhall be when he is inveſted with ſuch an Honour and Dignity. Well; Is the Honourable Man happy? No: Unleſs he be Supream. And thoſe who are Supream cannot think themſelves compleatly happy, unleſs they be Univerſal Monarchs; and thoſe who were ſo, we find they could not reſt there, but would needs be adored for Gods. O whither do the boundleſs Deſires of Men hurry them! Nothing in this World can put a ſtop to them.

* Οἱ δεδεμένοι εὐδαιμονίζουσι τοὺς λελυμένους, ἐκεῖνοι δὲ τοὺς ἐλευθέρους· οἱ δ' ἐλεύθεροι, τοὺς πολίτας· ἔτοι δὲ πάλιν αὖ τοὺς πλουσίους· οἱ δὲ πλούσιοι, τοὺς Σατράπας· οἱ δὲ Σατράπαι τοὺς βασιλεῖς. οἱ δὲ βασιλεῖς τοὺς Θεοὺς μονονυχὶ βοῶντὰν καὶ ἀσεβεῖν θέλοντες. Εἶτα ὅπως ἀεὶ τὸ ὑπὲρ ἑαυτοὺς ἐνδεεῖς ὄντες, οὐδέποτε τοῖς παροῦσιν ἔχουσιν, &c. Plut. *Ib.*

It was a pertinent Diſcourſe of *Cineas*, diſſuading *Pyrrhus* from undertaking a War againſt the *Romans:* Sir, (ſaith he) When you have conquer'd them, what will you do next? Then *Sicily* is near at hand, and eaſy to maſter. And what when you have ſubdued *Sicily?* Then we'll paſs over to *Africk*, and take *Carthage*, which cannot long withſtand us. When theſe are conquer'd, what will be your next attempt? Then (ſaith *Pyrrhus*) we'll fall in upon *Greece*, and *Macedon*, and recover what we have loſt there. Well, when all are ſubdued, what Fruit do you expect from all your Victories? Then (ſaith he) we'll ſit down and enjoy our ſelves. Sir, (replies *Cineas*) May we not do it now? Have you not already a Kingdom of your own? And he that cannot enjoy himſelf with a Kingdom, cannot with the whole World. Such are the Deſigns of Men, and ſo we may anſwer them. Moſt are projecting how they may get ſuch an Eſtate; then how they may raiſe themſelves to Honour, and think that their advancement in both, will bring them ſatisfaction. Alas! This will not do. Their deſires will ſtill run before them: And they may as well ſit down content where they are, as where they hope to be.

And the reaſon of this unſatisfactorineſs in worldly things is, becauſe none of them are ſo good as the Soul is. The Soul, next to Angels, is the very Top and Cream of the whole Creation, other things are but Dregs and Lees compared to it. Now that which is our Happineſs, muſt be better than our ſelves; for it muſt perfect us. But theſe things being far worſe, and inferiour, the Soul in cleaving to them, is ſecretly conſcious that it abaſeth and diſparageth it ſelf; and therefore cannot find true ſatisfaction. Nothing can fill the Soul, but that which eminently contains in it all good. But now, as Light is only divided, and parcell'd out among the Stars, but is all united in the Sun: So Goodneſs is only parcell'd out among the Creatures; this Creature hath one ſhare, and that another; not any of them contains the whole ſum of Goodneſs. This is proper to God only, who is the Author and Original of them all, in whom all Excellencies and Perfections are concentred. And therefore in him alone can be found that reſt and ſatisfaction which the Soul in vain ſeeks for, in any thing beſides himſelf.

Theſe are the Demonſtrations of the World's Vanity; which, tho' they be many and various, yet I doubt not but every Man's particular experience may furniſh him with divers others. But whatever our Obſervations are, the Uſes we may make of them are theſe:

I. *Firſt*; It ſhould teach us to admire and adore the good Providence of God to his Children, in ſo ordering it, that the World ſhould be thus vain, and deal ſo ill with thoſe who ſerve it. For if it were not ſo infamous and deceitful as it is, if it did not fruſtrate and diſappoint our Hopes, and pay us with Vexation, when it promiſeth Fruition and Content: What thinkeſt thou, O Chriſtian, would be the end of this? Would any one think of God, or remember Heaven, and the Life to come? St. *Auguſtine* ſomewhere ſpeaks excellently, *Turbat me Mundus, & ego eum diligo; quid ſi non turbaret? The World troubles and moleſts me, and yet I love it; what if it did not trouble me?* Certainly we ſhould fall into an utter forgetfulneſs of God, if we could find any true ſatisfaction here. We ſhould never think of returning to the Fountain of living Waters, if we could find enough in Ciſterns to quench the Thirſt of our Souls. And therefore God deals with us, as ſome great Perſon would do with a diſobedient Son, that forſakes his Houſe, and riots among his Tenants: His Father gives order they ſhould treat him ill, affront, and chaſe him from them, and all, that he might reduce him. The ſame doth God: Man is his wild and debauch'd Son; he flies from the Commands of his Father, and cannot endure to live under his ſtrict and ſevere Government. Whither goes he, but to the pleaſures of the World, and Revels and Riots among the Creatures? But God reſolves to recover him, and therefore commands every Creature to handle him roughly. Burn him Fire, toſs him Tempeſts, and Shipwrack his Eſtate; forſake him Friends, Deſigns fail him; Children be rebellious to him as he is to me; let his Supports and Dependances ſink under him, his Riches melt away, leave him poor, and deſpis'd, and deſtitute. Theſe are all God's Servants, and muſt obey his Will. And to what end is all this, but that ſeeing himſelf forſaken of all, he may at length, like the beggar'd Prodigal, return again to his Father?

Secondly; If the Vanity of the World be ſuch, and ſo great, if it be only an empty Bubble, a ſwelling Nothing, leſs ſolid than the dream of a Shadow; if it be thus unſuitable, uncertain, and unſatisfactory, as I have demonſtrated to you: what groſs folly

folly then are moſt Men guilty of in ſetting ſo high a price upon that which is of no worth nor ſubſtance? Tho' formerly we have been ſo much deceived as to take the World's Paint and Varniſh for true Beauty, and its glittering for ſubſtantial Treaſure; yet now ſince the Cheat is diſcovered, ſince you have ſeen this falſe Pack opened, and nothing but counterfeit Wares obtruded upon you, your folly will be inexcuſable, if after Experiments and Admonitions you ſhould contribute any longer to your own Cheat, and ſet a price upon things which you know to be vile and worthleſs. The wiſe Man (as you have heard) ſums up their whole Value, only in a great Cypher, and a great Blot, *Vanity and Vexation.* At what price would you rate *Vanity*, which is nothing? Or *Vexation*, which is worſe than nothing?

And therefore our Saviour, *Mark* 4. 9. compares the things of this World to *Thorns*; *Some fell among Thorns:* which Thorns he interprets to be the *Cares of this World, and the deceitfulneſs of Riches*, v. 19. Now, he were a mad Man, that to aſſwage his Hunger, would attempt to ſwallow a Buſh of Thorns. No leſs is the madneſs and extream folly of moſt Men, who to ſatisfie the eager Appetite of an hungry and indigent Soul, gape after the *Thorns* of this World, and chew *Thiſtles*; which inſtead of yielding them either Grapes or Figs, will only ſerve to pierce them through with innumerable Sorrows.

A Man's Wiſdom or Folly is commonly judged by the Bargains he makes. If he lay out that which is very precious, to purchaſe what is of no worth, this we juſtly account a fooliſh Bargain. If on the other hand, he purchaſe that which is of great Price, with ſomething little worth, we account it a wiſe and thriving Bargain. Now here we may ſee the groſs folly of moſt Men. Tho' they are wiſe enough in bartering one part of the World for another; yet they ſhew themſelves very Fools in purchaſing any part of the World with that which is no part of it. The Scripture hath told us, That all that is in the World, is Honour, Pleaſure or Profit. While we only traffick with theſe for one another, we do not amiſs. The World is a proper price for it ſelf; and doubtleſs we may lawfully part with ſome worldly Advantages to procure others. But then there are other things which do not belong to the World under this Acception: Our Affections, our Conſciences, our precious and immortal Souls. And theſe God hath given us to trade with for Heaven, and Eternal Glory. Now herein lies the folly of moſt Men, that they purchaſe the vile things of this World, with ſuch an ineſtimable price, and extravagantly outbid themſelves to procure Trifles with that which might procure them eternal Happineſs. More particularly;

Firſt; Is it not extream folly to laviſh our precious Affections upon vile and vain Objects? Affections are the Wings of the Soul, without which the Soul it ſelf were but a dull and unactive Carkaſs. Theſe God hath given it, that it might be able to take its flight to Heaven, and lodge it ſelf in his Boſom. Now how unworthy a thing is it, only to flutter to and fro upon the ſurface of the Earth, to clog and clotter theſe Wings with mire and dirt, which were at firſt made to take ſo high, and ſo noble a flight? 1.

* The Apoſtle hath commanded us to *ſet our Affections on things above, and not on things on the Earth.* And indeed, there is great reaſon for it. For the two choice Affections of the Soul are *Love* and *Joy*. Now that is moſt worthy our Love, that can return a Joy moſt worthy of us. But the Joy that the World gives, is uſually tumultuous, alway check'd with ſome ſecret annoy, and it ends with a dulneſs and damp upon the Spirits. It is but like the empty † *crackling of Thorns under a Pot*, that for the preſent makes a great noiſe and blaze, but ſuddenly vaniſheth all away into Smoak. Whereas an heavenly Chriſtian feels ſometimes a ponderous and weighty Joy, a Joy ſpringing up in his Soul almoſt intolerable, and altogether unutterable, a Joy that melts him into ecſtaſies and rapture. How infinitely doth he then diſdain that any Soul ſhould be ſo wretchedly ſottiſh, as to prefer the World before, or equalize it with God! He thinks the Happineſs he then enjoys ſo great, that altho' he believes it is, yet he cannot conceive how it ſhould be more, or greater in Heaven it ſelf. Then the Soul claps its Wings; it would fain take its flight, and be gon: it breaths, it pants, it reaches after God, and falls into an Agony of Joy and Deſire inconceivably mixt together. Can the World give us any ſuch over-powering Joy as this? It may afford us Corn and Wine, the weak Recruits of a frail Life: but when it hath emptied all its Store and Abundance into our Boſoms, it is not worthy to be

* Col. 3. 2.

† Eccleſ. 7. 6. *Flamma ſtipula exorta, claro crepitu, largo fulgore, cito incremento; ſed enim materiâ levi, caduco incendio nullis reliquiis.* Apul. Apol.

Pſal. 63. 3. be mentioned with the Love and Favour of God, which is *better than Life it ſelf.* And therefore the *Pſalmiſt* makes it his prayer, Pſ. 4. 6. *Lord, lift thou up the Light of thy Countenance upon us: Thou haſt put gladneſs in my heart, more than in the time their Corn and Wine encreaſed.*

The Joy of the World reſembles a Torrent: As upon a glut of Rain, you ſhall have a Torrent come rolling along with Noiſe and Violence, overflowing its Banks, and bearing all before it; yet it is but muddy and impure Water, and 'tis ſoon gon and dried up. Such is all the Joy this World can give; it makes a great noiſe, 'tis commonly immoderate and ſwells beyond its due bounds, yet 'tis but a muddy and impure Joy, it ſoon rolls away, and leaves nothing behind but a drought in the Soul. Now ſince the World's Joy is but ſuch a poor empty thing as this, it is moſt groſs folly for us to lay out our beſt Love upon that which cannot repay us with the beſt Joy.

2. *Secondly*; If the World be thus vain, what folly is it to lay out our moſt ſerious Cares and Contrivances upon it! The Cares of worldly Men are moſt abſurd and irrational. Ask them why they care? they will tell you it is that they may live without Care: and yet the more they get, the more do their Cares ſwarm and encreaſe about them. To what purpoſe do they thus diſquiet themſelves? They were as good make Nets to catch the Wind, as lay Plots either to obtain, or ſecure a World, which is ſo ſlippery, and ſo full of Diſappointments, that neither they who have it, are ſure of keeping it; nor they who have it not, of getting it. We may obſerve a kind of coyneſs in the World; Thoſe who court it moſt, and purſue it cloſeſt, oft-times miſs of their Deſigns, becauſe they overact them. And it is commonly ſeen, that thoſe who (as we uſe to ſay) have many Irons in the Fire, get nothing thereby, but only the burning of their own Fingers.

'Tis true, there is a prudential and providential Care, that is ſo far from being chargeable with folly, that it is neceſſary, and a great part of our Duty, not only as † 1 Tim. 5. 8. we are Men, but as we are † Chriſtians. And this prudential Care is, when we do what lawfully we may, to procure the Comforts of Life; and then with all Quietneſs and Indifferency, ſubmit the ſucceſs to God. This is a Care of Diligence. But that which is juſtly branded with folly, is a Care of Diffidence, which is always accompanied with Torment, Fears and Diſtractions about the Succeſs and Iſſue, and moſt unreaſonably vexeth us, for what is not in our power to determine. Such a Care as this uſurps upon God. And certainly it is no leſs a Fault to invade God's part than to neglect our own; and a like Folly. The right temper a Chriſtian ſhould obſerve in procuring any worldly Comfort, is to intereſt his Judgment in the choice of Means, but to keep his Affections diſintereſted and unconcern'd in the Event. But when we are anxious how our Deſigns will ſucceed, we make it a Torment to us in getting, before we can make it a Comfort to us in enjoying.

To what purpoſe then doſt thou, O worldling, rack thy Brains with Contrivances, how to fill thy baggs with Treaſure, how to empty them out with Advantage? When thou haſt added Heap to Heap; of all thy ſtore thou enjoyeſt no more, than what thou eateſt, or drinkeſt, or weareſt: And of this too thou enjoyeſt no more than will juſt ſuffice to ſatisfie thy Hunger, to quench thy Thirſt, and to fence off the Injuries of the Weather: All the reſt turns either to Diſeaſes or Burthens. True Reaſon will teach us to chuſe our Eſtates as we would do our * Garments, not thoſe which are largeſt, but thoſe which are fitteſt for us. Vaſt and over-flowing Eſtates are but like huge enormous Rudders, that rather ſerve to ſink the Ship, than ſteer it: Their Abundance is uſeleſs, and their Exceſs dangerous. To what end therefore is all our care and carking, all our perplexing and ſolicitous Thoughts, thoſe parching and conſuming Diſtractions, which can haſten on nothing but our own natural Decays; to what end are they, unleſs it be to contradict our *Saviour*, and ſhew that we have a Power to make *our* † *black Hairs white?* When we lay ſubtile and intricate Deſigns, to obtain the things of this World, we are but like Spiders, that with a great deal of Art and Labour, weave a curious Cobweb, only to catch Flies; and poſſibly ſpend more of their Bowels in framing it, than the Prey they catch can again repair. Yea, and it may be too, before the Prey be caught, both they and their Web are ſwept down together, and trod in the Duſt. So when we frame Deſigns, to get any worldly Advantage, it is but taking a great deal of pains to

* *Fortuna, velut tunica, magis concinna quam longa probanda, quippe etiam ea ſi non geſtetur, & trahatur, nihilo minus quàm lacinia præpendens impedit & præcipitat. Etenim in omnibus ad vitæ munia utendis, quicquid aptam moderationem ſupergreditur oneri potius quam uſui exuberat.* Apul. Apol.

† Matt. 5. 36.

to catch a Fly. And poſſibly before it be caught, the rude hand of Death wraps us about in our Cobweb, and ſweeps us down into the Grave, * and *in that very moment*, *we, and all our well-laid Projects periſh together.* * Pſal. 146. 4.

Thirdly; If the World be thus vain, What extream and prodigious Folly is it to take as much pains to ſecure the poor and periſhing Concernments of it, as would ſuffice to ſecure Heaven and Eternal Glory, were they laid out that way? We labour for the Bread that periſheth, and we periſh with it in our very Mouths. About this are our Hearts, our Hands, our Strength, our Time employed: whereas the great things of Eternity are ſo utterly neglected by us, as if they were none of our Concernments to look after. Were we but as labourers in our Chriſtian Calling, as we commonly are in our worldly Callings, Salvation would not lie upon our Hands unwrought; God and Chriſt, and all Heaven were ours. Who would doubt, when they ſee Men ſo buſy about Impertinencies, and the trivial Affairs of this World, but that they were much more anxious about their Souls? Who would not conclude, that certainly their great Work is already done, that ſhall ſee them ſo earneſt and ſolicitous about petty Matters? But alas; It may aſtoniſh Men and Angels, that rational Creatures, who have immortal Souls, Souls whoſe endleſs duration, muſt abide either in inconceivable Miſery or Bliſs, ſhould trifle away that time and ſtrength which might ſecure their everlaſting Happineſs, about thoſe vain Nothings, that have neither Happineſs in them, nor Continuance. Certainly, the ſervice of God is not more painful, than the drudgery of the World: And ſure I am, it is far more cleanly. Thou ſhalt not in his Service ſet thine Hand to any foul Office: Whereas the World employs thee baſely to rake together thick Clay, and load thy ſelf with it; and the Devil, yet worſe, to rake in the mire and filth of all manner of Defilements, which now pollute the Soul, and will hereafter damn it. Both theſe are moſt grievous Task-Maſters. Some *draw Iniquity with Cords of Vanity, and ſin as it were with a Cart-rope*, Iſa. 5. 18. They are ſo enſlaved to the work of the Devil, that he puts them into his Team, makes them draw and ſtrain for their Iniquities, and doth them a Courteſie when their Sins come eaſily. He makes them toil and ſweat in carrying Faggots to their own Fire, and blowing up thoſe Flames, which muſt for ever burn them. Others (as the *Prophet* expreſſeth it, *Hab.* 2. 13.) *labour in the Fire, and weary themſelves for very Vanity.* They take great pains in the World, and meet with great Diſappointments; for both are ſignified by *labouring in the Fire*, where what they produce, cannot be enjoyed, but is conſumed between their hands. 3.

Since then you muſt take ſo much pains, either for Sin or Vanity, why will you not be perſuaded rather to lay it out upon that which is ſubſtantially good, and eternally ſo? God requires not more, but only other work from you: And the *many things* that *Martha* was careful about, Religion and Holineſs reduceth to the *one Thing neceſſary*; which tho' it contains many particular Duties under it, yet by reaſon of its uniformity and ſubſerviency to it ſelf, is leſs diſtracting and cumberſome. The Wheels of a Watch move and click as faſt when it goes falſe as when it goes true: and if it be but ſet right at firſt, the ſame activity of the ſpring will ſo continue it, which before made its Motion irregular. So it is here: The ſame Activity and Induſtry which you irregularly uſe in purſuit of the World, would procure Heaven and Glory for you, were it that way directed. Your Cares, your Contrivances, your Endeavours, need be no more than now they are; only what before you laid out upon the World, reſerve now for Heaven. And how infinitely reaſonable is this! Certainly they are moſt ſtupidly fooliſh, that will take up Vanity at as dear a rate as Happineſs, and give as much for Vexation as for endleſs Joy.

Fourthly; If the things of this World be ſo vain, what inexcuſable Folly is it to part with the Peace, or the Purity of our Conſciences for them! And yet what more common? If Men can get any thing of the World at the price of a Sin, they think they have made a gainful Bargain. And therefore the Devil hath recourſe to this, as his moſt prevailing Temptation. When he ſet on our *Saviour* in the Wilderneſs, the laſt Aſſault was, * *All theſe things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worſhip me*; And when this Battery could not make a Breach, he raiſeth his Siege, as deſpairing of ſucceſs. And this is the uſual temptation by which he aſſaults others. *Judas* comes with his † *Quid dabitis*, what will you give me? and ſets Chriſt, and his own Conſcience to ſale, for the inconſiderable ſum of *thirty pieces*. He demands no more than the common Market price of a Slave (not amounting to above † eight and thirty Shillings) for the Lord of Life and Glory: And thinks his Bargain ſo good, that he gives 4.

* Mat. 4. 9.

† Mat. 26. 15.

* Exod. 21. 32.

† *Accounting the value of the common Shekel to be* 15 *pence of our Mony.*

gives himſelf to the Devil for Vantage. This is the very Root of all that Injuſtice, and Rapine, and Oppreſſion, and Violence that is to be found among Men. They all ſtrive and tug, who ſhall get moſt of this Earth from one another; and loſe Heaven and their own Conſciences in the ſcuffle. This is it that makes Men ſo oft ſhift their Sails, that they may run before every Wind that blows. If Times grow rough and tempeſtuous, and they muſt throw over board, either their Gain or their Godlineſs; this perſuades them to make ſhipwreck of Faith and a good Conſcience, only that they may bear up in this World, tho' they ſink hereafter. Now, what deplorable Folly is this! When thy Conſcience is diſquieted with the tormenting review of paſt Crimes, what will all thy ill-gotten Wealth avail thee? Thou wilt then with extream horrour caſt thy Eyes upon all thy Treaſures of wickedneſs, when Conſcience ſhall tell thee, Thou haſt not only treaſur'd up them, but Wrath too againſt the Day of Wrath.

Fifthly; What deſperate Folly is it to purchaſe a vain World, with the loſs of our precious Souls! So our *Saviour*, Math. 16. 26. *What is a Man profited if he ſhall gain the whole World and loſe his own Soul? or what ſhall a Man give in exchange for his Soul?* O think what great loſers they muſt needs be, who loſe their Souls to gain the World, and muſt at laſt loſe the World too, together with their Souls! This is the only thing that damns Men, that they prefer the Pleaſures, Honours, Profits, and pitiful Nothings of this World, before their precious and immortal Souls, which are more worth than ten thouſand Worlds. What is this but a ſtupidity as groſs as that of the old Heathens, to make a vile Worm our God, and ſacrifice an Ox to it; or a Monſter our God, and ſacrifice a Man to it? Think how dreadful and grating will be the reflexions of Worldlings in Hell, to conſider that there they muſt lie and burn to Eternity, for their inordinate love to that World, of which they have nothing left them beſides the bitter remembrance. What will it then avail them that they have lived here in Eaſe and Delights, when all their Mirth ſhall be turned into Groans and Howlings? What will all their Treaſures and Riches avail them, when theſe ſhall be melted down about them, to encreaſe their Torment? Believe it, 'tis ſad to be left to the conviction of that Day, when the Vanity of Earth ſhall appear in the Torments of Hell. Be perſuaded therefore, as you have renounced it, in all its Pomps and Vanities, when you gave up your Names to Chriſtianity, ſo to renounce it likewiſe in your Lives; habitually, at all times, by ſitting looſe from it, and living above it; and actually, whenſoever God calls for any of your temporal Enjoyments, that is, when you cannot keep them without wounding your Conſciences, and hazarding your Souls.

Thirdly; Another Uſe may be this, If the World be thus vain and empty, why then ſhould we pride our ſelves in, or prize our ſelves by any poor enjoyments of it? How fooliſh is it to account thy ſelf a better Man than another, only becauſe thy Dunghil is a little bigger than his! Theſe things are not at all to be reckoned into the value and worth of a Man: they are all without thee, and concern thee no more than fine Cloaths do the Health or Strength of the Body. 'Tis Wealth indeed that makes all the noiſe and buſtle in the World, and challengeth all the reſpect and honour to it ſelf; and the ignorant Vulgar, whoſe Eyes are dazled with Pomp and Bravery, pay it with a ſtupid and aſtoniſh'd Reverence. Yet know, that it is but thy Silks and Velvet, thy Lands or thy Retinue and Servants, they venerate, not thee: and if thou think'ſt otherwiſe, thou art as juſtly ridiculous, as that Aſs in the Apologue, that grew very gravely proud, and took ſtate when the People fell proſtrate before him, adoring not him but the Idol he carried.

Thoſe things which belong to the perfection of a Man, are all within him: Knowledge, and Wiſdom, and Temperance, a ſerene Mind and calm Affections, an inflexible Vertue, and a Soul conſtant and true to it ſelf in all Occurrences. Give me ſuch an one that can ſtand firm and unſhaken upon his own Baſis, when the whole World totters; that knows what is juſt and honeſt, and dares do it; that is Maſter of his own Paſſions, and ſcorns to be a Slave to another's; ſuch an one in his Rags and Poverty, is a far better Man than thoſe gay things, who owe all their Parts, and Wiſdom, and Vertue, to their Rentals, and whoſe Tenants and Stewards bring them in the yearly Revenue of their Reputation. But then ſuppoſe this excellent Perſon indowed with Divine Grace, and the true Fear and Love of God, and this will exalt him above the higheſt and greateſt of other Men, as far as they themſelves are above the vileſt of Beaſts, *Solomon* tells us, Prov. 10. 20. *That the Heart of the Wicked is little worth*; it is

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of no price nor value; and ſhall his Eſtate be, when his Heart is not? Indeed nothing makes us rich as Men, but Wiſdom, and Vertue; nor as Chriſtians, but Piety and Holineſs. And in theſe which are the only true and ſubſtantial Riches, the pooreſt Chriſtian may vie ſtakes with all the World. Drop millions of Gold, boundleſs Revenues, ample Territories, Crowns and Scepters, and a poor contemptible Chriſtian lays his one God againſt all theſe, and beggers them.

Fourthly; If the World and all the Enjoyments of it be thus vain, * this ſhould fortifie us againſt the fear of Death, which can deprive us of nothing but what is both vain and vexatious. 4.

* Μάλιστα σε εὐχολον πρὸς τὸν θάνατον ποιήσει ἡ ἐπίσασις, ἢ ἐπὶ τὰ ὑποκείμενα ὧν μέλλεις ἀφίσασθαι. Anton. *l.* 9. *s.* 3. *Amalis mors abducit, non à bonis, verum ſi quærimus. Hoc quidem à Cyrenaico Hegiſia ſic copioſe diſputatur, ut is à rege Ptolæmeo prohibitus eſſe dicatur illa in ſcholis dicere, quod multi his auditis, mortem ſibi ipſa conſciſcerent.* Cic. Tuſ. quæſt. l 1.

Life is nothing elſe but an huddle of Buſineſs, a great ſwarm of Employments, that have more ſtings in them than Honey. If we be great, we are but the larger Hives for Cares; if honourable, we are but raiſed above others to be the more weather-beaten. An high degree in this World, doth but ſhelter other Mens Cares under our Wings, and adopt other Mens Troubles, as a wretched ſupplement to our own. If our Eſtate be mean and low, as it expoſeth us to Contempt and Injuries, ſo it engageth us to reſcue our ſelves from the preſſures of Poverty by our own ſweat and induſtry. Thoſe few things that are neceſſary to a comfortable ſubſiſtence in the World, will yet coſt us care and labour, an aking Heart, and a weary Hand; and this turns our Bread into Stones, and our Fiſh into Scorpions. If we have too much Buſineſs in the World, our Callings become a Burthen or Temptation to us: And if we have none, we become a Burthen to our ſelves and to others. God hath written Vanity and Vexation upon every Condition; and if his Providence create not Troubles for us, yet our own Folly will. Thus hath Man made himſelf a Slave and Drudge to the World, over which God hath made him Lord.

Why then ſhould Death be ſo terrible, which comes only to eaſe us of our burthen, to ſtroak the ſweat from our Brows, and to give us a profound Reſt from all our Labours in the Bed of the Grave? *There* (as *Job* ſaith) *the weary be at reſt*; and all Cares and Troubles vaniſh, as ſoon as our Heads touch that Pillow. *There is no Work nor Device in the Grave whither we are going*; but a deep Repoſe, a ſecure Retirement, where none of the Vexations of this Life ſhall ever find us. Job 3. 17.

And as it frees us from all the Cares, ſo from all the Sorrows of this World. What is our Life but a Bubble? Our Sighs are the Air, and our Tears the Water that make it. The firſt poſſeſſion that we take of this World, is by crying: And there is nothing in it that we hold by a ſurer tenure than our Griefs. Tears are the Inheritance of our Eyes, either our Sins call for them or our Sufferings, and nothing can dry them up but the Duſt of the Grave. Sometimes we loſe a Friend, or near Relation; the Tribute we owe their Memory muſt be paid down in Tears. Sometimes their ungodly Practices torment us, when by their Lewdneſs and Debaucheries they are loſt both to their own Intereſts, and our Hopes. Sometimes compaſſion of other Mens Sufferings, affects us with a tender Sorrow; and as if we had not grief enough ſpringing up out of our own Bowels, we call in foreign Succours to augment the Score. And many times tedious and lingring Sickneſſes waſte us, grinding Pains rack and torture us, which were far the more intolerable, but that they haſten on that Death, that puts an end and period to all a Chriſtian's Miſeries. We are not concerned in the Grave, at the loſs of ſome Friends, nor the evil Courſes of others; what Calamities befal the World, or thoſe whom we loved deareſt in it: There it troubles us not, tho' Preferment go by the merit of Flattery and Baſeneſs, while the generous and gallant Soul ſtarves thro' the mere rigour of his Vertue. It concerns us nothing what ſtinking Breath blaſts our good Name; or what unworthy Foot treads upon our Grave. Here a little pain moleſts us; but there whole Limbs rot, and fall off, and crumble into Duſt, without at all diſturbing that quiet Reſt, that buries all the Cares and Sorrows of this Life in ſilence and oblivion. Where then is the dreadfulneſs of Death, which only frees us from the Troubles and Croſſes of a wretched Life? It is unreaſonable to complain of that Change, which delivers us from a World, of which we are ſtill complaining: And it is childiſh to quarrel at that Hand which undreſſes us, and ſtrips off our uneaſie Garments, only to lay us to ſleep.

Laſtly; If the World be ſo vain and empty, we may learn to be well contented with our preſent State and Condition, whatſoever it be. It hath been fully demonſtra- 5.

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ted, that there can be no compleat ſatisfaction in any Eſtate: And why then ſhould we deſire change? The great ground of Diſcontent, is not our Wants, but our Deſires. * There is ſcarce any condition in the World ſo low, but may ſatisfie our Wants: And there is no Condition ſo high as can ſatisfie our Deſires. If we live according to the Law of Nature and Reaſon, we ſhall never be poor; but if we live according to fond Opinion and Fancy, we ſhall never be Rich. That which we have, be it never ſo little, is full as ſatisfactory as that which we hope for, be it never ſo great. For *Vanity, and vexation of Spirit*, is paſt upon all that is in the World, whether it be more or leſs.

* Οὐ δ' εἰς ἡ ἐπὶ πένης εἰς τὰ ἀναγκαῖα. Clem. Alex. Pæd. l. 2. c. 2. *Quod ſatiare poteſt dives natura miniſtrat. Quod docet infrænis gloria ſine caret.* Petr.

And therefore, O Chriſtian, thou mayeſt well bear a narrow ſtint in the things of this World. If God reduce thee to a morſel of Bread, and cup of Water, it is enough: This will ſuffice to bear thy Charges to Heaven; or if this too ſhould fail, thy Journey will only be the ſhorter. Poſſibly God keeps thee ſhort in Vanities, that he might beſtow upon thee that which is a ſolid and ſubſtantial Good. The *Pſalmiſt* tells us, *Pſalm.* 68. 9. that God *daily loads us with his Benefits.* Tho' ſome may have more than others, yet every one hath his Load, as much as he can carry. Every Veſſel cannot bear up with the like Sail; and therefore God, to keep us from overſetting, puts on ſo much as will ſafeſt bring us to Heaven, our deſired Port.

* Pſ. 55. 22. Let us therefore *caſt theſe Cares and Burthens upon him who hath* * *promiſed to ſuſtain us*, and turn the ſtream of our Deſires Heavenward, where alone we can find permanent and ſatisfactory Good. † Walk humbly with God, keep your ſelves always in an awful fear of his dread Majeſty; be conſtant in the exerciſe of Grace, and the performance of Duty: Theſe are the only things exempted from Vanity and Vexation; in theſe alone can the Soul find true Reſt and Contentment. And therefore *Solomon*, after he had pierc'd and ſearch'd through all the World, and pronounced Riches, Strength, Beauty, Wiſdom, Learning, and all to be *Vanity, and vexation of Spirit*; he reſts himſelf in the Cloſe, and tells us, *cap.* 12. 13. *Let us hear the Concluſion of the whole Matter: Fear God, and keep his Commandments, for this is the whole of Man:* It is his whole Duty, and his only Happineſs in this Life.

† Ὅλον κενὸν· τί ἂν δεῖ τοῦτο ὃ δεῖ σπουδὴν εἰσφέρεσθαι; Ἔν τοῦτο διάνοια δίκαια, καὶ πράξεις κοινωνικαὶ, καὶ λόγος οἷος μήποτε διαφθαρῆναι καὶ διάθεσις ἀσπαζομένη πᾶν τὸ συμβαῖνον ὡς ἀναγκαῖον, ὡς γνώριμον, ὡς ἀπ' ἀρχῆς τοιαύτης καὶ πηγῆς ῥέον. Ἐκὼν σεαυτὸν τῇ κλωθοῖ συνεπιδίδου, παρέχων σωθῆναι οἷς ποιεῖ ποτε παρασήμασι βούλεται. Antonin. l. 4. § 22.

To

To the RIGHT HONOURABLE

The LADY

Katharine Brook.

MADAM,

THE Deſire of your dying Son brought me into the Pulpit, and now your Ladiſhip's Commands into the Preſs. I could heartily wiſh, that the tender of my Obedience in this Addreſs might not make one among your too many ſad Remembrancers, nor give you cauſe to lament him as well in the Preſs as in the Grave, as here propounded, a Pattern for our Life, as well as made by God an Example of our Death. But, Madam, *when you have wept over this dear Loſs in all the forms ſo great a Sorrow as yours could repreſent, this ſmall Piece will, I fear, prove ſo unhappy, as to give you his Memory in a new ſhape, and thereby lay a new ſcene for Grief. The Neceſſity and Uſefulneſs of this Subject of Mortality, are, I am confident, ſufficient to recommend it to your acceptance; and if any thing make it unwelcome, it muſt be that which gives you too great a Title to it, the nearneſs of the Inſtance: an Inſtance ſo near, that ſeems like the ſmiting of one half to bid the other prepare.*

The Loſs is confeſſedly great, vaſt as our Hopes, and general as our Sorrows. Indeed to look upon moderate Loſſes through Tears, is as ill a way to make a right Judgment of them, as it is to take the dimenſions of Objects through Water, which always reflects them greater or nearer than in truth they are. But yours, Madam, *is ſo truly extraordinary, and of ſuch publick Concernment, that it muſt needs fall below its juſt Eſtimate, if it be not judged through more than your own Tears and Grief. The Church and State join with you, and each of them deplores as a Loſs at preſent, whatſoever ſo great Vertues and Endowments as his prompted them to expect hereafter. The Right Eye of the Kingdom runs down with Tears:*

All that knew him, and had the Honour and Happineſs of ſo great an Example, pay down that Tribute in Sorrow, to his Memory, which they owed of Love and Service to his Perſon.

But, Madam, *it is in vain to nouriſh ſad Thoughts, by conjecturing to what height he might have attained, if Years had not been wanting to his Merits; for though his flouriſhing Hopes gave earneſt of ſomewhat moſt excellent and perfect, yet hath he now far out-ſtript even thoſe Hopes, and inſtead of a great Man on Earth, is become a glorious Saint in Heaven: And certainly we have no juſt Cauſe to quarrel the Divine Providence, for not taking our Method to advance him.*

That God would preſerve your Noble Sons yet remaining, and lengthen out their Lives to fill up their deceaſed Brother's Hopes, and their own too, that you may find no other miſs but in Number; that God would ſanctifie this heavy Stroke both to you and them, and fit you for that Laſt which alone can come nearer, is the Prayer of,

MADAM,

Hackney, *Oct.* 4. 1662.

Your Ladiſhip's moſt humble and obedient Servant,

EZEKIEL HOPKINS.

A

Funeral Sermon.

Eccleſiaſtes IX. 5.

For the Living know that they ſhall die.

LIFE, whether an active ſpark ſtruck out from the meeting of Soul and Body together, or whatſoever ſprightful and buſie thing elſe it be, is the higheſt perfection of Corporeal Beings, becauſe the neareſt reſemblance of the Divine.

The Variety of its Motions, the Multiplicity of its Functions, the ſecret conveyance of its influences through thoſe hidden Channels of the Organs, into the ſeveral parts of the Body, give it a preeminence above all that the inanimate greatneſs or luſtre of other things can attain unto. Upon this very account Philoſophy teacheth us, that the leaſt fly, though it be nothing but Duſt animated by the Sun, is yet of greater excellency than the Sun it ſelf; and *Sampſon*'s Bees than the Lyon that bred them. Theſe ſlight and contemptible Creatures, which ſerve for little elſe than to ſhew the World in how ſmall a Room God can encloſe the ſprings and engines of ſuch various Motions, have yet a perfection beyond all the large Volumes of the Heavens, and the Light and Duration of all the Stars in them: Upon theſe Principles *Solomon* making a Compariſon, in the verſe immediately preceeding the Text, between lifeleſs and living things, prefers the meaneſt of theſe before the beſt and nobleſt of the other: *A living Dog is better than a dead Lyon.*

This though it be true of all Creatures in general, yet the accommodation of it is here more particularly intended unto Man; and the deſign of the Spirit of God is, to ſhew that Life hath a vaſt Prerogative above Death. One would think it ſtrange, that there ſhould need ſo much ſolemnity, ſuch a train of preparatives, reaſons, and ſimilitudes to uſher in a concluſion ſo obvious and undoubted as this is, that it is better to live than to die. And yet, if we obſerve it, the method of the Holy Ghoſt is much ſtranger in confirming ſo plain a *Theſis* by an abſtruſe Argument, the Argument we have in the Text: *For the living know that they ſhall die:* Becauſe we know that we muſt die, therefore it is better to live.

This might ſeem ſomewhat an harſh kind of Argumentation, were it not, that as to die is the laſt period, ſo to die well, and breath out an holy Soul into the arms of a merciful God, is the greateſt end of Life: This advantage have the living. The dead can die no more; *For it is appointed unto Men once to die:* nor, if they err in this, can they ever recal or amend it. This is that warfare, as the Wiſeman calls it, in which we cannot twice miſtake. But it is the privilege of the living, that knowing the frailty of their lives, and the certainty of their diſſolution, they may by repentance and holineſs, ſo prepare themſelves for death as to make it only an happy tranſition from a Temporal to an Eternal Life, and an inlet into endleſs Bliſs and Joy. So that if we briefly gather up the Sum and Force of the reaſon, we may find that it lies thus: It is better to live than die, becauſe *the living know that they ſhall die*, and the knowledge and expectation of our death is the moſt likely

Heb. 9. 27. Eccleſ. 8. 8.

likely means to engage us to live in ſuch conſtant holineſs and preparatien, as that after death we may live in eternal Glory and Happineſs.

The words, though they are thus obſcure in their coherence, yet in themſelves and their own proper and genuine ſenſe, are very clear and perſpicuous. They contain in them the Judgment that the living paſs upon their own Mortality; and as they lie before us, cannot be ſo much as ſuſpected of any difficulty. I ſhall therefore, waving all other enquiries, make only theſe two.

I. *Firſt*, Whence it is, that the living attain the ſure and infallible knowledge of their own death.

II. *Secondly*, Whence it proceeds, that though all Men generally know that they ſhall die, yet ſo few do ſeriouſly and in good earneſt prepare themſelves for it.

1. To the firſt, I anſwer; there be many things from whence we may collect the neceſſity of dying. I ſhall pretermit divers, and only ſpeak to theſe following.

We may collect it by thoſe Harbingers and Forerunners of Death, Diſeaſes, Pains, and natural Decays, which are incident to all Men. Man is compounded of the contrary and jarring qualities of Heat, and Cold, Drought and Moiſture; which are always waging an inteſtine War within him. Health is the equal balance of theſe Contrarieties; when they are ſo temper'd together, the more active with the more reſiſting, that neither of them can get the Victory over the other. And therefore ſome ſuppoſe that *Adam* (who doubtleſs was created in the higheſt perfection of natural Health and Strength) had all theſe mixed *ad pondus*, in ſo even a temper, that none of them could naturally ſway him to Corruption; and that God then inflicted the Death he threatned, when upon the firſt Tranſgreſſion he turned the evenneſs of his Conſtitution, and thereby brought him into a mortal State. Sickneſs is nothing elſe but a predominant Faction in a Man's Temper, which, as Rebellions uſe to do, raiſeth it ſelf upon the ruin of the whole. As God ſlackens the reins to ſome quality in the greater World, when he intends to bring a general Calamity and Deſtruction upon it (for thus we read, that he once deſtroyed the World by a Dropſie, in the great Deluge; and that he will again deſtroy it by a Fever, in the laſt Conflagration) ſo likewiſe in Man, who is the leſſer World, God doth ſometimes let looſe the reins, and gives ſome of his natural qualities an unnatural predominancy; and either floods him with Dropſies, or burns him with Fevers, or numns him with Palſies, Lethargies and Epilepſies, and by other innumerable Diſeaſes ſo ravageth his Health and Vigour, his Youth and Beauty, that he becomes a Ghoſt, before yet he be a Corps.

Yea thoſe who have had no ſuch violent Aſſaults as theſe, yet find their decays grow up together with their Years. *Solomon* hath given us an elegant deſcription of them, *Eccleſ.* 12. from the ſecond to the ſeventh Verſe. Dimneſs of ſight, deafneſs of hearing, weakneſs and trembling of limbs, ſluggiſhneſs of ſpirits, chilneſs of blood, loſs of appetite and deſires; and a whole Hoſpital of other incurable Diſeaſes are the attendants of old Age, which is it ſelf the moſt incurable of all: that the very length of living may be argument enough of the neceſſity of dying. This is that heavy burthen that bows down all on whom it lies, that makes them go ſtooping to the Ground, as if it would bid them contemplate what they are, in the duſt, and conſider their mortality in that earth into which they muſt ſhortly fall. All theſe are as ſo many Harbingers of Death ſent before to bid us prepare, for that the King of Terrours cannot be long after.

2. The obſervation of Death's univerſal Empire over all other things, and over all other Men, may give us a certain knowledge that we alſo muſt ſhortly die. If we conſider the viciſſitudes of natural things, we ſhall find that Death reigns in all of them. The Day dies into Night, Summer into Winter; Time it ſelf that deſtroys all things, yet dies continually, nor can exiſt one minute together. Our very life is nothing elſe but a ſucceſſion of dying: every day and hour wears away part of it, and ſo far as it is already ſpent, ſo far are we already dead and buried: ſo that the longeſt liver hath no more but that he is longer a dying than others. This indeed is only to die ſucceſſively, but that fatal and final ſtroke is coming, when we ſhall no more live nor die. All others have felt it, and therefore *David* calls Death *the way of all the Earth.* We need no other proof of this than to ſearch into the

the Records of the Grave; there lie the rich and poor, the noble and ignoble, the wiſe and fooliſh, the holy and profane, the rubbiſh of a thouſand Generations heaped one upon another; and this truth, that all muſt die, is written indelibly even in their duſt.

The whole World is but a great Charnel-houſe: Our very Graves were once living: we dig through our Forefathers, and muſt ſhortly become Earth our ſelves, to bury our Poſterity. So thick ſown are the Carcaſſes of all the Ages ſince the Creation, as were enough to dung the whole face of the Earth with their Fleſh, and pave it with their Bones. Are not we of the ſame Mould with them? Hath not God's hand kneaded us out of the ſame Clay, and may not his finger crumble us into the ſame Duſt? Certainly, the Cords of our Earthly Tabernacle may be as eaſily unlooſed, or cut aſunder, as theirs.

We read but of two only of all Mankind exempted, by a peculiar Grace and Privilege, from this Law of Death, and they were *Enoch* and *Elias*. God ſtrangely tackt their temporal and eternal life together, and made their time flow into eternity without any ſtop or interruption; like Rivers that glide along into the Sea with a free and undiſturbed courſe; whilſt ours muſt firſt ſink, and find a paſſage under ground.

Thirdly, We may certainly know our ſelves mortal, by knowing our ſelves ſinful Creatures. There is a double neceſſity of Death upon the account of Sin: 1. As a Puniſhment; 2. As a Purgation of it. III.

It is neceſſary as a Puniſhment of Sin, that that primitive Threatning might be fulfilled, *Gen.* 2. 17. *In the day that thou eateſt thereof thou ſhalt ſurely dye.* Hereby the Juſtice of God ſtands engaged to inflict Death upon every Tranſgreſſour: And to this it is that the Apoſtle aſcribes it, *Rom.* 5. 12. *By ſin death entred into the world, and death paſſed upon all men, becauſe that all have ſinned.* Death therefore is not ſo much a debt due to Nature, as to the avenging Juſtice of God, and befals us rather by his ordination and appointment, than by any natural neceſſity. *It is appointed unto men once to dye*, Heb. 9. 27. And this appears, in that Man was at firſt created in pure Nature, yet in a deathleſs ſtate. 'Tis true, that *Adam*, even before he fell, had in him the Contemperation of the ſame contrary Qualities as now we have, and ſo, at leaſt, had alſo the remote principles of Death and Diſſolution: But probably either theſe were ſo harmoniouſly mixed, as that there was no tendency to a Diſſolution; or elſe he was created with ſuch a privilege, that by eating of the Tree of Life, or by the Command of his own Will, to which all his inferiour Faculties were then perfectly ſubject, he might ſway and over-rule the Jars and Diſcords of an elemental Conſtitution, and continue himſelf in Life, as long as he ſhould continue himſelf in Obedience.

So then, it is not primarily Man's Nature, but Man's Sin, and the Curſe of the Law taking hold upon him, that hath brought in this neceſſity of dying. But yet the Juſtice of God doth not inflict it as a Puniſhment upon all; for Death, under the ſtrict notion of a Puniſhment, is proper only to wicked Men and Unbelievers, who are left to bear the Curſe of the Law in their own Perſons, and to ſatisfie offended Juſtice in their own Sufferings. As to Believers, Chriſt hath undertaken and eluctated for them all that was penal. *He hath born the whole curſe of the law, being made a curſe for us*, Gal. 3. 13.

So that now, to thoſe who believe it is no more a Puniſhment, but only a Purgation. And were it not that God hath thus altered the quality of it, making it the greateſt means of Sanctification in the World, thereby turning that which was a Curſe into a Bleſſing, it might probably be maintained, that Faith in the Death of Chriſt would ſuperſede all neceſſity of dying, and make us not only righteous, but immortal. But God hath other Ends in the inflicting of Death, beſides the Satisfaction of his Juſtice: He makes uſe of it for the purging of his People from the Relicks of their Corruption; and 'tis the only Purgatory they muſt ever undergo. Sin hath taken a Leaſe of our Souls, and holds them by our own Lives: It will be in us to the laſt Gaſp; and as the Heart is the laſt that dies, ſo is that Corruption that lodgeth in it: But then dye it muſt. God hath ſo graciouſly ordered it, that though Death came into the World by Sin, yet Sin it ſelf ſhall be aboliſh'd out of it by Death. And as Sea-water loſeth its Brackiſhneſs when percolated through the Earth, and becomes ſweet and wholſome; ſo a Chriſtian, when he is ſtrained through the Grave loſeth all his Brackiſhneſs, all his Dregs and Scum, and becomes pure and holy, fit for the enjoyment of a pure and holy God. This is his final Victory; this is the

deciding ſtroke between him and all his ſpiritual Enemies. When he hath been long ſtruggling (with too little ſucceſs) againſt Sin and Satan, and is ready to faint, and deſpond, in the Conflict, Death comes in, ſent as an Auxiliary from God, and gives him both the day and the triumph. Certainly he cannot but count it a good office done him, to have his earthly houſe pull'd down upon ſo many of his uncircumciſed Foes, though it cruſh him too in the Fall.

Thus hath God brought over Death, which was before a formidable Enemy, to be of a Believer's Party: ſo that though it had its ſting and ſtrength, its very Being from Sin, yet it proves the moſt effectual means for the deſtruction of Sin. As Worms when they creep into their holes leave a ſlimy dirt about them; ſo it is with a Chriſtian; when he dyes he leaves his Sin, his Filth and Corruption, all at the Grave's mouth. There he leaves them, and his Soul, got free from that clog, mounts up into a bleſſed Eternity, where it is for ever fixt and perfected in Holineſs, where there is no Object to tempt, nor Corruption to betray. No ſteam of any Luſt ſhall there riſe to cloud our beatificial Viſion of God, ſuch as do here too often darken the eye both of our Reaſon and our Faith: we ſhall no more caſt kind glances upon our Sins, nor no more know a wavering and hovering deſire after them. Oh bleſſed Neceſſity! when the Soul ſhall be for ever tied up to one all-ſatisfying good! when it ſhall with as natural a proneneſs, and vehement ardour, love and delight in God, as it loves it ſelf, and delights in its own happineſs! And why then ſhould we deſire to linger here below, and to ſpin out a miſerable Life, whereof Sin and Sorrow will ſtill have the greateſt ſhare? Here the beſt of us are engaged in perpetual Quarrels between Sin and Grace, the one will not yield, and the other cannot; Corruption compels one way, and Grace commands another: haſte therefore, O Chriſtian, out of this ſcuffle, make haſte to Heaven, and there this Controverſie ſhall be for ever decided. There we ſhall no more live in fear of new Sins, nor in ſorrow for old, but all ſorrow and ſighing ſhall ceaſe, all tears ſhall be wiped from our Eyes, and all Sin rooted out of our hearts. And upon this account Death is neceſſary.

Now though by theſe, and other ſuch like conſiderations, we may arrive at a certain knowledge that we ſhall dye, yet the particular circumſtances of the time, and manner of our Death is known to God only.

Some have a little before their deceaſe, given ſecret preſages of theſe things, as I am informed this honourable perſon did. Whence theſe proceed will not be neceſſary here to enquire. Poſſibly they may be only fortuitous and caſual: the event may make thoſe things paſs for predictions which were only ſpoken at random. Or if they ſeem too punctual to be ſuch, the beſt account that I can give is this, that Death being about to unlooſe thoſe ſecret and ſweet bands, thoſe vital knots that tie our Souls and Bodies together, we begin to grow more unconfined in our knowledge, as well as our being; and receive intelligencies of things after another way, than by the dull conveyance of ſenſe. There is now that duſt and aſhes in the eye of the Soul that hinder it from diſcovering futurities; but when death is blowing this away, it begins to know after its own manner; and receives at leaſt ſome obſcure and glimmering hints of thoſe Objects which ſenſe could never adminiſter. And hence poſſibly may proceed thoſe ſtrange prophetick ſpeeches that many have given out concerning their own Death. But when-ſoever they are, God doth ordinarily reſerve the exact knowledge of theſe things to himſelf.

1. *Firſt*, He only knows the critical and punctual time of our Death, for he hath determined it to a very moment. It is God that turns up our Glaſs, that puts ſuch a Meaſure of Sand into it, and no more, and hath prefixt that it ſhall run ſuch a Time and no longer. It is he that hath written our Names upon ſo many Days and Hours as we ſhall live, as upon ſo many leaves of his Book; and it is impoſſible for us to turn over that Day or Hour that hath not our Names written upon it, from all Eternity. Now this Book of Life, God hath written in an hand that is not legible by us. We know not the Tale of Days that he hath appointed us, but this we know, that we ſhall fulfil, and cannot exceed them. He hath ſet us our Bounds of living, beyond which we cannot paſs. The Infant that dies as ſoon as it ſeeth the light hath fill'd up its appointed time, as well as he that lives to decrepid Age. And therefore, though God be ſaid in Scripture to cut off ſome Men in the midſt of their Days; this muſt not be ſo underſtood, as if there were remaining in all the ſtore of Time any Days that were due to them; but only it denotes, either that God cuts them

them off in the full Strength and Vigour of their Years, when they might, according to humane probability, have lived much longer, or elſe comparing the ſhortneſs of their Life, with the length of others, God ſeems to break it off in the middle before he had finiſht it. Indeed moſt Men do themſelves ſhorten their own lives; ſome by intemperance are ſtill ſhaking their Glaſs to make it run the faſter, and others break it at once by violence; yet all live as long as God had decreed, though not ſo long as was their duty. I ſhall not farther diſpute whether the term of Life be fixt or moveable. *Job*, methinks, hath clearly ſtated and determined the Queſtion, *Job* 7. 1. *Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth? are not his days alſo like the days of an hireling?* An hireling hath his Days of prefixt ſervice, and when they are expired, he is diſcharg'd from his labour, ſo *Job* 14. 5. *His days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou haſt appointed his bounds that he cannot paſs.* It is true however, though God hath thus numbred out our Days, yet there are means proper to prolong our lives beyond the term that God hath fixt in his Decree, and ſuch as would prove available if applied: whoever dies might have lived longer, had the right means been uſed. As *Martha* ſaid to Chriſt; *Lord if thou hadſt been here my Brother had not died:* So we may ſay, if ſuch means and remedies had been applied, death might have been prevented. But withal we muſt obſerve, that that God who hath prefixed to every one his term of Life, hath likewiſe ordained in his own Counſel and purpoſe, that thoſe means which are proper to prolong it beyond that term, ſhall through ſome unavoidable miſtake or miſhap, either not be known, or not uſed. This may be a ſupport unto us againſt Fears of our own, and Grief for the Death of others; all our times are in God's hands, he meaſures out every Day to us; and as he hath appointed the bounds, over which we ſhall not paſs; ſo he hath appointed that we ſhall certainly reach them. His Providence diſpoſeth of the meaneſt and ſmalleſt concernments of Man's Life, and therefore much more of Life it ſelf: and if an hair of our Heads cannot, much leſs then ſhall we our ſelves, fall to the Ground without our Heavenly Father. Luke 11. 21.

Secondly, As we know not the time, ſo neither the particular manner of our Death, whether it ſhall be ſudden, or foreſeen; by Diſeaſe, or Caſualty: whether the Thread of Life ſhall be ſnapt in pieces by ſome unexpected Accident, or worn and fretted away by ſome lingring Conſumption, or burnt aſunder by ſome fiery Fever. In what manner and ſhape our Death will appear to us we know not; this is a ſecret of God's own Breaſt. But whatever the ſhape be, if we endeavour by an holy Life to prepare our ſelves for it, it ſhall not be frightful nor terrible to us. II.

But truly, the generality of the World are ſo little careful to prepare for their Death, as if they were privileged Perſons, and had a protection given them from that Arreſt. Though they ſee thouſands fall before them, though Death mows down their Friends and Relations round about them, yet they live ſo ſecure and confident, as if they were not at all concerned in thoſe Examples, as if God's hand cut off others only to make the more room for them in the World. Who is there ſo fool-hardy, that ſtanding near the mark of an Archer, and ſeeing one Arrow fly over his Head, another light at his Feet; one glance by his right, another by his left Hand, that will not at length bethink himſelf of his danger, that by the very next he alſo may be ſhot and ſlain. Man is this mark at which Death is continually ſhooting, ſometimes the Arrow flies over our Heads, and ſlays ſome great Perſon, our Superiour; ſometimes it lights at our Feet, when it kills a Child or Servant, or thoſe who are our inferiours: Sometimes it paſſeth by our left Hand, and kills an Enemy, at whoſe death poſſibly we rejoyce; and anon it ſtrikes the Friend of our right Hand: Though we ſee all this; though we ſee our Friends and Foes, thoſe of all States and Ages drop down dead round about us, yet are we ſtill as frolick and careleſs, as if this nothing at all concerned us; whereas poſſibly the very next Arrow may ſtrike us through the Heart dead upon the Place. 'Tis a ſtrange and brutiſh Sottiſhneſs, that ſo many ſpectacles of Mortality cannot move.

We read of that Victorious Emperor *Charles* the Vth. that to engrave the deeper apprehenſions of his Death, he cauſed his own Funerals to be ſolemnized, while he was yet living. He laid himſelf down in his Tomb, and had that rare fate of great Perſons, to be lamented with true tears; at leaſt his own. *Hoc videlicet rudimento* (as the Hiſtorian ſpeaks) *Carolus vicinæ jam morti proludebat.* If it were any help to prepare him to dye at laſt really, by dying thus firſt in Emblem, we may almoſt daily *Strada* Bel. Belg. lib. 1.

daily have the ſame. 'Twill be no great miſtake to account every Funeral we attend on to be our own. Let us imagine our ſelves nailed up in the Coffin, laid in the Grave, covered over with Earth, and putrifying to Worms and Dirt; this is only but a few days to anticipate what ſhall be. Not a Grave opens its mouth, but it plainly ſpeaks thus much, that we are mortal and periſhing: not a rotten Bone, nor dead Scull is ſcattered about it, but tell us we muſt ſhortly take up our abode with them, in the ſame darkneſs and corruption. And if upon every ſuch ſad occaſion we make no particular application of it to our ſelves, we not only loſe our Friends lives but their very deaths too, yet herein are we generally faulty: When God ſnatcheth them from us, we uſually reflect more upon the loſs, than the example; and thereby as he deprives us of the comfort we had in their lives, ſo we deprive our ſelves of the inſtruction and benefit we might have by their Deaths. There are indeed few (unleſs it be thoſe who have quite diveſted themſelves of humanity) but will ſometimes conſider their frail and mortal ſtate; at leaſt, when they ſee a pattern of it before their Eyes. When they ſee departing Pangs, diſtorted Eyes, quivering Limbs, the wan and ghaſtly Corps, the image of Death in all its lively Terrours; if they have any remainders of natural ſoftneſs left, it muſt needs ſtrike them with Penſiveneſs, to think that one day this muſt be their own caſe; ſhortly all this muſt be acted over upon themſelves. But no ſooner is the dead interred, and the Grave fill'd, than all theſe ſage and ſerious thoughts vaniſh, and they return again to the ſame glut of luſt and pleaſures as before.

2. Let us therefore conſider (which was the ſecond General propounded) whence it proceeds that Men are ſo ſtupidly irrational, that though they all know they ſhall dye, yet ſo few ſeriouſly prepare themſelves for it. Perhaps, upon enquiry, we ſhall find the cauſes of it to lye in theſe following particulars.

1. *Firſt*, Men are generally ſo immerſt in the buſineſs and pleaſures of Life, that theſe ſwallow up all ſerious thoughts of Death, and preparations for it. They are employed about other things: like an heap of *Ants* that are buſily toiling to get in their proviſion, without regarding the Foot that's ready to cruſh them. Such are the impertinent and vain cares of Men: one contrives how he may melt away his days in luxury and pleaſure; how he may by variety and choice of invented delights imp the wings of Time, and make the ſlow days and hours roll away faſter over him. 'Tis not likely theſe ſhould entertain any ſober thoughts of dying, who thus like Prodigals laviſh out their time, as if they could never ſee the bottom of it, and their ſtock could never be exhauſted. The unconcerning vanities of Viſits and Complements divide their days; and the only uſe they make of their time is to ſtudy how they may paſs it: till their end comes upon them unthought of, and ſowre Death cuts them off in the midſt of all their fooliſh pleaſures.

Some are buſily climbing up the ſteep aſcent of Honour and Dignity, and are ſo wholly engaged in getting Promotions and new Titles, that they forget their old ſtile of mortal Creatures. They ſpend their lives in purſuing a puff of wind, an airy fantaſtick thing, depending meerly upon the fond and irrational opinion of the giddy multitude. As Counters, which as they are placed, ſtand for ſcores, or hundreds, or thouſands; but are all of the ſame value when hudled together: ſo truly, the Honours which the ambitious and gallant Spirits of the World do ſo paſſionately court, are as fictitious as theſe, depending meerly upon common eſteem. When Death comes to ſhuffle and huddle the Noble and Ignoble together in the Grave, what becomes of all the diſtance, and difference that was between them? Will the duſt and aſhes of the one make obeyſance then, or pay reſpect to the duſt and aſhes of the other?

Others are plotting, with the Fool, how they may grow rich, and lay up Goods for many Years, when yet they know not whether God will not take away their Souls this very Night; and then what remains to them of all that which they have ſcraped together? Such Men, methinks, may be well compared to Sumpter-Horſes: they are laden with a rich Treaſure, and attended with a numerous Train of Servants; but at Night when their Load is taken off, what remains to them of all their Carriage, but only the ſtripes and wearineſs of the day? Vain Men! are theſe the great important things you ſet your hearts upon? Muſt the World drink up all your thoughts, and Death that will ſhortly ſnatch you from all the Enjoyments of it be forgotten? Yet ſo brutiſh are we become that though whatſoever we hold here be by the

the Death of the former owners, yet we are apt to look upon our ſelves as perpetual poſſeſſors, and never think that we muſt part with it to others, as others have done to us. The Riches and Honours, which are but the duſt and ſmoak of this World, have ſo blinded our Eyes, that we cannot diſcern the near approaches of Death: And thus while we, *Archimedes* like, are buſily drawing Projects and Deſigns in the duſt, and are wholly intent about vainer Speculations than his, we mind not the Alarm, nor perceive the Enemy is upon us, till we are ſtricken dead thro' the Reins.

Secondly, Men delay ſerious Preparations for Death, becauſe they generally look upon it as afar off. Thoſe who are young think they muſt of courſe live till they be aged; and the aged think that their decays are not ſo great and ſudden, but that they might well weather out yet a few years more. The healthy think they need not prepare till they be ſummoned; and thoſe whom God doth ſummon by diſeaſes and weakneſſes, think that yet 'tis poſſible they may eſcape them. And thus, tho' it may be God hath told us out but a few days or hours, yet we reckon very bountifully of years and ages, as if our times were not in his hands, but our own. Men would need no longer Eternity, if God ſhould defer his ſtroke till they thought themſelves old enough to die. While their Youth and Spirits revel it, and their Blood runs dancing through their veins, the thoughts of Death are not come in ſeaſon with them: 'Tis as great a *Soleciſm* to think of their Graves, as of going to Bed at Noon-day. Theſe cold and flegmatick Conſiderations are more fit for their declining years, and the Winter of their lives; and they reſolve they will then think of dying when they are choak'd up with Coughs and Catarrhs, and can ſcarce ſee a Death's-head, but through a pair of Spectacles. But what becomes of theſe Reſolutions? When Age hath ſnowed upon them, and froſt-bitten all their former Pleaſures, yet even then they find the Dalliances that paſs between their Souls and Bodies ſo ſweet, that they are very loth they ſhould be broken off; and this prompts them to think (as we are apt to believe what we deſire) that as yet they ſhall not. They hope they have ſome time more to live, and ſo drive their Death from year to year before them; and never think of dying as long as they have life enough left to think of any thing. II.

This is the verieſt dotage imaginable: For if it be true what the Naturaliſts affirm, that no grown Perſon carrieth to the Grave with him the ſame fleſh that he brought into the World, that the revolution of a few Years gradually wears away the former Body, and brings a new one in its ſtead; it is ſtrangely groſs, that they ſhould think of living much longer, who have already out-lived ſeveral Generations of themſelves; or that they ſhould not at length prepare for Death, who have already buried themſelves, it may be eight or nine times over. Diſeaſes and natural decays have for many years laid cloſe ſiege to them, routing their Guards, battering the Walls of their Fleſh, and forcing the Soul to quit the Out-works, and retire into the Heart; yet the mad deſire of living makes them hope they ſhall hold out theſe ruins of Life yet a while longer; tho' they ſee many hundred others, better manned and fortified than themſelves, taken in upon the firſt Aſſault.

We are ſcarce ſo wretchedly miſtaken about any thing, as about old Age. For firſt, we reckon it a vaſt while thither. What a ſhew do threeſcore or fourſcore years make at a diſtance? How numerous do the days and hours appear? But thoſe who have attained to them find they all glide away inſenſibly from them, and hardly know they have lived ſo long, but that they have bought ſo many Almanacks. Certainly long Life is like an Evening miſt, and ſeems far greater to us at a diſtance than when we are in it. 'Tis ſtrange how the different ſituating our ſelves will mightily alter the proſpect of our Years: while we look forward upon them from Youth, they all are repreſented to us long and happy; but when we look back upon them from Age, they then appear to have been ſhort and troubleſome. A day to come, ſhews far longer to us than a Year that is gon. 'Tis high time for us to mend our Accounts, and to eſtimate the Years that are to come, by thoſe that are already paſt. Thoſe thirty or forty Years, which were judged by thee in thy Childhood an unattainable Age, how ſhort do they ſeem now when thou haſt outlived them! What remains of them all, but that thou art grown bigger than thou wert, and haſt the remembrance of ſome inconſiderable Actions that were done in that time? Why then ſhould we think thirty or forty Years yet to come ſuch an huge

Gulph as can never be waded through? Remembrance can with one glance review what's paſt, and why ſhould Hope and Expectation look upon what's to come as boundleſs and infinite? are all our Winter days ſpent, and none but our Summer in reſerve? Are none remaining for us but the faireſt and the longeſt? Surely both Hemiſpheres of our Lives have equal Horizons; and we ſhall find, that our paſt and future Years have but juſt the ſame meaſure.

II. *Secondly*, Moſt Men preſume they ſhall live to extream Age. A vain Confidence! As if God would turn the World into an Hoſpital, and fill it with the old and decrepit. We have a Proverb, That Young Men may, but Old Men muſt die; whereas Obſervation will inform us, that incomparably fewer die Old than Young: And thoſe too are ſo worn out with crazy and languiſhing Diſtempers, ſo tired with following the Funerals of their Families, that they deteſt the Age they formerly deſired, and execrate their Grey Hairs, made ſuch as well by Griefs as Years. This World is God's Nurſery for Eternity, and he will not cumber it with too many old Trunks. Death lies every where in ambuſh for us. The *Jews* reckon up nine hundred and three Diſeaſes, but the Caſualties we are ſubject unto are certainly innumerable. A Tile may brain us, a Peſtilential Vapour out of the Earth ſtifle us, our Houſes may bury us under their Ruins, our very Meat and Drink may choak us, and the Means to preſerve Life may become the Inſtruments of our Death. We read of ſome that a Fly, or a Grape-ſtone have diſpatched, that have died by plucking off an Hair from their Breaſts, God turning a very Hair into a Spear to deſtroy them. Our Souls may leak out at ſome ſmall Crack in thoſe hidden Pipes of Life, the Veins. 'Tis a ſtrange Folly, that we who are ſubject to ſuch various Diſeaſes and Accidents, ſhould yet dream of dying of no other but Old-age. Did we but ſeriouſly conſider by what ſmall Pins this frame of Man is held together, it would appear no leſs than a Miracle to us, that we live one day or one hour to an end.

III. *Thirdly*, Men think a few of their lateſt days and thoughts are enough to prepare them for Death: They account it extream Folly to loſe the Delights of Life, by ſtill jarring upon this ingrateful Remembrance, that they muſt ſhortly die, and therefore delay it till thoſe unwelcome Monitors, Age and Grey-hairs, call loudly upon them, till they can read deep Emblems of their Graves in their hollow Eyes and furrowed Brows. And if ſomething muſt be done for their Souls, it ſhall be only a ſmall courteſie at parting. Thus they devote the flower and ſpirit of their years to Sin and Pleaſure, and think, when their Time runs low, to put off God with the dregs of it, and content him with the Devil's refuſe. Alas! the only thing worth living for is to die well. 'Tis not to eat, or drink, or ſleep, or ſport, or talk; 'tis not to grow rich, or honourable; but, to learn how we may, by a ſevere Mortification, die firſt to the World, and then out of it. And is it not (as * *Seneca* ſpeaks) a ſhame, that thou ſhouldeſt deſtine to this great buſineſs of Life, only thoſe Relicks of thy time which can be employed about nothing elſe? Is it never time to become new Men, till youare ceaſing to be? or of reforming your Lives, till you are endingthem?

* *Non pudet te reliquias vitæ tibi reſervare & id ſolum tempus bonæ menti deſtinare quod in nullam rem conferri poſſit.* Sen. de brev. vitæ, *cap.* 4.

Believe it, the vaſt Concernments of your everlaſting ſtate require your freſheſt Strength and Spirits. 'Tis not a dying Sigh will waft your Souls over into a bleſſed Eternity: 'tis not to leave ſomewhat behind for pious uſes; nor at the laſt gaſp to recommend your ſelves into God's hands, when you have been all your life long in the Devil's. 'Tis not ſome Chimney-prayer, nor Blanket-devotion, nor the Name of God brought up in a Cough, that will ſuffice: Heaven were a cheap Prize could it be ſo lazily obtained. No; Repentance is quite another thing: 'tis to ranſack the Soul, to rend the Heart, to demoliſh ſtrong Holds, to rout thoſe Legions by which we are poſſeſt. In a word, 'tis to take Heaven by an holy Force and Violence. And what ſtupendious Folly is it, to defer this great Work (a Work that will ſtrain every Nerve of your Souls to perform it well) 'till the ſluggiſhneſs and infirmities of Old-age oppreſs you? Think you, your Souls can then vigorouſly beſtir themſelvs when they are grown ſtiff with Age, when your Faculties are benumb'd, and your Spirits congeal'd paſt the thaw of a Fire? Are they then fit for Action when they lie wrap'd about with tough and clammy Flegm, and buried under Sloth and Sleep? Be perſuaded therefore inſtantly to break off all delays, and from this very moment to provide in good earneſt for your Souls; leſt as the blandiſhments of the Fleſh and the

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World make you now think it is too ſoon, ſo the ſudden ſurprize of Death, and the dreadful ſight of a boundleſs Eternity ruſhing in upon you, make you hereafter cry out, It is too late, too late.

Fourthly, Men generally put off ſerious thoughts of dying, becauſe of the terrours and inſupportable dread that ſuch apprehenſions bring with them. And therefore Death is called by *Job*, *the King of terrours*; a King that comes attended with a thouſand Fantaſms and frightful Apparitions. Who can without a ſhivering horrour think of the ſeparation of thoſe dear Companions, the Soul and Body, of the debaſement and diſhonours of the Grave; that we muſt lie in a bed of ſtench and rottenneſs, under a coverlet of crawling Worms, there mouldering away to duſt in oblivion? Shortly we ſhall be no more our ſelves; we muſt change this ſubſtantial Life, a Life that is really felt, and hath real comforts in it, we muſt change it, to live only in the inſcription of a Tomb-ſtone, or the memory of a Friend. Our Eyes muſt no more behold this dear and pleaſant Light; we muſt no more reliſh the delights of this World; all our fair-laid Projects will be diſappointed, and we in a moment ſnatch'd away from whatever we enjoyed or deſigned. Now theſe are too gloomy Meditations for the jovial and frolick World: Such melancholy thoughts of dying prove little leſs than Executioners themſelves, and leave Death but half its work. Humane Nature abhors them: we find that Chriſt himſelf in whom it was moſt pure and ſpotleſs, not gaſter'd by any of thoſe weak Fears or Fancies that pervert our Reaſon; yet even he, as Man, recoils at that Death, which, as God, he was aſſured to conquer. IV. Job 18. 14. Luke 22. 42.

The fulleſt aſſurance of Heaven is ſcarce ſufficient to diſarm the terrours of Death, or reconcile us to it. Saint *Paul*, to whom God gave the unexampled ſight of Heaven, and diſcover'd the ineffable Glories, Light and Luſtre of that bleſſed Place, is yet troubled to think that the eternal poſſeſſion of theſe can be no otherwiſe obtained than by dying. Loath he was to deſcend into Heaven through the Grave; and having been once caught up into Paradiſe, can ſcarce think of going thither any other way. *We that are in this Tabernacle* (ſaith he) *do groan, being burthened; not that we would be uncloathed, but cloathed upon, that mortality might be ſwallowed up of Life.* Though his fleſhly cloathing, like theirs that travel in foul Weather, become burthenſome with Mire and Wet, with Sin and Tears; though he groan under the weighty preſſure, and would be glad to be eas'd and cleanſed at any rate; yet nature it ſelf ſtartles when it ſees the rude hand of Death ſtretcht out ready to undreſs him, and rather than this Garment ſhould be taken off, would have it dipt in Light and Glory upon him. 2 Cor. 12. 4. 2 Cor. 5. 4.

Thus Dreadful is Death to us, as Men; but much more as Sinners. 'Tis the Guilt that deſerves it, and the Hell that follows it, that gives Death its moſt hideous ſhape. We are not ſo much affrighted at the grim and meagre looks of this Officer that is to arreſt us, as at the ireful Countenance of the Judge, that is to paſs Sentence upon us; 'Tis not the unfelt rotting in the Grave, or thoſe Worms that muſt ſhortly feed upon their Carkaſſes, but the burning in Hell, and the reſtleſs ſtingings of that tormenting Worm, that breeds in a putrid Conſcience: From theſe Death receives its power and anguiſh. And therefore the Apoſtle tells us, that *the ſting of death is ſin*. And indeed well may it be the ſting of the firſt Death, ſince it carries in it the venom and poyſon of the ſecond. No wonder then, if thoſe who are conſcious to themſelves of Guilt, dare not think of ſtanding before the dreadful Tribunal of God. They cannot bear the Thoughts of eternal Wrath and Vengeance, to be forever inflicted by the Almighty Power of an incenſed God. No wonder at all, that they thruſt far from them the thoughts of their dying day, becauſe they preſage, that that day, whenſoever it comes, muſt needs be an evil day to them. 1 Cor. 15. 56.

I ſhall add no more; but only make ſome Application of what hath been ſpoken.

If we all certainly know that we muſt die, this might teach us ſo much Wiſdom as not to ſet our affections eagerly upon any thing in this preſent World, a World which we muſt ſhortly leave. Death will within a while pluck us from it, and it will prove a violent rending to us, if our Affections be inordinately glewed unto it. Conſider that all things in this preſent World are but fading and periſhing; but your precious Souls are ever living and immortal. Be not unequally yoak'd; do not join Uſe I.

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an ever-living Soul to dying Comforts. This were a Tyranny worſe than that of *Mezentius*, who (as the Poet tells us) bound the Living to dead Carkaſſes.

Virg. Æneid. 8.

It was a perverſe uſe the old Heathens made of the neceſſity of dying, when in their Feaſts, their Cuſtom was to bring in a Skeleton to their Gueſts, thereby exciting them to Mirth and Voluptuouſneſs, while they could reliſh ſuch Delights, becauſe ſhortly they muſt be as much Duſt and Bones as what they ſaw. This is the common Theme of *Horace*, *Anacreon*, and all the *Epicurean* Stye. Like thoſe, 1 *Cor.* 15. 32. *Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we ſhall die.*

Potantibus ergo Larvam argenteam attulit ſervus ſic aptam ut articuli ejus vertebræque locatæ in omnem partem flecterentur. Hanc cum ſuper menſam ſemel iterumque abjeciſſet, & catenatio mobilis aliquot figuras exprimeret, Trimalcio adjecit, Hen, heu nos miſeros quam totus homuncio nil eſt! Sic erimus cuncti poſtquam nos auferet orcus. Ergo vivamus dum licet eſſe bene, Petr.

How much better improvement doth the Apoſtle make of it, 1 *Cor.* 7. 29? *The time is ſhort, it remaineth therefore, that they that have Wives, be as tho' he had none; and they that weep as tho' they wept not; and they that rejoyce, as tho' the rejoyced not; and they that buy, as though they poſſeſſed not; and they that uſe this World, as not abuſing it, for the Faſhion of this World paſſeth away.* What Folly is it to toil, and wear out our Lives in the purſuit of thoſe vain things from which we may be ſnatched before we can caſt another look at them?

Go, Fool, and dote upon thy own, or others Beauty; but know withal, that ſhortly a Neſt of Worms will breed there, and ſuck corruption and naſtineſs out of that Face, which hath been thy Pride, and the Beholders Sin and Shame.

Go, Worldling, rake together thy Wealth, and hoard up thy Treaſures; but know withal, that of all thy Poſſeſſions thou ſhalt ſhortly need no more than will but ſuffice to bury thee. Gold and Silver are too heavy lading to be carried into the other World; nothing of them ſhall go with thee, unleſs it be their ruſt to witneſs againſt thee. If there be any difference, whether thou live rich or poor, honourably or deſpiſed, in pain or in pleaſure; yet certainly there is none when thou comeſt to die. What is it to a dying Man, whether his Chamber be richly furniſhed or not, whether he breath out his Soul in a Palace, or in a Cottage? We ſhall not take pleaſure in ſumming up our Eſtates, and counting how much we ſhall die worth, and how many hundreds or thouſands we ſhall leave behind us. Theſe things will be then as far from being our Care, as they are now from being our Concernments.

Let the Voluptuous Man purſue his Delights and Paſtimes; but let him know withal, that he doth but thruſt away his days to make way for Death. That hour is coming, when he will more earneſtly wiſh to gain time, than ever he ſtudied to ſpend it.

Let the Ambitious Court Honours and Preferments; but withal let him know, it will be no great Comfort to him in Death, that he falls under a bigger Name and Title than others. What are they when they ſtand upon the higheſt Pinacle of Worldly Dignities, but Bladders ſwelled up with the breath of the Popular Rout, Nothings ſet a-ſtrut; Cheſs-men that on the Board play the King and Nobles, but in the Bag are of the ſame Materials and Rank with others?

Though now it be hard to perſuade Men of theſe things, yet powerful and eloquent Death will certainly perſuade them better than all the Sermons or Demonſtrations that ever they heard. At High-noon things caſt but a ſhort and little Shadow; but in the declining Evening theſe Shadows are extended to an huge Length and vaſt Dimenſions. So 'tis with us, in the High-noon of our Age, in the heat and vigorous warmth of our Blood, the World ſeems to caſt but little Shadow; all things in it appear to us bright and orient; but when our Evening begins to decline, and our days ſhut in, when our Eyes ſhall ſwim in Night and Darkneſs, then the Shadows are extended, and all the bright and glittering things of the World will appear to us nothing but Gloomineſs and Horrour.

Uſe II. *Secondly*, Since we all know that we ſhall die, let this ſerve to exhort us ſeriouſly to prepare for our Death. That our Souls are immortal and muſt live for ever, is a dictate of Nature it ſelf, if we had not Scripture to confirm it. And thoſe who have ever ventured to deny it, have rather ſpoken their wiſhes than belief. They are divine ſparks kindled only by the Breath of God, and the ſame breath that kindled them hath likewiſe pronounced that they ſhall never die; ſhortly they muſt launch forth into Eternity, and know by experience the Truth of thoſe impreſſions that God hath ſtampt upon them concerning their own endleſs duration.

'Twill

'Twill not be many years nor days hence, till every one of us be in our eternal State; there ſtands nothing between us and it, but this thin mud-wall of our Bodies: a weak fence againſt ſo many diſeaſes and caſualties as may every day and hour aſſault us. What *Anacharſis* ſaid of thoſe who ſail'd, that they were but four inches removed from Death, is true of us all; we are but four inches removed from Death and Eternity. Nay, a wound that digs not half ſo deep may diſpatch us. Our Souls are in our Bodies only as a little air included in a thin bubble; and when that breaks, oh what or where are we? Gon in an inſtant out of all the buſineſſes and pleaſures of this preſent Life into an eſtate for ever unchangeable.

Laertius in vitâ Anacharſ.

Now what is your care, and what do you chiefly buſie your ſelves about? Death is approaching you, arm'd with ten thouſand Woes and Plagues; and is it time for you to trifle away your precious Moments (Moments on which depends your Eternity) in ſports, or complements, or impertinent employments? Is it time for you to muſe what garb you will wear, what viſit you will make, whether at this Houſe or the next; what recreation ſhall paſs away to morrow, whether the Hawk, or the Hound, when all this while Death hath you in full chaſe?

While you are contriving your profits and pleaſures, your recreations and employments, and ſharing out your lives among them, a ſudden, unſeen, and unthought of hand of God ſnatcheth you from them all, and all theſe vain thoughts periſh with you. Is this providing for Eternity? is this improving your ſhort time, and few Minutes for Heaven? Pity is it that ever a precious and immortal Soul ſhould be intruſted to the care and management of ſuch Brutes, who by minding nothing but their ſenſual eaſe and delights, their food and fodder, degrade it in this World, and deſtroy it in the next.

Now, to provide for eternity, I know no better rule, than to do nothing but what thou might'ſt be contented to be found doing when Chriſt ſhall come to Judge thee: to live ſo, as if every day were thy laſt, and the very next to Eternity. If it be not ſo, it is more than you or I know. Since we have no aſſurance of a day or hour longer, it is but reaſon and wiſdom to look upon every one as the laſt.

Suppoſe now your Chambers darkned, your Friends ſtanding round your Beds, mourning over you, a ſad ſilence filling all the place, nothing heard but your Groans, or theirs to anſwer yours; when your Souls ſitting on your lips ſhall look over into Eternity and flutter to be gon; when they ſhall, like the flame of an expiring lamp, vibrate and catch at the exhauſted Body, how would you then ſpend that ſmall ſcantling of remaining time? Would you be laying up for years? would you be contriving for your vain pleaſures, or ſend for your idle and debauch'd Companions to laugh and jeſt away that laſt hour, as well as the reſt? No; theſe deſigns, and this mirth are now daſh't; now the neceſſities of the Soul begin to croud hard upon you; the ſight of a ſevere Judge and dreadful Tribunal, the worryings of an accuſing Conſcience, the fearful review of paſt Sins, and expectation of attending Torments, now ſhake out all ſuch, once ſo delightful and contenting thoughts: and now when your Souls are departing out of your Bodies, they begin to come into your remembrance.

Hearken to the voice of dying-men, what ſay they? Oh, that God would pardon and accept them! Oh that he would ſpare them a little to repent and reform! or elſe, Oh that he would aſſure them of his favour, and receive them to his mercy! This is the language, and theſe are the cares of the ſick-bed, when Death comes nigh to them and looks them in the face. And why is it not your care now in your health and ſtrength? What aſſurance have you, that you are not now as nigh Death as thoſe who lie thus languiſhing, and complaining of their folly for neglecting their Souls till this laſt hour? God doth not always give warning, but ſome he ſtrikes ſuddenly; and for ought we know, we may be as near our Deaths as thoſe whom their Friends and Phyſicians have given over.

However, ſhould God ſpare you longer, yet the duration of your Life is moſt uncertain; and to delay our preparations for Death upon the uncertain continuance of Life, is ſuch ſtupendious Madneſs and Folly, that certainly were there not witchcraft and ſorcery uſed upon us by the Devil, a Man that hath the free command of his Wit and Reaſon, could never be guilty of.

Night is haſtning, and ſpreading it's wings over us; the Grave expects us, and bids its other Corps make room; Death is graſping us in its cold Arms, and ready to carry us to the dreadful Tribunal; and yet how little of our great Work is done! We burn away our precious days, and miſerably waſt our light and our Life; we exhauſt our ſtrength, and laviſh out our affections upon toys and fond nothings; and that Life of ours which the Pſalmiſt calls a tale, for its ſhortneſs, we make a tale for its vanity: We ſpend it moſt frivolouſly, till the days of Darkneſs, which are many, come upon us; and then think to prepare for Eternity when we are fit for nothing elſe, and leaſt of all for that.

Some ſad inſtances there have been of thoſe who having neglected this great work till the end of their Life, have then ſpent that little remnant of time they had in crying out for more: It may be ſo with you; if your Conſciences be not awakened ſooner than by the Pain and Diſquiet of your ſick Beds, you will then with horrour cry out, more time, Lord, more time! but it will not be granted, the term is fixt, the laſt hour hath ſtruck, the laſt ſand is run; and as you and your work, are then found, ſo muſt you into eternity.

Methinks, this is ſuch a conſideration as muſt needs prevail with all the World: Our time is but ſhort and momentary, we are but of yeſterday, and poſſibly may not be to morrow; and God hath ſuſpended Eternity upon the improvement of this moment; a few hours will determine our everlaſting condition, and according as they are ſpent ſo muſt our doom be, either eternal Happineſs, or eternal Miſery. And why ſhould our precious Souls be ſo vile in our eyes as to loſe them for very ſloth and careleſneſs? Why ſhould we hearken to the ſuggeſtions of the Fleſh, or the allurements of the World? Stand off, we are working for Eternity, an Eternity that is but a few days hence, a boundleſs, a bottomleſs, and endleſs ſtate, into which we know not how ſoon we may enter. This is a motive that cannot but prove effectual with all that have their right underſtandings about them. But many are ſo ſtrangely beſotted by the Devil, that though they hear theſe truths, truths that they cannot deny, that they cannot doubt of, yet they live at ſuch a rate of ſin and ſecurity, as if their Eternity were to be expected here, or none to be expected hereafter.

Now if we have carefully prepared our ſelves for Death, it will be to us a repoſe inſtead of a terrour. The Scripture doth frequently compare it to ſleep, and it is indeed the moſt natural reſemblance that can be given. While we are aſleep we neither ſee nor hear; all our Senſes are lockt up, we enjoy none of the delights of Life, no comfort in our Friends, in our Riches or Eſtates; all thoſe things are cancelled out of our memories. And what more than this can Death do to a Believer? And there-
1 Theſ. 4. 14. fore they are ſaid to *ſleep in Jeſus*. 'Tis a ſleep that gives them reſt from their labours, a ſleep that opens their Eyes which were before benighted with ignorance and errour, a ſleep that deprives them of the dim and muddy light of this World, but brings them to the viſion of that radiant ſource and fountain of all Lights, in whoſe Beams Angels do for ever rejoyce, and are for ever cheriſhed.

Why ſhould we then be ſo terrified at the apprehenſions of Death? We may truly ſay, the bitterneſs of it is paſt, its ſting is taken out. We may ſafely take this Serpent into our Boſoms: though it hiſs againſt us, it cannot wound us. Yea, inſtead of wounding us, 'tis reconciled to us, and become one of our party. And therefore when the Apoſtle is drawing up a Chriſtian's Inventory, he reckons Death as part of his Goods: *Whether Life, or Death, or things preſent, or things to come, all are yours*, 1 Cor. 3. 22. And ſo Philip 1. 21. *To me to live is Chriſt, and to die is gain.* And well may a Chriſtian count Death among his gains, ſince it is the hand of Death that draws the Curtain of the great Tabernacle, and lets us in to ſee God face to face in that Palace of ineſtimable Majeſty, where we ſhall have the ſtrong Rays of his Glory beat full upon us, and be our ſelves made ſtrong enough to bear them.

Yea theſe Bodies of ours, which are the only part that can ſuffer damage, ſhall have it abundantly recompenſed at the Reſurrection. *They are ſown in weakneſs, but*
1 Cor. 15. 43. *ſhall be raiſed in power; they are ſown in diſhonour, but raiſed in Glory.* Theſe frail and dull clods ſhall then become impaſſible as Angels, ſubtile as a ray of Light, bright as the Sun, and nimble as the wings of Lightning.

Having thus exhorted you to prepare for Death, I know not how farther to inforce it upon you with greater advantage, than by propounding to you the example of this noble Perſon deceaſed, whoſe whole Life was a more ſerious preparation for Death, than moſt Mens dying thoughts. He well knew the Nobility of his extrac-

tion

tion would be no excuſe to him from the peremptory Summons of Death; neither did he make it any excuſe to him from an induſtrious and ſtrict preparation for it. This he teſtified by the ſeries of his whole Life, in which there evidently appeared ſuch an awe of God, and a real ſenſe of true Piety and Religion, as clearly evinced he had ſtrong and habituated Meditations of that great levelling day, wherein the higheſt ſhall ſtand upon no higher Ground than the meaneſt.

He did not think Religion any Stain to his Honour, nor minding Heaven to be the Employment of thoſe only who have nothing on Earth. Indeed Irreligion and Atheiſm are now reckoned as a piece of good breeding among the great Ones of the World; 'tis now counted as a Sign of a degenerous and low-ſunk Spirit, to acknowledge even God himſelf for their Superiour. Thoſe are cried up as the Wits of the time, who can daringly diſpute it againſt whatſoever is ſacred in Chriſtianity; yea againſt the being of God himſelf. 'Tis now become an Argument of a Judicious and Gallant Mind, to call into queſtion the moſt Fundamental Maxims of our Faith, and the Authority too of thoſe Holy Oracles that confirm them. Reaſon alone is extolled as the beſt and moſt ſufficient Guide both in Matters of Belief and Practice; and they appeal to that for their Judge, which commonly by their Debauches and Intemperancies, they either ſo corrupt that it will not diſcern the Truth, or elſe ſo ſot and ſtupifie that it cannot. And thus, as the Moon ſhines brighteſt when it is at the greateſt Oppoſition to the Sun, theſe think their Reaſon then ſhines brighteſt, when it ſtands at the greateſt oppoſition to God.

This Noble Perſon, whoſe Reaſon had as fleet a wing, and could ſoar as high a pitch as any of theirs who pretend to nothing above it, yet ſaw it Reaſon to give his Faith the precedency, and always found more acquieſcence in a *Thus ſaith the Lord*, than in the moſt critical Reſearches, and poſitive Concluſions of his Reaſon. So reverend an eſteem had he for thoſe Sacred Dictates of Scripture, that though his Wit and Parts ſhone forth to admiration, in whatſoever he pleaſed to employ them about, yet he never preſumed to exerciſe them on that Common Place of abuſing Divine Verities; he was not ambitious to commence a Wit by Blaſphemy, nor did he pretend to Ingenuity by being Impious; but whereas too many uſe their Wit in jeſting at them, he ſhewed his Holy Wiſdom in believing and obeying. Other Books he made the Ornament of his Mind, this the Guide of his Life; he knew what others, but did what God ſpake.

He was not made a Chriſtian out of Old Heathens, nor owed his Vertues to the Sage Precepts of *Plutarch* or *Epictetus*. Theſe are now become the Pen-men and Evangeliſts of our Young Gentry: *Seneca* is with them preferred before Saint *Paul*, though his chiefeſt credit be that he wrote ſo well that ſome have miſtakingly thought him *Paul*'s Diſciple. The Vertue of this Noble Perſon acknowledged a more Divine Original, being formed in him by the ſame Spirit that gave him Rules to act it. This taught him to out-ſtrip in true Wiſdom, Temperance and Fortitude, not only whatſoever thoſe ſtarcht Moraliſts did, but whatſoever they wrote; and whereas they preſcribed but the exerciſe of Vertue, he ſublim'd it and made it Grace.

Next to his abſolute ſubjection to God, was his obedience unto his honourable, and now diſconſolate Mother, wherein he was to ſuch a degree punctual, that as her Wiſdom commanded nothing but what was fit, ſo his Duty diſputed not the fitneſs of things beyond her Command. His Demeanour towards her was moſt ſubmiſſive, towards all ſo obliging, that 'twas but the ſame thing to know and admire him.

His Converſe gave the World a ſingular Pattern of harmleſs and inoffenſive Mirth, of a Gentility not made up of fine Clothes, and hypocritical Courtſhip; a ſweetneſs and familiarity that at once gain'd Love, and preſerv'd Reſpect; a grandeur and nobility ſafe in its own worth, nor needing to maintain it ſelf by a jealous and moroſe diſtance.

Never did vice in youth find a more confirmed goodneſs. So impregnable was he againſt the Temptations that gain an eaſie acceſs to thoſe of his rank and quality, that they could neither inſinuate into him by their allurements, nor force him by their importunities. Nor did he think it enough to ſecure his mind from the infection of Vice, unleſs alſo he ſecured his Fame from the ſuſpicion of it. Some indeed owe their innocence to their dulneſs and ſtupidity, and are only not vicious, becauſe not witty enough to be talking, and handſomely wicked. His Vertue was of choice and the ſevereſt exerciſe of it mingled with ſuch charms from his parts and ingenuity,

that

that his very ſeriouſneſs was more alluring than thoſe light divertiſements in others which intice only becauſe they pleaſe. His Apprehenſion was quick and piercing, his memory faithful and retentive, his phanſie ſprightful and active, and his judgment over-ruling them all, neither prejudicated by vulgar opinions, nor eaſily couſened by varniſht and plauſible errour.

After all this, there can be nothing wanting to make up a moſt compleat and abſolute Perſon, but only induſtry to quicken his parts, and time to ripen both to perfection. His induſtry was remarkable in the Aſſiduouſneſs of his Studies, where he ſpent not his Hours in Plays or Romances, thoſe Follies of good Wits, but in the diſquiſition of ſolid and maſculine knowledge: in which he out-ſtript even thoſe who were to depend upon Learning for their livelihood, and had no other revenue than what aroſe out of their fruitful and well cultivated brains. And as for that other, I mean time to maturate theſe growing hopes, that ſad Providence which hath called us together to this mournful ſolemnity, hath denied it, by a ſudden and ſurprizing ſtroke, cutting off his days, and thereby rendring that Vertue, thoſe Parts, that Induſtry, uſeleſs to us in any thing but the Example, and I ſhould ſay unprofitable to him too, but only, that which he never had opportunity to employ in this World, hath, I doubt not, fitted him for a better.

A

SERMON

PREACH'D

At *Christ-Church* in *Dublin*, Jan. 31. 1669.

1 Pet. II. 13, 14.

Submit your selves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the King as supreme, or unto Governours, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well.

WERE nothing else required to a Day of Humiliation, but the Solemnity of publick *Sorrow* and a *sad* review of former Miscarriages; If a Fast did only lay a Tribute upon our Eyes, and Tears were the whole amercement of our Crimes; I my self should have judged the Text now read, much improper to the occasion; and should rather have chosen some of those passionate Lamentations, that might have opened a Fountain in every Eye to flood this place, and turn it into a *Bochim*. But becaufe the best Sorrow is Amendment, and *Reformation* the truest Repentance, I therefore thought our most unfeigned mourning for a *slaughter'd Monarch*, would be to learn and practise our duty to the *living*.

I believe there are none of us here, but do from our very Hearts detest and execrate that horrid Villany which we this day bewail; and account those Hands accursed that were so impiously imbrewed in the Royal and Sacred Blood of *their Sovereign*, and *God's Anointed*. Let us therefore testifie our abhorrence of that bloody Crime by our present submission: and by our chearful Obedience, if not *expiate the Sin* and Guilt, yet in some measure *redeem the Credit and Glory* of these Nations.

I have therefore pitch'd upon these words of the Apostle, *Submit your selves to every Ordinance of Man, for the Lord's sake*, &c. And they are one of those many Rules prescribed in this latter part of the Chapter, for the right ordering of a Christian Conversation, that it might be blameless, and inoffensive.

For though it were both the Primitive Principle and Practice in all *lawful things*, to yield ready Obedience to the Will and Command of their Magistrates; and in all *unlawful*, chearfully to devote themselves to Sufferings: yet (as appears by their Apologies) they were clamoured against by the Heathens, as Heady and Seditious, Authors and Leaders of Factions, Disturbers of the Publick Peace, and pestilent Enemies to the State. This Accusation was altogether undeserved, and indeed incongruous both to their Temper, and the Rules of their Profession. It was a very unlikely thing, that *they* should aim at worldly Greatness, whose first entrance into Christianity was the renouncing of the World: that *they* should embroil the State in Rebellion against their Prince, who never lift up their Hands, but in Prayers to God for him; that they should intend to get the Sovereignty and Dominion to them-

ſelves, who never thought of any other Crown but of Martyrdom, and that which followed upon it, of Glory. They were not ſuch martial and fighting Chriſtians, as the Men of our Times. And we may well wonder, if this Generation, who have been ſo hot and fiery about little Circumſtances, and thought the Debate of a Rite, or the Mode of Diſcipline, cauſe enough to warrant Arms, and Blood, and the Ruins of Kingdoms; If they had lived in thoſe Primitive and Apoſtolical Days, how they would have comported themſelves under the Tyranny and Cruelty of their Heathen Emperours. Certainly, if only a Conceit and Fancy of Superſtition, could now levy Armies, and draw out the Sword againſt thoſe, who were acknowledgedly of the ſame Doctrine and Faith with themſelves, who held the ſame *Profeſſion*, the ſame *Baptiſm*, the ſame *Head*, the ſame *God*, the *Father of all*, and agreed in all the Subſtantials of one and the *ſame Religion*; we may well think they would have flown out into all the Extremities of Blood and Violence, when no other choice lay before them, but either *Death*, or *Idolatry*. Thoſe who could now think it *lawful* to depoſe and murther a *Chriſtian King*, would no doubt have thought it *meritorious* to aſſaſſinate a *Pagan Perſecutor*. The Church had been then *Militant* in another ſenſe than it was: and Chriſt might have had *many Hectors*, but *few Martyrs*. No, the mild and calm Spirit of the Goſpel taught them otherwiſe. Flying or dying were their only Refuges, and Prayers and Tears, their only Weapons. To read the Hiſtories of thoſe firſt Days of the Church is but to wade ſo far in Blood. Such multitudes periſh'd, of each Sex, of all Ages, by wild Beaſts, by Fire, by the Croſs, by the Sword, by all the witty * Cruelties that rage could invent, or power execute, that it is a wonder there were Perſecutours enough to deſtroy them, and a far greater wonder that there were any left to ſucceed in the Profeſſion of the ſame Faith. But it was here true, what one of them ſaid, *Sanguis Martyrum eſt Semen Eccleſiæ: The Blood of Martyrs is the Seed of the Church:* † whence ſprung up ſuch a numerous Company of Confeſſours, as by their invincible Patience, not by Oppoſition and Reſiſtance, wearied out their Tormenters, who had not ſtrength enough to *inflict*, what the Chriſtians had ſtrength enough to *ſuffer*. Yea, ſo thick was this *Seed* ſown, that * St. *Jerom* aſſigns no leſs than the Blood of *five thouſand* Martyrs to every Day in the Year; only excepting the firſt of *January* from ſo deep a *Rubrick*. And that which I cannot but account the hardeſt and ſoreſt tryal of their Patience, was that whenſoever it pleaſed Almighty God to ſend any notable Plague upon the World, as Sickneſs, or Drought, or Famine; whenſoever the Sea, or Rivers broke out, or a worſe Deluge of Barbarous and Savage Nations broke in upon the Roman Confines, ſtreight the Out-cry of the Rabble was, *Chriſtianos ad Leones, Away with the Chriſtians to the Lions*, as *Tertullian* witneſſeth in his *Apologetick:* ſtreight the anger of the Gods muſt be appeaſed with the Blood of Chriſtians, who for refuſing to *Sacrifice* muſt themſelves be made Victims.

Now though it be a great provocation to *become* Turbulent and Seditious, when Men are *cauſleſly* ſuſpected, and puniſh'd as ſuch already: Yet, ſaith our Apoſtle; though you are ſo dealt with, ſpoken againſt, and perſecuted as evil-doers, herein ſhew your ſelves to be Chriſtians, that aim at greater Matters than what your Emperours are jealous you will attempt to take from them; and be not only *victorious in your Conſtancy* under *Sufferings*, but *loyal alſo in your Obedience*, under *Suſpicions*, and *falſe Accuſations*. *Though they ſpeak againſt you as Evil-doers*, as it is *v.* 12. *Yet ſubmit your ſelves to every Ordinance of Man, for the Lord's ſake.*

The words contain in them;

I. *Firſt*, An *Authoritative Command* of Obedience. *Submit your ſelves.*

II. *Secondly*, The *Object* to which this Obedience muſt be yielded. *Every Ordinance of Man.*

III. *Thirdly*, The *Diviſion* of this Ordinance of Man into *Supream and Subordinate*. *Submit to the King as Supream, and to Governours ſent by him, as ſubordinate.*

Fourthly,

* *Quid ſentis de carne cum ſupplicüs erogatur, eniſa reddere Chriſto vicem moriendi pro ipſo, & quidem per eandem crucem ſæpe, nedum per atrociora quæque ingenia pœnarum?* Tertul. *de Reſurrect.*

† *Ligabantur, includebantur, cædebantur, torquebantur, urebantur, laniabantur, trucidabantur, & multiplicabantur.* Aug. de Civit. Dei, *l.* 22. *c.* 6.

* Hieron. *Epiſtol. ad Chromatium & Heliodorum.*

Fourthly, We have the *Duty* of all Governours, and the *End* of all Government expreſt; and that is, *The puniſhment of Evil-doers, and the Praiſe of them that do well.* IV.

Fifthly, We have the *Motive* that inforceth this Exhortation and Command. *Submit to them for the Lord's ſake.* V.

There are but two Terms in the Text that require Explication. The one is, what is meant by *every Ordinance of Man.* The other, what Force lies in that abjuring Expreſſion, *For the Lord's ſake.*

As to the former; *Every Ordinance of Man* may be taken, either,

1. For every *Edict and Conſtitution, every Law and Command* that iſſues forth from thoſe that are in Authority over us. Called therefore an *Ordinance of Man*, becauſe invigorated by humane Authority. Or,

2. It may be taken for *Magiſtrates* themſelves. And indeed thus it ought to be underſtood in this place. And ſo the ſenſe is this: Whatſoever lawful Form of Magiſtracy or Government you live under, *Submit* your ſelves unto it. And it is here called *an Ordinance of Man*, Κτίσις ἀνθρωπίνη, *an humane Creature*; not as though Magiſtracy were only an humane Invention, or a Creature of Man's making. For ſo Saint *Peter* ſhould contradict Saint *Paul*, who tells us, *Rom.* 13. 1. *There are no Powers but of God: the Powers that be, are ordained of God. And he that reſiſteth the Power, reſiſteth the ordinance of God.* But yet this *Ordinance of God*, is here called an *Ordinance of Man*, both becauſe it is appointed among Men, and for the good of Men; and becauſe likewiſe the ſeveral Forms of Government were at firſt modell'd, as humane Prudence and Convenience dictated. *Magiſtracy* is an *Ordinance of God*, in reſpect of its *original Inſtitution*; but it is an *Ordinance of Man*, in reſpect of its *particular Conſtitution and Modification.*

Then as for the *Motive*, *Submit your ſelves for the Lord's ſake.* This can bear no other ſenſe, than upon the Account of God's Command, as you would do an acceptable Service to him. And it is *tantamount* to that other place, *Rom.* 13. 5. *You muſt needs be Subject, not only for Wrath, i. e.* for fear of the Prince's Wrath, and the direful Effects that may follow upon it in caſe of Diſobedience, *but alſo for Conſcience ſake, i. e.* becauſe of thoſe Obligations which lie upon Conſcience from God's Commands. For nothing can be done for Conſcience ſake, which is not done out of reſpect to God's Authority, who is the only ſupream Lord of Conſcience, and hath ſtrictly bound it to all Duties of Submiſſion to his Under-officers and Vicegerents upon Earth. So that diſobedience to the *Ordinance of Man* reſts not there, but becomes Rebellion againſt God himſelf. Princes Rule by virtue of God's Commiſſion and Authority; they are his Lieutenants in the World, and therefore to diſobey them, is to rebel againſt that Sovereign and Divine Authority by which they reign.

Hence therefore let us obſerve; *That Obedience to earthly Kings and Governours is a Duty we owe to them; and not to them only, but to the Great King and Governour of Heaven and Earth. Submit your ſelves for the Lord's ſake.*

Man was at firſt created after the Image and Similitude of God; and one great part of that Image conſiſted in his *Dominion* over the Creatures. But Kings in this particular, approach much nearer unto the Divine Reſemblance, and have *fairer ſtrokes* of this Image drawn upon them than any other Men. They are raiſed in Power and Sovereignty, not only over the *brute* and *irrational Creatures*, as others are; but over *Men* themſelves, and are *Lords of thoſe*, who are *Lords of the World.* As *Adam* was therefore like unto God, becauſe inferiour to none but him; ſo are they. The Image of Divinity is ſo conſpicuous in their Dominion and Sovereignty, that upon this very account alone, God takes them into co-partnerſhip of that Glorious Name, whereby himſelf is known, *Pſal.* 82. 6. *I have ſaid, Ye are Gods.* Whatſoever they be for other Endowments, whether Vertuous or Vicious, Perſecutors, or Favourers of Religion; yet in reſpect of Sovereignty and Dominion, they are the viſible and lively Images and Pourtraicts of God upon Earth.

Now as a contumely, or diſhonour done to the Image or Statue of a Man, redounds only to the diſhonour of the Perſon whom it repreſents, (and therefore States, to puniſh thoſe who are either dead, or fled out of their reach, have been oftentimes known to execute their Pictures) ſo it is here: Diſobedience to the Lawful Magiſtrate, reflects contempt upon God himſelf, whoſe Image the Magiſtrate is: And by *deſpiſing Government, and ſpeaking evil of Dignities*, they only invent a way how they may rebel againſt, and depoſe God *in Effigie.*

But

But it is not my Deſign to make a *Panegyrick* in magnifying Kingly Power; but rather to give ſome inſtructions concerning that *Submiſſion* and *Obedience* which we owe unto it upon the Command of God. Never certainly was it more needful than now, rightly to ſtate how far, and upon what grounds we are obliged to obey the *Powers* that God hath ſet over us. Which poſſibly we may gain ſome Light to diſcern, by a through ſifting of theſe following Diſtinctions.

1. *Firſt*; We muſt diſtinguiſh of *Rulers:* For they are either *lawful Magiſtrates* or *Uſurpers*. And bleſſed be God, that we may now, without danger, make ſuch a diſtinction as this is.

2. *Secondly*; As *they*, ſo their *Commands* may be either *lawful* or *unlawful*.

3. *Thirdly*; Obedience to their lawful Commands may be conſidered as due, either in point of *Prudence*, or elſe in point of *Conſcience*.

4. *Fourthly*; Obedience in point of Conſcience, is either *Active* in performing what is required; or *Paſſive*, in ſuffering what is threatned.

Out of theſe *Diſtinctions*, I ſhall form ſeveral *Propoſitions*, reſolutory (as I hope) to my Subject in hand.

I. *Firſt*; Therefore, No Subjection is due to an *unlawful and uſurping Power*, upon *God's Command* and *for Conſcience ſake*. Some of late Years who have been mighty loth to *diſpute Titles* againſt their preſent Intereſt and Advantage, have earneſtly oppoſed this Aſſertion: affirming that *uſurped Power*, tho' it be *unlawful* in the *Acquiſition*, yet becomes ſo far *lawful* when *acquired*, as to oblige Conſcience it ſelf to ſubmiſſion. A ſtrange and abſurd Opinion this; as if that became lawful by being *accompliſh'd*, which was wicked and ſinful in being but *attempted*. Then muſt *proſperous* wickedneſs hereafter be taken for Vertue; and the only way to *juſtifie* a bad undertaking, muſt be to go *through with it*. No; It is not a *rude*, *boiſterous Power*, that may perhaps be like an irreſiſtible Torrent, and bear all down before it; it is not this, but *Right* and *Title* that inveſts a *Magiſtrate*. Magiſtracy and Authority, is too *Sacred a Thing* to be intail'd upon the *longeſt Sword*, and the *ſtrongeſt Arm*. And certainly, if actual poſſeſſion of Sovereignty can make good any *Uſurper*'s Title unto it, and make him the *Power ordained of God*, by the ſame Reaſon may any plead Title to your Houſes and Eſtates, who can either by force or fraud make entry upon them.

But yet as abſurd as this Doctrine is, *Scripture* is alledged for it: and of all, that place is eſpecially inſiſted on, *Rom.* 13. 1. *There is no Power but of God; the Powers that be, are ordained of God.* Hence they collect, That the *very Being or Exiſtence of a Power*, makes it the *Ordinance of God*, and obligeth even *Conſcience* it ſelf to Obedience. But here, it is not the Apoſtle's intent to aſſert, that the *Being* of a Power makes it lawful; but that thoſe *lawful Powers that are*, are God's Ordinance and Appointment. And this appears.

1. Becauſe the word ἐξουσία, which is here tranſlated *Power*, is not any where uſed in the New Teſtament, but only to ſignifie *Authority, and a lawful Power*. Yea, when the *Devil* himſelf uſed it, *Luke* 4. 6. He would willingly have had our Saviour underſtood him in this ſenſe. And not to inſiſt on this, the very notation of it from the Verb ἔξεστι, *Licet*, proves the only proper uſe of it to be for *lawful Power*.

2. This *Power* which the Text ſpeaks of, is ſuch as may *not be reſiſted*. *Whoſoever reſiſteth the Power reſiſteth the Ordinance of God: and they that reſiſt, ſhall receive unto themſelves damnation*, verſe 2. But now that Power which hath no Title to Sovereignty, beſides preſent poſſeſſion, may be *lawfully reſiſted*, without the ſad doom of incurring Damnation for ſo doing. What frequent Inſtances have we in the Book of *Judges*, of the Revolutions of the *Iſraelites* affairs; Often in the Poſſeſſion, and under the oppreſſion of their neighbouring Kings, till God raiſed them up Deliverers to reſcue them from that Bondage and Slavery? They did not think they were for *Conſcience*, or for *God's ſake* bound to obey the uſurping Powers they were at times under. No, though their Uſurpers might plead ſometimes Twenty, ſometimes Forty Years preſcription to ſtrengthen their Title. Not to inſtance in all the particulars I might, (for that would be too tedious) what ſhall we think of *Jehoiada*'s Proceedings, not only in *reſiſting* but in *depoſing*, *and putting* Athaliah *to death*. Clear it

is,

is, that ſhe had the Sovereignty in poſſeſſion, and ſtood ſeiz'd of it above ſix Years. Yet none (I hope) will affirm, that *Jehoiada reſiſted God's Ordinance*, or incurred *Damnation* by depoſing her, and reſtoring his rightful *Prince*. Again,

3. Since the only Title that an *Uſurper* hath to Sovereignty, is his *reſiſting* and deſtroying the lawful Power, it will follow, that a damnable Act, as this is, may of it ſelf confer a *lawful Power*, if Invaſion or Poſſeſſion alone can make it ſuch, which is an Opinion ſo wild, that Sobriety and Reaſon abhor it. 'Tis true indeed, many have been rightful Sovereigns, who aſcended the Throne by flagitious Crimes, and the Murther of their Predeceſſours: but yet the Title could never be devolved upon them by their Wickedneſs, but either by elective or hereditary Succeſſion. They have reſiſted and deſtroyed the lawful Powers, only to make way for their own Title to take place; but never can it be conceived that Rebellion ſhould give a Title; or that God ſhould give a Man ſuch a form of Deputation as doth at once *confirm* his *Authority*, and *ſeal* his *Damnation*. It is evident therefore, that lawful Sovereignty is not founded upon actual Poſſeſſion, but a fix'd and ſettled Right; and conſequently where-ever an uſurping Power is advanc'd, neither God, nor Conſcience, require Submiſſion to it.

And yet to give the contrary Opinion ſome plauſible colour, it is here objected, that *thoſe very Perſons* which the Apoſtle ſpeaks of, and which the believing *Romans* ought not to reſiſt upon pain of Damnation, were but *Uſurpers*; the *Cæſars* intruding by Force and Violence, and the Ruin of the Common-wealth, into the Supream Authority.

To this may be anſwered; That not to diſpute their right in firſt *ſeiſing* of the *Roman Empire*, which poſſibly (as I think in moſt, if not all other Governments) might be unjuſt enough; yet it is as certain, and as clear as Hiſtory can make any thing, that they were by the free Votes both of *Senate* and *People*, and all the Authority of that *State* ſetled and acknowledged for their rightful Magiſtrates, and enjoyed the Title and Power for ſome Succeſſion of Emperours, before the Apoſtle wrote this Epiſtle. And therefore Obedience was due to them, upon the account of *Conſcience*, and *for God's ſake*. But it no way follows, that becauſe the *Powers* that *then were*, were God's Ordinance, that therefore *every Power* that is at any time *Exiſtent*, muſt needs be ſo too. That's the firſt Poſition.

II. *Secondly*, Upon *prudential* and ſelf-preſerving Principles, Submiſſion may ſometimes be yielded to the *lawful Commands* of an unlawful and uſurping Power. *Lawful Commands* I call them, not as though ſuch had any right to command, but becauſe they may command that which is right and lawful to be done. Now, though it be every Man's Duty, by all likely and probable means, to endeavour the ſuppreſſion of an uſurping Power; yet *Prudence*, and that Sovereign Law of *Self-preſervation*, muſt dictate to him the Way and Manner how it may be accompliſh'd; which till it be found *feaſible*, it is but precipitateneſs for any Man to oppoſe himſelf *naked* and *defenceleſs* againſt *armed* Violence. This raſhneſs doth but *throw away* a Life, which if preſerved till fairer Opportunity preſents its ſelf, might become greatly ſerviceable to the rightful Prince; and inſtead of depoſing, doth but ſecure the Uſurper, alarming him againſt the future Attempts of others, to which, Confidence and Security might elſe expoſe him. And therefore *Jehoiada* did not declare againſt *Athaliah*, till he had engaged the Officers of the Army, and laid his Combination ſo, as Reaſon might vote it would prove ſucceſsful. But enough, and too much already of *Uſurped Powers*. Therefore,

III. *Thirdly*, We ought to obey the Commands of the Lawful Magiſtrate, in thoſe things which are in themſelves *neceſſary* to be done, and our *indeſpenſible Duty*; and that not only out of *Conſcience to God*, but alſo out of *Conſcience to men*. Such are all the Duties of the Law of Nature, and of the written Law of God, which the Magiſtrate ought to inforce upon us by his Authority; for he is *Cuſtos utriuſque Tabulæ, the Guardian of both Tables of the Law*. And though the Duties therein preſcribed, do beforehand bind the Conſcience to the practice of them; yet alſo is the guilt of tranſgreſſing them aggravated by the addition of the Magiſtrate's Command; and it is no contemptible Security added to the Laws of God, when they have a *Guard* of Humane Laws ſet about them; and none can violate the Laws of God, but he muſt alſo wrong and violate the Authority of his Prince. As for inſtance, We ought to worſhip God after a right and due manner; we ought to *honour our Parents, to abſtain from Theft, Murther, and Adultery*, though there were no humane Laws to require it from us.

But yet when the Magiſtrate ſhall interpoſe *his Authority*, and injoyn the very ſame; theſe Duties lie then more *preſſing* and *binding* upon our Conſciencies. For then the ſtrength of divers Commands is put together *into one*; and we are *doubly* obliged to theſe Duties, both by *thoſe Laws* of God which expreſly require them; and alſo by *another Law* of God, which requires *Obedience* to our *Magiſtrates*. Of this I think, there is no doubt at all made; and therefore,

IV. *Fourthly*; If the thing commanded be *indifferently Lawful*, and *appear ſo to us*; that is, if it be in its own Nature ſuch as we may either do it, or not do it without ſin, then are we to be determined by the Magiſtrate's Commands to do what he requires, and to abſtain from what he forbids. For though after the Magiſtrate hath interpoſed his Authority, the thing remains in it ſelf ſtill *indifferent*, yet it no longer remains *ſo*, as to our Practice; but it is a Sin in us, not to do what lawfully we may when he requires it. For I ſuppoſe a Magiſtrate hath a greater command over his Subjects, than any Father hath over his Children, ſince the Magiſtrate is the *Common Father*, *Pater Patriæ*; and Children are bound to obey him, rather than their Parents, when their Commands contradict one the other. Now which of you doth not aſſume to himſelf ſuch an Authority over his Child, as to think him bound in Duty, to do that upon your Command, which before you commanded him was meerly indifferent, and might either be done by him, or not done? The ſame Obedience therefore which you expect from your Children in things indifferent, the ſame you owe to your Prince, and the *Authority* that's over *you*.

And therefore it is a moſt *abſurd* Opinion which ſome have taken up, that things in themſelves *indifferent*, become *unlawful* when *impoſed*. As if that were unlawful to be *done* when commanded, which was lawful to be done, even without a Command: or any thing could be lawful, when only permitted; but ſinful, when enjoyned.

And as it is hugely abſurd and irrational, ſo it is very dangerous and pernicious: For it cuts the very Sinews, and plucks up the very Roots of Government. It caſhiers and abrogates the far greater part of all humane Laws; and abridgerh the Magiſtrate's Authority, in injoining any thing, but expreſs Duties, commanded before of God in Scripture.

And ſee what a wild Conſequence will follow upon this Tenent? For if things indifferently lawful, become ſinful when impoſed, then by the ſame Reaſon they muſt needs become neceſſary, when they are forbidden. And ſo conſequently, whatſoever of this Nature the Magiſtrate ſhall forbid, Men muſt look upon themſelves as bound in Conſcience to practiſe: And what *Monſters* lie in the Womb of this Conſequence, any underſtanding Man may at firſt glance perceive. What is this, but to ſpell the Magiſtrate's Authority *backwards*; and to give him that Power over your Conſciences by his *Prohibitions*; which you deny to his *Commands* and *Injunctions?* This *Tenent* therefore is moſt *ridiculous*, moſt *fooliſh*, and moſt *pernicious*.

We ought then in all things which are in themſelves *indifferent*, and *appear ſo to us*, to give ready and chearful Obedience to the Commands of our lawful Magiſtrates, and that for the Lord's ſake. And here they are not little Prejudices, nor little Inconveniencies, becauſe ſuch a Command croſſeth my former Cuſtoms, or my preſent Humour, that can ſuperſede my Obligation. No, nor is it lawful without very great and preſſing Reaſons, and almoſt a Neceſſity, to chuſe the *Paſſive part* of the Command, to undergo the *Penalty* rather than fulfil the *Precept*. And that becauſe the Penalty is only annexed, as the *ſecondary Will* of the Magiſtrate, to inforce the Precept; nor doth the Law primarily aim at *Puniſhment*, but at *Conformity* to it. This is to be accounted the *Will* of the Magiſtrate, whoſe *Will* is our *Obligation* in all things that are lawful and indifferent. And therefore to chuſe the *Penal*, before the *Preceptive* Part of Obedience, without very weighty and neceſſitating Reaſons urging us thereunto, cannot altogether be excuſed from *Diſobedience*; becauſe it comes not up to that Conformity which the Magiſtrate principally intends. That's the fourth Poſition.

V. *Fifthly*; If the thing be indifferently lawful in it ſelf, but appears *doubtful* unto us, and we cannot reſolve our ſelves whether it be lawful or evil; I think we are obliged (till we receive clearer Light and Information) to take *that part* of the doubt which the Magiſtrate commands us, as being the ſafeſt, and moſt ſatisfactory to Conſcience. And my reaſon is this; Becauſe the Obligation that lies upon us to *obey* the

the Magiſtrate's Commands, is *certain*; but the *unlawfulneſs* of what thou *doubteſt* is *not ſo:* and therefore his Authority ought to preponderate with us, and make that our *undoubted Duty*, which was before but a *doubted and ſuſpected Sin.*

Indeed, the Apoſtle tells us, *Rom.* 14. 23. *That whatſoever is not of Faith, i. e.* whatſoever is not done, or forborn with a rational perſuaſion of the lawfulneſs of doing or forbearing it, *is ſin*; and that *whoſoever doubteth, is damned if he eat.* But in this Caſe, the Magiſtrate's Commands do not ingage thee to do any thing *doubting*, but rather will ſolve thy *Doubts*, and diſintangle thee from the Snare in which thy Conſcience was held. For though the nature of the thing be not at all *changed* by his Commands, yet thy doubtful Mind may be well *ſetled:* For *upon his Command*, thou haſt reaſon to think that thy *Duty*, which *before his Command* thou couldſt not abſolutely conclude to be a *Sin.* That's a fifth Poſition.

Sixthly; If the thing injoyned, be in it ſelf ſinful and unlawful, or at leaſt appear ſo unto us, then take theſe two following Rules. VI.

Firſt; We ought not, upon any Pretences or Inducements whatſoever, to yield *Active Obedience* to ſuch a Command. In this Caſe, that Plea of the Apoſtle holds good, and will do ſo ever, *Acts* 5. 29. *We ought to obey God rather than Men.* And, *Acts* 4. 19. *Whether it be right in the ſight of God to hearken unto you, more than unto God, judge ye.* And in this Caſe, it was no rude nor uncivil, but a noble and truly Heroick Anſwer, which the Three Worthies gave unto *Nebuchadnezzar*, Dan. 3. 18. *Be it known unto thee, O King, that we will not ſerve thy Gods, nor worſhip the Golden Image which thou haſt ſet up.* For when Princes Commands contradict the Commands of God, they carry no Authority in them to inforce our *Active Obedience*; no more than the Commands of an *Inferiour Magiſtrate* do, when they contradict the Laws of the *Supream.* 1.

Yea, we are not to yield *Active Obedience*, not only when their Commands *are* expreſly againſt the Commands of God; but when we are verily in our own Conſciences ſo perſuaded. For Conſcience rules us in God's Name, and whatſoever it dictates, it believes to be the very Will and Mind of God. And therefore to ſlight the Voice of Conſcience, is interpretatively to ſlight the Voice of God. And thoſe who will not follow the Voice of Conſcience, when they believe its Dictates to be the Will of God, would not follow them though indeed they were ſo.

But then we muſt be ſure that we have expreſs Word and Warrant from God; and not take up with doubtful and obſcure Texts, and more doubtful and remote Conſequences, to diſpenſe with us from that Obedience, which is evidently and frequently required. But,

Secondly; Though we may not yield *Active Obedience* to the unlawful Commands of our Superiours, yet we are bound to yield *Paſſive Obedience* to them. For all humane Laws conſiſt of a *Precept* and a *Penalty*; where the *Precept* may not be *obeyed*, yet the *Penalty* muſt be *ſubmitted to*, with all Patience and Quietneſs, though it reach to the loſs of our Eſtates, or of our Liberty, yea, the deareſt of all our Poſſeſſions, Life it ſelf; unleſs we can prudently withdraw our ſelves, and avoid their Rage by flight. That's the ſixth Poſition. 2.

Seventhly, and laſtly; We ought in no caſe whatſoever to reſiſt, and rebel againſt the lawful Powers that God hath ſet over us; yea, though they ſhould uſe their Power unlawfully. *For whoſoever reſiſteth the Power, reſiſteth the Ordinance of God. And they that reſiſt, ſhall receive to themſelves Damnation.* As it is in the Government of a State or Nation, if any inferiour Magiſtrate abuſe his Power over thee, thou art not preſently to oppoſe him by any violent or illegal Proceedings; nor to make any Inſurrection againſt him, and pull him off his Tribunal, or diveſt him of his Authority; but appeal to the Prince and Supream Magiſtrate, for redreſs of thoſe Wrongs. So likewiſe here, if the Supream Magiſtrate ſhould abuſe his Sovereign Power, and command thee to do what God, his Superiour, hath commanded thee not to do, and ſhall puniſh thee for not obeying him, and offending God; thou art not to reſiſt, nor make Conſpiracies againſt him, nor to raiſe Tumults and Seditions to depoſe him from his Authority; but only quietly and meekly to appeal unto God, who alone is his *Judge* and *Ruler*, and to beg him to take thy Cauſe into his cognizance, and redreſs thy Wrongs and Injuries. VII.

Yea,

Yea, put the Caſe as high as we can; ſuppoſe that Chriſtian Subjects ſhould live under the Dominion of a Prince, who, as he is a *God* in reſpect of *Power*, ſo he is a *Devil* in reſpect of *Cruelty* and *Miſchief:* Suppoſe the two worſt Caſes that can befal them.

Firſt; That he ſhould injoyn them *Superſtition* and *Idolatry*.

Secondly; That he ſhould oppreſs them by *Perſecution* and *Tyranny*.

If ever there were a ſpecious Pretence for Subjects to ſay, *Shall I ſmite him, ſhall I ſmite him?* it is in this Suppoſition. Here ſeems the beſt Cauſe, and the higheſt Equity in the World, to deliver the *World* from a *Monſter*, and the *Church* from a *Devil*. Yet, I ſay, neither of theſe can juſtify *Rebellion* againſt him, or *Revenge* upon him. Was there ever a more accompliſh'd and conſummate Wretch than *Nero?* A Man that made the *martyrdom* of Chriſtians his *Paſtime?* *and burnt them in the Streets of *Rome* to light him from the Stews. And yet St. *Paul* commands the Roman Chriſtians to ſubmit *to him for Conſcience-ſake*, and threatens them with *Damnation* if they *reſiſt*. No, we ought in this Caſe (though it be far from the fiery Spirit of our Times) to *receive Blows*, but not to *ſtrike again*, and rather to indure the greateſt of Cruelties, than lift up our hands to revenge them.

* *Pereuntibus (Chriſtianis) ludibria addita, ut ferarum tergis contecti, laniatu canum interirent, aut crucibus affixi aut flammandi; atque ubi defeciſſet dies, in uſum nocturni luminis uterentur.* Tacit *Annal. l.* 15.

And indeed there is a great deal of reaſon for it. For,

1. *Firſt*; *Puniſhment* is an Act of *Vengeance*. Now Revenge is ſuch a wild untamed thing, that God hath not truſted it in any private hands, but reſerved it to himſelf, who can beſt diſpenſe and govern it. *Vengeance is mine, ſaith the Lord, and I will repay it*, Rom. 12. 19. So that none ought to intermeddle with this part of Juſtice, but thoſe whom God hath impower'd thereunto, and made his Subſtitute Officers and Miniſters to diſpenſe it, and that is only the Magiſtrate. Rom. 13. 4. *He is the Miniſter of God, a Revenger to execute Wrath upon him that doth evil.* None are to be *Revengers* but *God* and *Magiſtrates*. Magiſtrates upon *evil Men*, and God upon *evil Magiſtrates*. Private Chriſtians have nothing to do with *Revenge*, or Puniſhment: no, not to inflict it one upon another; much leſs upon their *Rulers:* and if they do, as they *rebel* againſt *Men*, ſo they *uſurp* upon God, and put themſelves in his ſtead.

2. *Secondly*; Princes are *ſupream* to all but God; and therefore *accountable* to none beſides him. All Humane Power is *ſubordinate* to theirs, and *derived* from it: for from the *chief*, do *other* Magiſtrates receive their Authority and Commiſſion; and therefore cannot any Humane Power puniſh thoſe on whoſe Authority they depend.

3. *Thirdly*; What a wide Gap for all manner of *Confuſion* and *Diſorder*, would this open to the World! who, that fancies himſelf aggrieved and wrong'd, would not preſently make a Party, and ſound the Trumpet, and proclaim that he had Equity and Juſtice on his ſide, and ſo hurl all into *Tumults* and wild *Confuſion?* But though thou mayſt have ſuffered real injuſtice; yet thou oughteſt not to rebel, The Wiſe Man hath long ſince condemned the *ſtriking of Princes for Equity*, Prov. 17. 26. Whether for *their Equities* ſake or *thine*. And the Apoſtle reckons it the *glory* of a Chriſtian, and an acceptable *Service* to God, patiently to indure when we *ſuffer Evil* for *doing Well*. 1 Pet. 2. 19, 20, 21. *What glory is it, if when ye be buffeted for your Faults, ye ſhall take it patiently? But if when ye do well, and ſuffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: becauſe alſo Chriſt ſuffered for us, leaving us an Example, that ye ſhould follow his ſteps.*

Yea, even *Religion*, the beſt and moſt precious of all our Enjoyments, is too weak a cauſe to juſtify Rebellion and Inſurrections. To think that upon the account of *Religion*, or any Form, or Mode, either of Worſhip or Diſcipline, that Men are zealous for, they may lawfully oppoſe, yea, and depoſe the Authority that God hath ſet over them, is a Tenet utterly *irreligious*. And truly Religion can never ſo much ſuffer by the fierceſt *Perſecution*, as by ſuch wild and rebellious *Principles*. It is a Doctrine quite contrary to the true *Genius* and *Conſtitution* of Chriſtianity. In the Primitive Times, for the long ſpace of Three hundred Years, till at length the *Roman* Emperours gave up their Names to *Chriſt*, thoſe who commanded the whole World, ſet all their Wit and Force to cruſh this growing Doctrine, but were ſtill diſappointed in this Attempt. Whence this Defeat? Was it becauſe they were overborn by the too powerful Reſiſtance that the Chriſtians made againſt them?

Nothing

Nothing leſs: * For though almoſt every City, every Village, every Family; yea, their Camps, and Armies abounded with Chriſtians, as *Tertullian* witneſſeth in his *Apologetick*, yet under all thoſe ſavage and barbarous Perſecutions, that butcher'd them up *like Sheep appointed to the Slaughter*, we never read of any *Inſurrection* againſt the lawful Magiſtrate.

* *Si enim hoſtes apertos, non tantum vindices occultos agere vellemus, deeſſet nobis vis numerorum & copiarum? Plures nimirum, Mauri & Marcomani, ipſique Parthi, vel quantæcunque unius tamen loci, & ſuorum finium gentes, quam totius orbis? Externi ſumus, & veſtra omnia implevimus, urbes, inſulas caſtella, municipia, conciliabula, caſtra ipſa, tribus, decurias, palatium, ſenatum, forum; ſola vobis relinquimus templa. Cui bello non idonei, non prompti fuiſſemus, etiam copiis impares, qui tam libenter trucidamur, ſi non apud iſtam diſciplinam, magis occidi liceret quam occidere?* Tertul. Apol.

† Nay, the *Fathers* boaſt and glory of this *conquering patience* of the Chriſtians, and *challenge* the Heathen to produce any one Inſtance of a *Mutiny* or *Sedition*, wherin a Chriſtian was engaged. * Notwithſtanding their vaſt *numbers* that might make them *potent*; notwithſtanding they were all *devoted to Ruin and Deſtruction*, which might make them *deſperate*; and *Deſpair* added to *Power* makes it *invincible*; yet we read of no Tumults, no Uproars, no Wars raiſed by them in the State; for the Peace and Proſperity of which they prayed *dying*; and took the Sword rather into their *Throats* than into their *Hands*: Nor was it their method to propagate Chriſtianity and true Religion, by any other Blood but their own. This was the way by which the *Primitive Church* thrived, which ſent more Chriſtians to Heaven, and gained more to be Chriſtians on Earth than ever the Pomp and Splendour of it hath done ſince.

† *Circa Majeſtatem Imperatoris infamamur; tamen nunquam Albiniani, vel Nigriani, vel Caſſiani, inveniri potuerunt Chriſtiani.* Tertul. *ad Scapulam.*

Unde Caſſii, & Nigri, & Albini? unde qui inter duas lauros obſident Cæſarem? Unde qui faucibus ejus exprimendis palæſtricam exercent?—— De Romanis, ni fallor, id eſt, de non Chriſtianis. Tert. *Apol. vid.* Aug. *de civ. Dei.* l. 22. c. 6

* *Non nos adverſum te, Imperator, armavit ipſa, quæ fortiſſima eſt in periculis, deſperatio. Tenemus ecce arma, & non reſiſtimus, quia mori magis quam vincere volumus, & innocentes interire, quam noxii vivere præoptamus. Exuperius legionis Thebææ ſignifer, ad Maximinian.*

This was the true Evangelical Spirit, which taught them to obey their Magiſtrates Commands in what was *lawful*; and in what was *otherwiſe*, either prudently to avoid their rage by flight, or patiently to endure it by dying. They had not learn'd that Lirry, that the Saints are the only Lords of the World; that all the *ungodly* (and all muſt be ſuch, whom they pleaſed) were but *Uſurpers* and *Intruders* upon *their Rights:* That they muſt *Overturn, Overturn, Overturn*, to make way for the *Kingdom* of *Chriſt*; intending, no doubt, to ſet themſelves, one at *his right Hand*, and another at *his left*, in that *his Kingdom*. The Doctrine of the Goſpel taught them not theſe violent and rebellious Principles; but it is as full of *Peace* as it is of *Purity*; and inſtructed them to acknowledge their Magiſtrates Authority, to pray for their Proſperity, to obey their Commands chearfully, or quietly to ſuffer Puniſhment: and this, though they had abundant *Provocation to reſiſt*, and *Probability* of being *ſucceſsful*.

Much more *damnable* therefore is it, when there is no ſuch *provocation* given; when *Religion*, and *Piety*, and *Juſtice*, are only pretended; when Godly Princes diſcharge their Conſcience, and their Chriſtian Duty in the Government committed unto them; much more damnable is it, I ſay, yea, damnable to the utmoſt degree of Damnation, for Subjects upon every whimſical Diſcontent, to reſiſt, impriſon, depoſe, and murther them; while they cheat and cozen the World with the Pretences of Saints, but do the Works of Devils.

And now had this Doctrine been more preſt, and more ponder'd of late Years, we had not *this day* had this ſad occaſion to be humbled for the unparallel'd wickedneſs of *Yeſterday*. A day it was, that were it not it afforded us an opportunity to teſtify our abhorrency and deteſtation of that bloody Villany it once ſaw, we might well wiſh that the Year would skip it over; and imprecate it, as *Job* doth the day of his *Birth*, *Job* 3. 3, 4. *Let that day periſh, let it be darkneſs, let not God regard it, neither let the Light ſhine upon it: let Darkneſs, and the ſhadow of Death ſtain it, and a perpetual Cloud dwell upon it.* A day that hath brought an indelible Blot and Infamy upon theſe Nations, and made us a Reproach and Scorn to the whole World. And what is worſe, it hath expoſed Religion it ſelf to contempt and hatred, and made it a Reproach to Scorners, who whilſt they ſaw thoſe very Men that ſo highly pretended Reformation, and the Power of Godlineſs, imbrew their Hands in *Royal and Sacred Blood*, have been ready to conclude, that to profeſs Religion, is nothing elſe but to

ſeek a Varniſh and Colour for ſome black and horrid Wickedneſs. This hath rendred the Reverend Name of Godlineſs, deſpicable and odious to prophane Spirits; who whilſt they ſaw none priviledged to act their Rapines, Revenge, Injuſtice, and moſt wrongful Uſurpation and Tyranny, but thoſe whoſe Mouths were as full of a glorious Profeſſion, as their Hands were of wicked Deeds, have charged all thoſe Impieties upon the ſcore of Religion, and made it bear the burthen of thoſe Crimes with which it is not conſiſtent.

Is was once the glory of the Proteſtant Religion, that it taught Subjects to account the Perſons of their Princes Sacred and Inviolable; Supream to all under God, and accountable to none but Him: and poſſibly this one Doctrine hath been no ſmall Advantage to make it gain ſo much ground in ſo ſhort a ſpace. But now our Adverſaries triumph in the ſhame of our Profeſſion, when the moſt notorious Regicides, who not only avow the Doctrine, but publickly perpetrate the Fact of depoſing and killing a King, are found among thoſe who pretended to be at the greateſt diſtance from Romiſh Principles and Practices. There is indeed a great difference between the Doctrine of a *Schiſm*, and the Doctrine of a *Church*; between the practice of a *Nation*, and the practice of a prevalent *Faction* in the Nation. And bleſſed be God, we have this ſtill left to ſilence the Recriminations of all Antichriſtian Adverſaries, that to depoſe and aſſaſſinate *Kings*, is not the Doctrine of the *Proteſtant Church*, but of the *Romiſh Synagogue*. And as it was not the Doctrine of the *Church*, but of a *Schiſm*; ſo neither was it the *Fact* of the *Nation*, but of a rebellious and prevailing *Faction* in it; nor could their armed violence reach the *Head*, till they had firſt deſtroyed the *Body* both of *Church* and *State*.

But it is not the Work of this Day to *excuſe any*, but to *ſtir up all* to bemoan this bloody and horrid Crime. A Crime the moſt horrid and accurſed that ever was acted under the Sun, but only when a Miracle eclips'd it from looking on. Though the Hiſtories of all Nations abound with the ſad Tragedies of their lawful Princes aſſaſſinated by their Subjects, yet we may ſtill remark, that their Wickedneſs was either ſo Timerous, or ſo Modeſt, as to endeavour to hide the Blood they ſhed, and durſt not be otherwiſe guilty, but with thoſe Advantages of Night and Secrecy, that might make them appear Innocent. But here Royal and Sacred Blood is Theatrically ſpilt; and the Fact avowed by the impudent Pomp and Solemnity of Villany. Villany ſo profligate, that it ſcorn'd to proceed in a clandeſtine manner, but as it was reſolved to out-do all the Examples of former Regicides, ſo to outface all that ſhould dare to oppoſe or condemn it. And therefore to add Ceremony and Scorn to Murther, they erect a Pageantry of Juſtice; ſummon the *Throne* to appear before the *Bar*; arraign *Majeſty*, before which Awe and Reverence ſhould have made them tremble; condemn him for their own Crimes; and execute that wicked Sentence with all the Oſtentation that triumphant Spight and Malice could invent.

And that which makes all this the more odious and execrable; all this was tranſacted under *Forms of Juſtice*, and *ſpecious Pretexts of the Glory of God*, and the Intereſts of Religion. Here the *Faith* bleeds together with the *Defender* of it: Religion it ſelf ſuffers by the vile hypocriſy of thoſe who pretended to an higher ſtrain of Godlineſs in Practice, and Reformation in Diſcipline, than yet the World had ever known. And it is likely to ſuffer an eternal Reproach, as long as there are any *Popiſh* Blaſphemers, to caſt it into the Teeth of *Proteſtants*, that they never thought their Religion *pure enough*, till it was *waſh'd in the Blood* of a *Chriſtian King*, of the ſame profeſſion with themſelves. O prodigy of Wickedneſs! that ever *Juſtice* ſhould be pretended to the committing of a Crime ſo full of dread and horrour, that it might well puzzle and *nonplus Juſtice* how to *puniſh* it, and *Mercy* how to *forgive* it! That ever the increaſe of true Piety, and the Advancement of the Honour of Religion ſhould be made a colour to the ſhedding the *Blood of a King*, a *Fact* that gave *Religion* the moſt *mortal Wound* that ever it received, ſince it was firſt planted in the World by *the Blood of our Saviour!* And yet thoſe Sacred Names, *The Purity of Worſhip*, *The Reformation of Abuſes*, *The Honour and Glory of God*, *Law and Juſtice*, *and the due Liberty of the Subject*, muſt be made a *Stale* by thoſe Men (who could not elſe have ſucceſsfully acted ſuch a *deviliſh* part, unleſs they appeared like *Angels of Light*) to promote an impiety, whoſe direct Deſign, and natural Conſequence, was to *overthrow* and *root them all out:* and when they had caſt out and ſlaughtered, not only their

their *Brethren*, but their *common Father*, ſet up their cry with thoſe Hypocrites in *Iſaiah*, *Now the Lord be glorified.* Iſa. 66. 5.

And as this Fact was *in it ſelf* moſt *impious*, ſo it was moſt *fatal* in all its *Train of Conſequents*. Nothing but *Ruins and Miſchiefs*, *Extortion*, *Diſtraction*, *Sacrilege*, *Injuſtice*, *the Blood of many*, *and the Tears of all*, *Perſonal*, *Domeſtick*, *and Publick Evils*, *Rents and Diviſions at Home*, *Scorn and Contempt Abroad*, have almoſt ever ſince followed, one upon the neck of another: and would to God they were ſo little felt and known, as to need recounting. Nor indeed was it fit, that ſo horrid a Crime ſhould have any better *Attendants*. And truly how could it be otherwiſe, where *Oppreſſion* and *Violence* were the only *Legiſlative Power?* where *Anarchy* and *Tyranny*, the two *Extreams* of Government, were always ſtriving for the upper hand? Where our *Lives*, *Liberties* and *Eſtates* depended only upon the *rude vote of the Sword?* Our *Laws*, the common Fence and Security of the Nation, and every Man's beſt and richeſt Patrimony, were themſelves *outlawed* by the private Intereſts of a few ambitious Malecontents: Our Church rent in pieces by Schiſms, Errours, Hereſies, damnable Doctrines of Devils; not only publickly broach'd, but publickly patronized too.

And yet ſome eaſie Minds are ready to think thoſe times happy, becauſe of the *Liberty*, or rather indeed the Licentiouſneſs of Religion. But was Religion indeed in ſo good a plight, when in a *Junćto*, the Neceſſity and Uſefulneſs of the *Miniſtry* was put to the Queſtion? When Learning, Religion, and the Holy and Precious Ordinances of God, depended upon the rotten Breath of a Company of Men of rotten and corrupt Minds, whoſe *Gain was their Godlineſs*, and had nothing Holy belonging to them, but what they got by Sacrilege? Was Religion in ſo good a plight, when we daily feared an Interdict upon our publick Aſſemblies? When the Solemn Worſhip of God was interrupted, and affronted by every one that had but Impudence and Enthuſiaſm enough to do it? Nay, indeed Religion was vaniſh'd into canting Phraſes, into an empty and notional Profeſſion; and that very Profeſſion, dwindled away into innumerable Sects and Schiſms, Errours and Hereſies; that certainly none can think it was in a proſperous Condition, but thoſe who think Religion then proſpers, when it is not much, but manifold. Thoſe that tolerated every Sect, every Opinion and Religion, ſeemed ſo to carry themſelves, as if within a while they would have expected the True. For certainly, when once Men in Power can allow of falſe Doctrines, the next ſtep is to imbrace them, the next to impoſe them.

Yea, the fickleneſs and inſtability of our Uſurped Governments, which might give us hope of Relief, proved only the frequent renewing of our Miſery, one Power ſtill ſucceeding another in the ſame Deſign, all ſeeking to advance themſelves upon the Ruins of the Publick. I remember an *Apologue* of an ulcerated Man, who, when his Friends would have driven away a ſwarm of Flies that had been long ſucking his Sores; Let them alone, ſaith he, theſe are pretty well ſated; but if you drive them away, freſh ones will come, with freſh Appetites, and more torment me. So truly it fared with us in our Toſſes and Change of Governments. When one Swarm of our Governours had their Greedineſs and Avarice ſomewhat glutted, then were we conſigned over unto another, who ate the very Fleſh of theſe Nations, and drank their Tears and Blood. Yea, and what was both the Reproach and Aggravation of our Miſery, thoſe Flies were but the Off-ſpring of Dirt and Dunghils. Our Plague was like that of *Egypt*, the very *duſt of the earth crawl'd upon us.* The meaneſt of the People were our Rulers, and out of thoſe Brambles proceeded Fire, that conſumed the *Cedars of Lebanon*. And according to the Pedigree of our Princes, ſuch were our Prieſts and Teachers. If any could but prate Nonſenſe, and prove it by Blaſphemy, this was a ſufficient Conſecration into the Office. This was enough to make him a moſt admired Light, wo indeed was but an *Ignis fatuus*, leading the ſilly and deluded Rout through the Bogs and Precipices of Errour and Hereſie, into Perdition.

Haud parcit populis regnum breve Stat.

This was the Poſture both of Church and State, in thoſe bleſſed Times of *Religion* and *Liberty*, which they ſo much boaſt of, and which were ſo highly advanced by thoſe Mens zealous Endeavours, that they were grown quite out of reach, and almoſt out of ſight: and had not God by a Miracle of Divine Mercy interpoſed, within a while we ſhould neither have had the Face nor the Name of *Religion* or *Liberty* left among us. But he infatuated their Counſels, and defeated their Deſigns; and when there

was

was no viſible Power to break them, he daſh'd them in pieces one againſt the other, till they mutually brake themſelves. *So let all thine Enemies periſh, O Lord; but let the King rejoyce in God, and joy in thy ſtrength; through the Mercy of the moſt High, let him never be moved.*

Now although it hath pleaſed Almighty God to break that Yoak from off our Necks, and to ſet us free from that Oppreſſion and Violence; yet we ought not only to deteſt, but bemoan the Outrages and Wickedneſſes that were then committed; and ſeek to God, that he would avert from us thoſe Plagues and Judgments which the guilt of a part, may deſervedly bring upon theſe whole Nations. For this is the unhappineſs of being link'd, though not in Conſpiracy, yet in National Society with Evil-doers; that although we firſt ſuffer *from* their Sins, yet we may afterwards ſuffer *for* them. When but one *Achan* had ſinn'd; and that not ſo heinouſly, as to make him either a Murtherer or a Regicide, God puniſheth the whole Camp of *Iſrael* for it, and cauſeth them to flee, and fall before their Enemies; Joſh. 7. 11. *Iſrael hath ſinned, for they have taken of the accurſed Thing, and have alſo ſtolen and diſſembled.* It was but the Fact of one private Man, and yet God charged it upon the whole, *Iſrael hath ſinned, and they have taken.* Such a Malignant Influence hath the very Community with wicked Men, though we have no Communion with their Wickedneſs, to diffuſe Guilt and Judgments upon a whole Nation. Believe it, Blood is a loud and crying Sin. The firſt that was ever ſpilt, was heard as far as from Earth to Heaven; Gen. 4. 10. *The Voice of thy Brother's Blood cryeth to me from the Ground.* And, *Revel.* 6. 10. *The Souls under the Altar cry with a loud Voice, How long, O Lord, Holy and True, doſt thou not judge and avenge our Blood on them which dwell on the Earth?* And if the Blood of private Perſons be ſo audible in God's Ears, how much more loud and vocal is the Blood of a ſlaughtered *Monarch!* Eſpecially, when the Blood, Oppreſſion, and Ruins of ſo many thouſands as were involved in the direful Conſequences of that fatal Day, joyn their Voices with it, aſſault Heaven, and Cry aloud for Vengeance. Let us then cry mightily to God, that the Voice of our Prayers may be louder in his Ears, than the Voice of our Provocations: and let us by our Tears waſh away that foul ſtain that lies upon our Profeſſion; and beg of God, that he would pour out a plentiful Effuſion of the *Blood of Chriſt*, to cleanſe theſe Nations from the Guilt of Blood: for nothing leſs than the *Blood of God*, which could expiate even for the ſhedding of it ſelf, can expiate for ſhedding the Blood of a *King*.

TO

TO THE READER.

THE *following* Book *has ſo much of* ſubſtantial Worth, *together with ſo many* true Beauties, *as not to* need Recommendation: *The* Deſign *therefore of this* Addreſs *to Thee,* Good Reader, *is partly to* aſſure *thee the Work is genuine, partly to give thee ſome light into the general Nature of it, or* what *thou art* here to expect.

It was my Happineſs, many Years ago, to contract a very intimate Acquaintance, I might call it Friendſhip, *with that great Perſon the Author, while we lived Neighbours in that Flouriſhing, Religious, and Liberal* City, where theſe Diſcourſes had their Birth, and became firſt Vocally Publick. And I doubt not, but that the* Memories *of many of the* Citizens *there, are a* ſufficient Record, *by the conſulting of which, any who ſhould ſcruple my Teſtimony, as leſs competent, may receive* plenary ſatisfaction. *I being conſtantly employed my ſelf, at the hours when this Expoſition was delivered, could not be an Auditor of it. But as I then underſtood what Subject my Frind was treating on, ſo now reading the Tract, I cannot but acknowledge the true Spirit and Stile of the Author.*

* Exeter.

All, I think, that can be doubted, is, Whether He deſigned *this Work for the Preſs, and* put *thereto his* Laſt Hand.

As to the former point, I am apt to think, when he firſt undertook the Argument, he deſigned Nothing more Publick than are our uſual Sermons. But having finiſh'd what he propoſed, his Labours were judged ſo exceeding Uſeful, and had beſides ſo highly pleaſed his Audience, that he was reſtleſly importun'd to make them more Publick. And though through exceſs of Modeſty he would not conſent hereto, for that time, yet he tranſcribed them himſelf, (*for no one elſe could, he having written them at firſt in a peculiar Shorthand*) *and having tranſcribed them,* left *them as a* Depoſitum *in the hands of one of his Pariſhioners, with whom he had ſome time ſojourned, (a Perſon of Integrity, and well know to me, though now deceaſed) to be diſpoſed of after his Death.*

From ſuch his Tranſcribing *and* Entruſting *them, as well as from ſome* particular Indications, *apparent in them, and very convincing to me (who was well acquainted with his way of Writing his Sermon-Notes, and eſpecially from the addition of* divers Marginal Notes,) *which I am ſure were put there both by himſelf, and after his firſt Tranſcribing pains, I conclude (as to the latter point of doubt) he* had put the laſt Hand *he intended to put to them.*

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I ſee nothing farther now needful to add, but to pray, That the Book *may be* Publick enough; *I mean* Read *by as many as the Copies will ſuffice, till they are worn out, and* Practiſed *by all who Read it: Then I am ſure both the* Author's *and* Reader's Pains *will be very* happily placed.

Peckham-place,
July 3. 1691.

Edw. Cork *and* Roſſe.

AN

AN EXPOSITION UPON THE Commandments.

The First Commandment.

God ſpake theſe words, and ſaid, I am the Lord thy God: Thou ſhalt have none other Gods but me.

THERE are two things in the general which perfect a Chriſtian: the one, is a clear and diſtinct Knowledge of his Duty; the other, a conſciencious Practice of it, correſpondent to his Knowledge; and both theſe are in an equal degree neceſſary. For as we can have no ſolid, nor well-grounded Hopes of Eternal Salvation without Obedience, ſo we can have no ſure nor eſtabliſh'd Rule for our Obedience without Knowledge: And therefore our Work and Office, is not only Exhortation but Inſtruction; not only to excite the Affections, but to inform the Judgment; and we muſt as well illuminate as warm.

Πολυσχιδὲς μὲν τῆς θείας διδασκαλίας τὸ σῶμα συναιρεῖται δὲ ὡς ἐν κεφαλαίῳ εἰς τε μάθησιν ἐντολῶν, καὶ φυλακὴν, εἰς πεπλὴν θείαν γνῶσιν, καὶ προσκύνησιν. Just Mart. Expoſ. Fidei.

Knowledge indeed may be found without Practice; and our Age abounds with ſuch Speculative Chriſtians, whoſe Religion is but like the Rickets, that makes them grow large in the Head, but narrow in the Breaſt; whoſe Brains are repleniſh'd with Notions, but their Hearts ſtraightned towards God; and their Lives and Actions as black and deformed, as if their Light had only tann'd and diſcolour'd them. I confeſs, indeed, that their Knowledge may be beneficial unto others, who may ſavourily feed upon that Meat which theſe do only mince and carve: yet where it is thus over-born by unruly Luſts, and contradicted by a licentious Converſation, to themſelves it is moſt fatal and baneful. It is like Light ſhut up in a Lanthorn, which may ſerve to guide and direct others, but only ſoots, and at laſt burns that which contain'd it.

But although Knowledge may be thus without Practice, yet it is utterly impoſſible that the Practice of Godlineſs ſhould be without Knowledge.

For if we know not the limits of Sin and Duty, what is required of us, and what is forbidden, it cannot be ſuppoſed, but that in this corrupted State of our Natures, we ſhall unavoidably run into many hainous Miſcarriages, unleſs it were poſſible for us to pleaſe God at unawares, and ſo get to Heaven by great chance.

And therefore, that we might be informed what we ought to do, and what to avoid, it hath pleaſed God who is the great Governour, and will be the righteous Judge of all the World, to preſcribe us Laws, for the regulating of our Actions; and that we might not be ignorant what they are, He hath openly promulgated them in his Word: For when we had miſerably defaced the Law of Nature, originally written in our Hearts, ſo that many of the Commands of it were no longer legible, it ſeemed good to his infinite Wiſdom and Mercy, to tranſcribe and copy out that Law in the ſacred Tables of the Scriptures, and to ſuper-add many poſitive Precepts and Injunctions which were not before impoſed.

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The

The Bible therefore is the Statute-Book of God's Kingdom, therein is compriſed the whole body of the Heavenly Law; the perfect Rules of an holy Life, and the ſure Promiſes of a glorious one. And the Decalogue, or Ten Commandments, is a Summary or brief Epitome of thoſe Laws, written by the immediate Finger of God, and contracted into ſo ſhort an Abridgement, not only to eaſe our Memories, but to gain our Veneration; for ſtentious Commands are beſt befitting Majeſty. And indeed, if we conſider the paucity of the Expreſſions, and yet the copiouſneſs and variety of the Matter contained in them, we muſt needs acknowledge not only their Authority to be Divine, but likewiſe the Skill and Art in reducing the whole Duty of Man to ſo brief a Compendium.

Exod. 34. 28. The words are but few, called therefore the words of the Covenant, the Ten Words; but the ſenſe and matter contained in them, is vaſt and infinite. The reſt of the Scripture is but a Commentary upon them; either exhorting us to Obedience by Arguments, or alluring us to it by Promiſes, or frighting us from tranſgreſſing by Threatnings, or exciting us to the one, and reſtraining us from the other, by Examples recorded in the Hiſtorical part of it.

But before I come to ſpeak of the Commandments themſelves, it will be neceſſary to premiſe ſomething concerning the Time, the Reaſon, and Manner of their Delivery:

The Time (according to the beſt Computation of Chronology) was about Two thouſand four hundred and ſixty Years after the Creation of the World; Two hun-
Exod. 20. 1. dred and twenty Years after *Iſrael*'s deſcent into *Egypt*, and the third Month after their departure out of *Egypt*; before the Birth of Chriſt almoſt Fifteen hundred Years, and therefore above Three thouſand before our Days.

This was the firſt time that God ſelected to himſelf a National Church in the World; and therefore it ſeemed expedient to his Wiſdom, to preſcribe them Laws and Rules how they ought to order both their Demeanour, and his Worſhip and Service. Before this the Law of Nature was the ſtanding Rule for Obedience; but becauſe it was blotted and raz'd by the firſt Tranſgreſſion, it was ſupplied in many particulars by Traditions delivered down from one to another: And thoſe of the Patriarchs, who according to the Preſcripts of this Law, endeavoured to pleaſe and ſerve God, were accepted of him, and frequently obtained the Privilege of eſpecial Revelations, either by Dreams, or Viſions, or heavenly Voices, concerning thoſe things wherein they were more particularly to obey his Will. In thoſe firſt Ages God made no diſtinction of People or Nations, but as it is ſince the Wall of Partition is broken down, and the *Jewiſh* OEconomy abrogated by the Death of Chriſt, ſo was
Acts 10. 35. it before, that in every Nation he that feared God, and wrought Righteouſneſs, was accepted of him.

But the World totally degenerating into vile Superſtitions and Idolatries, the Knowledge and Fear of the true God was ſcarcely any where to be found, but only in the Family and Poſterity of *Abraham*; and even there too we have reaſon to ſuſpect a great Decay and Corruption, eſpecially in their long aboad among the Idolatrous
Joſh. 24. 14 *Egyptians*; yea, the Scripture doth in ſeveral places expreſly charge them with it: and in all probability they took the Pattern of their Golden Calf from the *Egyptian Apis*,
Ezek. 20. 7, 8. being Idolaters only in a younger Figure, and a leſſer Volume. God therefore juſtly rejects all the reſt of the World; but being mindful of his Promiſe to their Father, and the Father of the Faithful, appropriates this People to himſelf as his peculiar Inheritance: And becauſe it was manifeſt by experience, that neither the Law of Nature, nor Oral Tradition, handed down along from one Generation to another, were of ſufficient force to preſerve alive the Knowledge and Worſhip of the true God, but notwithſtanding theſe, the whole Earth was become wicked and idolatrous; that therefore this People whom God had now taken to himſelf, might have all poſſible advantages to continue in his Fear and Service, and that they might not degenerate as the reſt of the World had done, he himſelf proclaims unto them that Law by which he would Govern them, writes it upon Tables of Stone, commits them into the hands of *Moſes*, whom he had conſtituted his Lieutenant; and commands them to be laid up in the Ark as a perpetual Monument of his Authority, and their Duty. How wretchedly depraved are our Natures, when even that which is the very Light and Law of them is ſo obliterated and defaced, that God would rather intruſt its Preſervation to Stones, than us; and thought it more ſecure when engraven on ſenſeleſs Tables, than when written on our Hearts!

The

The Manner wherein this Law was delivered, is described to be very terrible and astonishing: the Wisdom of God design'd it so, on purpose to possess the People with the greater Reverence of it; and to awaken in their Souls a due Respect to those old despised Dictates of their Natures, when they should see the same Laws revived and invigorated with so much Circumstance and Terrour: For indeed the Decalogue is not so much the enacting of any new Law, as a reviving of the old by a more solemn Proclamation. And for the greater Majesty and Solemnity of the Action, we read,

First, That the People were commanded to prepare themselves two days together by a Typical Cleansing of themselves from all external and bodily Pollutions, before they were to stand in the Presence of God. So we find it enjoined, They were to be sanctified, and to wash their Cloaths, and be ready against the third Day, whereon the Lord would come down in the sight of all the People, upon Mount *Sinai*. I. *Exod.* 19. 10, 11.

Now this signifies unto us two things:

First, That we ought to be seriously prepared when we come to wait before God in his Ordinances, and to receive a Law at his Mouth: Indeed, the Dispensation of the Gospel is not such a Ministery of Terrour, as that of the Law was; God doth not now speak unto us immediately by his own Voice, which they that heard it, were not able to endure; he doth not pronounce his Law in Thunder, nor wrapt it up in Flame and Smoak; but he speaks unto us in a still Voice, by Men like our selves; and conveys the rich Treasure of his Will unto us in earthen Vessels, of the same Mould and Frailty with our selves. He treats with us by his Messengers and Ambassadors; whose Errand, though it be delivered with less Terrour, yet ought not to be received with less Reverence, for it is God himself that speaks in them, and by them; and every word of Truth which they deliver unto you in the Name of the Great God, and by the Authority of that Commission which he hath given them, ought to be received with as much prostrate Veneration and Affection, as tho' God himself had spoken to you immediately from Heaven. 1.

Think then how solicitous the *Israelites* were in fitting themselves for that great and dreadful Day of hearing the Law; a Day more great and dreadful than ever any shall be, except that of Judging Men according to the Law; think how their hearts throb'd and thrill'd within them, when they heard the clang of the heavenly Trumpets mixt and blended with loud and terrible cracks of Thunder; and both giving them a Signal of the near Approach of God: think, if you can, what thoughts they had when they saw the Mountain burning with Fire, and inveloped with Clouds and Smoak, out of which on every side were fearful Lightnings shot among them; think how they trembled, when they saw the Mountain tremble and totter under the Weight and Greatness of God descending down upon it: And bring with you the same Affections, if not so terrified, yet as much over-awed, whensoever you come to wait upon his holy Ordinances; for it is the same God that speaks unto you, and he speaks the same things to you, as then he did; not indeed with such amazing Circumstances, yet with the very same Authority and Majesty.

Were God now to come down among you in his terrible Majesty, or should a thick Cloud fill this place, and Lightnings flash out of it; should you hear the Thunder of his Voice, *I am the Lord*; *thou shalt have no other Gods before me*; certainly such a dreadful Glory would make your hearts tremble within you, and the very Earth tremble under you: Could you then give way to Sloath and Drowsiness; could your Hearts run gadding after Vanities and Trifles, or could there be any Object considerable enough to divert your Thoughts and Affections from so terrible a Glory? Why believe it, God is as really present here, as when he thus manifested himself to the *Israelites*; and present upon the very same occasion too. He is now delivering his Law to you, pronouncing his high and sovereign Commands; and if he so far consults our weakness, as not to do it in such an astonishing manner: Yet far be that disingenuity from us, that we should be either the less careful to prepare for, or the less reverent in attending on the Declarations of his high Will and Pleasure, though he makes it known to us by Men of the same Temper, yea, or Distempers with our selves.

2. *Secondly*, If the *Iſraelites* were to ſanctifie and prepare themſelves to appear before God at Mount *Sinai*, how much more ought we to ſanctifie our ſelves that we may be meet to appear before God in Heaven? That Glory which God manifeſted when he delivered the Law, is not comparable to the infinite Glory which he always reveals to the Saints in Heaven: and yet, if the People of the *Jews* were not allowed to ſee God, though veiled with a Cloud, and thick Darkneſs, without being firſt accurately prepared for ſuch a glorious Diſcovery, how much more ought we to prepare our ſelves, to waſh our filthy Garments, and to cleanſe our Souls from all Defilements both of Fleſh and Spirit, that we may be worthy to ſtand before God, and to ſee him there where he darts forth the full rays of his Brightneſs, and cauſeth his Glory for ever to appear without any check or reſtraint, without any cloud or veil interpoſing to hide it.

That's the firſt Circumſtance obſervable in the delivery of the Law.

II. *Secondly*, The Mount on which God appeared, was to be fenced and rail'd in, with a ſtrict Prohibition that none ſhould preſume to paſs the Bounds there ſet them, nor approach to touch the Holy Mount, under the Penalty of Death. So we have it, *Exod.* 19. 12. Which intimates unto us two things:

1. *Firſt*, The due Diſtance that we ought to keep from God, and teacheth us to obſerve all that Reverence and Reſpect which belongs unto Him, as being infinitely our Superiour. Certainly, every place where God manifeſts himſelf, at leaſt whilſt he doth ſo, is venerable and awful: and therefore, when God revealed himſelf to *Jacob* in a Dream, and gave him the Repreſentation of a Ladder reaching from Earth to Heaven, Angels upon every round of it, and God on the top; we find with what awe he reflects upon it in his waking Thoughts, *Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and ſaid, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the houſe of God, and this is the gate of Heaven.*

Gen. 28. 16, 17.

2. *Secondly*, This ſetting Bounds and Limits to the Mount, ſignified, as in a Type, the ſtrictneſs and exactneſs of the Law of God. His Law is our Boundary, which he hath on purpoſe ſet to keep us from ruſhing in upon his Neck, and upon the thick Boſſes of his Buckler: And that Soul that ſhall preſume ſo to do, that ſhall break theſe Bounds, and commit a Treſpaſs upon the Almighty, ſhall ſurely die the Death, even that eternal Death which he hath threatned againſt all Violaters of his Law.

That is a ſecond remarkable Circumſtance in the delivery of the Law.

III. *Thirdly*, We have a Diſcription of the terrible Manner in which God appeared to pronounce his Law: Thunders, and Lightnings, and Earthquakes, and Fire, and Darkneſs, were the Prologue and Introduction to it; and were ſo dreadful as cauſed not only the People to remove, and ſtand afar off, as not able to endure ſuch terrible Majeſty, as we find it, but even affrighted *Moſes* himſelf, who was to be *Internuncius Dei*, the Meſſenger and Herald of God: This we find intimated, *Exod.* 19. 19. *When the Voice of the Trumpet ſounded long and waxed louder and louder, Moſes ſpake.* What it was that he ſaid, is not there mentioned; but in all probability, he then ſpake thoſe words which the Apoſtle hath recorded, *So terrible was the ſight, that Moſes ſaid, I exceedingly fear and quake.*

Exod. 20. 18, Heb. 12. 21.

Now this dreadful Appearance of God in the delivering the Law, ſerved for two Ends:

1. *Firſt*, To affect them with a reverent Eſteem of thoſe Commands which he ſhould impoſe upon them: For certainly, unleſs they were poſſeſs'd with moſt groſs and beaſtial Stupidity, they muſt needs think thoſe things to be of vaſt and great Concernment, which were attended with ſuch a train of remarkable and amazing Circumſtances; and it is natural for Men to be awed by Pomp and Solemnity; the Majeſty of the Commander adding a kind of Authority to the Command.

2. *Secondly*, To put both them and us in mind, that if God were ſo terrible only in delivering the Law, how much more terrible will he then be, when he ſhall come to Judge us for tranſgreſſing the Law! Indeed the whole Apparatus of this Day ſeems to be Typical of the laſt; but as it is the condition of all Types, it ſhall be far out-done and exceeded by its Anti-type. Here were Voices, and Fire, and Smoak, and the noiſe of a Trumpet; and theſe ſtruck Terror into the hearts of the People, who came only to receive the Law: But O! think what Conſternation will ſeize upon,

upon, and cramp the hearts of Sinners, when the Lord ſhall deſcend from Heaven at the laſt Day with a Shout, with the Voice of the Archangel, and with the Trump of God, as the Apoſtle deſcribes it. When not a Mountain only, but the whole World ſhall be burning, Heaven and Earth all on a light flame about them; when they ſhall hear the terrible Voice of the Majeſty on high calling to them, Awake ye Dead, and come away to Judgment; when the Earth ſhall be univerſally ſhaken, and ſhake the dead Bodies out of their Graves, when whole Crouds of naked Nations ſhall throng and cluſter about the great Tribunal, not to receive a Law, but a Sentence, a Sentence that ſhall determine their final and eternal Eſtate: certainly, if the giving of the Law were ſo full of Terrour, much more terrible ſhall be our being judged according to that Law. *1 Theſ.* 4. 16.

And this is another remarkable Circumſtance in the delivery of the Law.

IV.

Fourthly, When God himſelf had with his Dread Voice ſpoken to them theſe Ten Words, their affright and aſtoniſhment was ſo great, that they intreat *Moſes* to be the Truchman and Interpreter between God and them, *They ſaid unto Moſes, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God ſpeak with us, leſt we die.* Neither is this without a great Myſtery and excellent Signification; for it intimates that the Law, as it is diſpenſed to us only from God, is in it ſelf the Miniſtration of Death and Condemnation: but as it is delivered to us by a Mediator, by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, (of whom *Moſes* here was a Type) ſo we may hear and obſerve it, and obtain eternal Life, not for, but through our Obedience to it. And therefore the Law is ſaid to be ordained by Angels, in the hand of a Mediator; that is, it was ſolemnly diſpenſed by the Miniſtery of Angels, and then delivered into the hand of *Moſes*, to be by him communicated to the People. Now this intimates unto us, that the Severity and Terrours of the Law were intended to drive us unto Chriſt, as here they drove the *Iſraelites* unto *Moſes*, the Type of Chriſt, from whoſe mouth the Law ſpake not ſo dreadfully, as it did from God's. *Exod.* 20. 19. *Gal* 3. 19.

V.

Fifthly, Upon this Interceſſion and Requeſt of the People, *Moſes* is called up into the Mount, the Law depoſited in his hands, engraven in two Tables of Stone, by the Finger and Impreſſion of God himſelf, the moſt ſacred Relique that ever the World enjoyed; but at length loſt, together with the Ark that contained it in the frequent Removes and Captivities of that People: Neither is this too without its Spiritual Myſtery and Signification; for it notes to us that our Hearts are naturally ſo hard and ſtony, that it is only the Finger of God that can make any impreſſion of his Laws upon them. It is well known that the Ark was a moſt famous Type and Repreſentation of Jeſus Chriſt; and the keeping of the Tables of the Law in the Ark, what doth it elſe mean, but to prefigure to us that the Law was to be kept and obſerved in him who fulfilled all Righteouſneſs? And when God doth again write his Laws upon our Hearts, we alſo keep them in Chriſt our Ark, whoſe compleat Obedience ſupplies all our Imperfections and Defects.

VI.

Sixthly, Whereas this Law of the Ten Commandments was twice written by God himſelf; once before, and again after the Tables were in an holy Zeal broken by *Moſes*; this alſo is full of Myſtery, and ſignifies the twice writing of the Law upon the Hearts of Men: firſt, by the creating Finger of God, when he made us perfectly like himſelf; and then again, by his regenerating Power, giving us a new Impreſſion, and as it were ſetting us forth in a new Edition, but yet containing the ſame for ſubſtance, as when we came forth at firſt out of the Creating hand of God; for Regeneration, and the new Birth is but a reſtoring us to the Image of God, which we defaced by our Fall in *Adam*, and as it were a new ſtamping of thoſe Characters of himſelf, in Righteouſneſs and Knowledge, which were obliterated.

VII.

Seventhly, and *Laſtly*, It is ſaid, that when *Moſes* came down from the Mount after his long Converſe with God, his Face ſhone with ſuch a divine and heavenly Luſtre, that the *Iſraelites* were dazled with the Brightneſs, and could not ſtedfaſtly look upon him; and that therefore he was forced to put a Veil over his Face, to allay and temper thoſe Beams which the reflexion of God's Face and Preſence had caſt upon him; but this Veil he laid aſide, when he turned into the Tabernacle to ſpeak with God. The ſignificancy of which Hiſtory, the Apoſtle expreſly gives us, That there was a Veil upon the Heart of the *Jews*, ſo as they could not ſee to the end of the Law, which *Exod.* 34. 9. *2 Cor.* 3. 13, 14, 16.

which is Chriſt Jeſus, who is the end of the Ceremonial Law, by putting an end unto it in its Abrogation; and the end of the Moral Law, becauſe in him it hath attained its end, for the end of it was by convincing us of our own Weakneſs and Inability to perform it, to lead us unto Chriſt, by whoſe Righteouſneſs alone, and not by the Works of the Law, we are to expect Juſtification before God: Yet there was ſo thick a Veil caſt over the Law, that the *Jews* could not look through it upon the Glory that ſhone in Chriſt, of whom *Moſes* was ſtill the Type: But when they ſhall turn unto the Lord, this Veil ſhall be taken away, and then ſhall they diſcern the ſignificancy of all thoſe Ritual Obſervances, and perceive ſpiritual Things after a more ſublime and ſpiritual manner.

And thus I have ſhewn you the Time, the Reaſons, and the Circumſtances of the delivery of this Epitome of the Law in the Ten Commandments, wherein many excellent Goſpel-Truths are delineated and ſhadowed out unto us.

But ſome one may ſay, What need all this long Diſcourſe about the Law? Is it not fully abrogated by the coming of Chriſt into the World? Shall we be again brought under that heavy Yeak of Bondage, which neither we, nor our Fathers were ever able to bear? Doth not the Scripture frequently teſtifie, that we are not now under the Law, but under Grace; that we are freed from the Law, that Chriſt was made under the Law, to free thoſe who were under the Law; and therefore to terrifie and over-aw Mens Conſciences by the Authority of the Law, what elſe is it but a Legal Diſpenſation, unworthy of that Chriſtian Liberty into which our Saviour hath vindicated us, having fulfilled the Law by his Obedience, and by his Death aboliſh'd it?

To this I anſwer, Far be it from every Chriſtian to indulge himſelf in any Licentiouſneſs from ſuch a corrupt and rotten Notion of the Law's Abrogation; for ſo far is it from being aboliſh'd by the coming of Chriſt, that he himſelf expreſly tells us, *He came not to deſtroy the Law, but to fulfil* it; Τὸν νόμον πληρῶσαι, *i. e.* either to perform or elſe to perfect and fill up the Law. And *Verſe* 18. aſſevers, That *till Heaven and Earth paſs away, one jot or one tittle ſhall in no wiſe paſs from the Law, until all be fulfilled*; *i. e.* till the conſummation and fulfilling of all things; and then the Law which was our Rule on Earth, ſhall become our Nature in Heaven.

Matth. 5. 17.

When therefore St. *Paul* ſpeaks (as frequently he doth) of the Abrogation, and Diſannulling of the Law, we muſt heedfully diſtinguiſh both of the Law, and likewiſe of the Abrogation of it. The Law which God delivered by *Moſes*'s Miniſtry, was of three ſorts:

The Ceremonial,
Judicial, and
Moral Law.

The diſtinct Conſideration of each of theſe, may afford us ſome light in this matter.

The Ceremonial Law was wholly taken up in injoining thoſe Obſervances of Sacrifices, and Offerings, and various Methods of Purifications and Cleanſings, which were typical of Chriſt, and that Sacrifice of his which alone was able to take away Sin.

The Judicial Law conſiſted of thoſe Conſtitutions which God preſcribed the *Jews* for their Civil Government: for their State was a Theocracy; and whereas in other Commonwealths the chief Magiſtrates gave Laws unto the People, in this, the Laws for their Religion, and for their Civil Government, were both Divine, and both immediately from God. So that their Judicial Law was given them to be the ſtanding Law of their Nation; according to which all Actions and Suits between Party and Party were to be tried and determined; as in all other Nations there are particular Laws and Statutes for the Deciſion of Controverſies that may ariſe among them.

But the Moral Law is a Syſtem or Body of thoſe Precepts which carry an univerſal and natural Equity in them, being ſo conformable to the Light and Reaſon, and the Dictates of every Man's Conſcience, that as ſoon as ever they are declared and underſtood, we muſt needs ſubſcribe to the Juſtice and Righteouſneſs of them.

These are the three sorts of Laws which commonly go under the name of the Law of *Moses*, all of which had respect either to those things which prefigured the Messias to come, or to those which concerned their Political and Civil Government, as a distinct Nation from others; or to those natural Vertues and Duties of Piety towards God, and Righteousness towards Men, as were common to them with all the rest of Mankind.

Now a Law may be said to be null and void two ways:

Privatively, or

Negatively.

Either that it was repealed after it was first given, or that its Obligation extendeth not, nor ever did extend to some People and Nations in the World.

Now I desire you heedfully to attend to these Propositions, for they will be of great use to clear up how far, and in what manner, we are freed from the Obligation of the Law.

First then, As for the Ceremonial Law we affirm, that to the *Jews* it is properly abrogated, and the Obligation and Authority of it utterly taken away and repealed. And concerning this, it is, that the Apostle is to be understood, when in his Epistles he so often speaks of the Abrogation and Disannulling of the Law; he speaks it, I say, of the Ceremonial Law, and Aaronical Observations, which indeed were so fulfilled by Christ as to be abolish'd: For this Law was given to be only an Adumbration, and σκιαγραφία, or faint Representation of Christ: as in the Night, while the Sun is in the other Hemisphere, yet we see its light in the Stars, which shine with a borrowed and derived Brightness; but when the Sun is risen, and displays its Beams abroad, it drowns and extinguisheth all those petty Lights: so while Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, was yet in the other Hemisphere of Time, before he was risen with Healing under his Wings, the *Jews* saw some glimmering of his Light in their Ceremonies and Observances; but now that the Day of the Gospel is fully sprung, and that Light which before was but blooming, is fully spread, those dimmer Lights are quite drowned and extinguished in his clear Rays; and an utter end is put to all those Rites and Ceremonies which both intimated, and in a kind supplied the absence of the Substance. So that to maintain now a Necessity of Legal Sacrifices, and Purifyings, and Sprinklings, is no less than to evacuate the Death of Christ, and to deny the shedding of that Blood, that alone can purifie us from all Pollutions; which is but to catch at the shadow, and lose the substance. I.

Secondly, In respect of us, who are the Posterity and Descendants of the *Gentiles*, it is more proper to affirm, That the Ceremonial Law was never in force, than that it was truly abrogated; for the Ceremonial Law was National to the *Jews*, and in a sort peculiar to them only. Neither did God intend that the Observation of it should be imposed upon any other People, although they should be proselyted, as a thing necessary for their future Happiness. And this appears by strong and cogent Reasons. II.

First, Because God expressly commands all those who were to be subject to the Ceremonial Law, that they should appear at *Jerusalem* thrice in the Year before the Lord. Now this Command would have been impossible to be obeyed, were it intended that its Obligation should reach to those Countries which were far remote and distant from *Jerusalem*. 1. *Exod.* 34. 23, 24.

Secondly, Because all their Sacrifices and Oblations, in which consisted the chiefest part of the Ceremonial Worship, were to be offer'd up only at *Jerusalem*, which were alike impossible, if this Command of Sacrificing had been intended by God to be obligatory to all the World. No Sacrifices were accepted by God, but what were offer'd up in the Temple; and therefore the *Jews* to this day, although they are very blindly zealous of the Law, yet offer no Sacrifices unto God, looking upon themselves as dispensed from that Duty, because of their Dispersion, and the impossibility of assembling themselves at *Jerusalem* to do it: And therefore doubtless that Command, even whilst it was in force, obliged none but the *Jewish* Nation, who living not far from their Metropolis, might with conveniency enough assemble themselves together to that Holy Service. 2.

And *Thirdly*, We find that even before Chriſt's coming, the *Jews* themſelves did not impoſe the Obſervation of the Ceremonial Rites of their Law, upon all thoſe Heathens whom they won over to be Proſelytes to their Religion; for their Proſelytes were of two ſorts:

Ger. berith Proſelyti Fœderis and called alſo

Such as were *Proſelyti Legis*, who became perfect *Jews* in Religion, lived among them, and engaged themſelves to the full Obſervance of the whole Law.

Ger. thedek, Proſelyti Juſtitiæ.

And ſuch as were called *Proſelyti Portæ*; that is, thoſe Heathens who were ſo far converted, as to Acknowledge and Worſhip the only true God, although they lived in other Nations, and obliged not themſelves to the performance of what the Levitical Law required: theſe the *Jews* admitted into Participation of the ſame common Hope and Salvation with themſelves, when they profeſſed their Faith in God the Creator, aad their Obedience to the Law of Nature, together with the Seven Traditional Precepts of *Noah*.

Theſe Precepts were.

1. The *Adminiſtration of Juſtice upon Offenders.* 2. *Renouncing of Idolatry.* 3. *Worſhipping the true God, and keeping the Sabbath.* 4. *Abſtaining from Murther.* 5. *From Fornication.* 6. *From Robbery.* 7. *From eating of Blood, or any Member of a Beaſt taken from it alive.*

From all which it clearly appears, that the Ceremonial Law, to ſpeak properly, is not abrogated to us *Gentiles*, it never being given with an intent to oblige us; but it is truly abrogated and diſannulled to the *Jews* by the coming of Chriſt, the Meſſias into the World, in whom all theſe Types were to receive their full Accompliſhment. And concerning the Ablation of this Ceremonial Law, we muſt underſtand the Apoſtle, when he frequently and earneſtly aſſerts the Liberty of Believers, and their Freedom from the Law; that is, the believing *Jews* were poſitively freed from the neceſſity of obſerving it; and the believing *Gentiles* were negatively free from obſerving it at all.

And for the farther clearing of this Matter, we muſt know that in the very beginning of the Church, there aroſe great Diſſention between the believing *Jews*, and the believing *Gentiles*, concerning the Neceſſity of obſerving the Levitical Law: for we find, *Acts* 15. 5. That certain of the Sect of the Phariſees which believed, affirmed, That it was needful to Circumciſe the *Gentiles*, and to command them to keep the Law of *Moſes*. Which yet was greater Rigour than was formerly uſed to the Proſelyte Party. To determine this Queſtion, the Apoſtles and Elders meet together in a Council at *Jeruſalem*; where after ſome Debate, the whole Reſult ſeems in brief to have been this; That the believing *Jews* might ſtill, without Offence, obſerve the Rites and Ceremonies of the Law; for though the Neceſſity of them were now abrogated, yet the Uſe of them might for a Seaſon be lawfully continued; though they were *mortuæ*, yet not *mortiferæ*; dead they were, but hitherto not deadly: * They were expired, yet ſome Time was thought expedient for their decent Burial. And therefore we find St. *Paul* himſelf, who ſo earneſtly in all his Epiſtles oppoſeth the Obſervation of the Ceremonial Law, yet he himſelf ſubmits to the uſe of thoſe Rites, and purifieth himſelf in the Temple according to the Law, *Acts* 21. 26. yea, he alſo circumciſeth *Timothy*, becauſe he was the Son of a *Jeweſs*, *Acts* 16. 3. by which he evidently declares, That thoſe Believers who were of that Nation, though they were freed from the Neceſſity of it, yet they might lawfully as yet, obſerve the Aaronical Conſtitutions, eſpecially when to avoid giving of Offence, it might be expedient ſo to do. So tender a thing is the Peace of the Church, that even abrogated Rites and Ceremonies ſhould not be violently rejected, to indanger a Wound and Schiſm; and therefore much leſs ought conſtituted and received Rites in things of leſs moment than Sacrifice and Circumciſion, be ſo ſtifly and pertinaciouſly oppugned to the incurable Breach and Diviſion of the Church.

Among theſe Cerinthus *was a Ringleader as* Epiphanius *affirms.* Hæreſ. 13

* *Cum veniſſet fides quæ prius illis obſervationibus prænunciata poſt mortem & reſurrectionem Domini revelata eſt, amiſerant tanquam vitam Officii ſui. Veruntamen tanquam defuncto corpore neceſſariorum officiis deducenda erant quodammodo ad Sepulturam, nec ſimulate ſed Religioſe; non autem deſerenda continuo vel, inimicorum obtrectationibus, tanquam canum morſibus projicienda. Proinde nunc quiſquis Chriſtianorum, quamvis ſit ex Judæis ſimiliter ea celebrare voluerit, non erit pius deductor, vel bajulus corporis, ſed impius ſepulturæ violator.* Aug. Ep. 19. ad Hieronym.

But then concerning the *Gentiles*; although before the coming of Chriſt, they might become perfect Proſelytes to the whole Law of *Moſes*, and receive the Seal of

of Circumcision, as * many of them did, yet after the Evangelical Doctrine was consummate, and the Apostles sent into all the World to preach it to every Creature, they by the Holy Ghost determine, in that first Council of the Church, That the *Gentiles* should by no means be burthened with any of those Impositions: but as they were heretofore by the *Jews* themselves concluded to be in a safe Condition, even as many of them as worshipped the true God, and observed the Commandments of *Noah*; so now the Apostles Decree to preserve them in the same Liberty; and therefore write unto them, That they should not subject themselves to the dogmatizing Commandments of false Teachers, who required them to be circumcised, and to keep the Ceremonial Law; but that from as many as believed, nothing more was required than only to abstain from Meat offered to Idols, and from Blood, and from Things strangled, and from Fornication; *i. e.* (as Judicious Mr. *Hooker* very probably interprets it) from incestuous Marriages within prohibited Degrees. And all those Commands laid upon them by the Apostles, are the very Precepts of *Noah*. But Circumcision, and other Observances of the Ceremonial-Law, they were not obliged to; * yea, they were obliged not to observe them, as being Subversions of their Souls, *Acts* 15. 24. And therefore we find that the same holy Apostle who himself circumcised *Timothy*, because he was the Son of a *Jewess*, when he writes to the *Gentiles*, he tells them expresly, That if they be circumcised, Christ shall profit them nothing, *Gal.* 5. 2.

* Izates *King of* Adiabena, Jos. Ant. 20. 2. *although* Orosius, *l.* 7. *c.* 6. *affirms him to have been a Christian, yet that he was circumcised according to the mind of his first Instructor* Ananias, *the same* Josephus *witnesseth.*

Eccles. Pol. lib. 4.

* *The Reason why the* Gentiles *ought not to observe the Ceremonial Law, even then when the believing* Jews *might lawfully do it, I suppose was this, That there lying no precedent Obligation upon them to do it, as there did upon the* Jews, *they could have no other Motive to persuade them to submit to these Observances, unless it were an Opinion, that they were necessary in themselves for their Justification before God. Which was indeed to evacuate the Death of Christ, and overthrow the Foundation of the Gospel.*

And thus we see how far and in what sense the Ceremonial Law is abrogated.

III. *Thirdly*, As concerning the Judicial Law, and those Precepts which were given the *Jews* for the Government of their Civil State, that Law is not at all abrogated; not to us, for it was never intended to oblige us. Neither indeed is it at all necessary, that the Laws of every Nation should be conformed to the Laws which the *Jews* lived under; for doubtless, each State hath its liberty to frame such Constitutions as may best serve to obtain the ends of Government: And therefore, although the Punishment of Theft were ordained by God himself to be sometimes a double, sometimes a four-fold, sometimes a five-fold Restitution, yet are our Laws not to be condemned, which ordain the Penalty of this Transgression to be no less than Death; for the Reason and Necessity of our Nation is the best Rule and Measure for those Laws by which they are to be governed. *Exod* 22. 1. 4.

Neither is the Judicial Law abrogated to the *Jews*; for though now in their scattered State the Laws cease to be of force, because they cease to be a Body Politique, yet were their Dispersion again collected into one Republick, most probably the same National Laws would bind them now, as did in former times, when they were a happy and flourishing Kingdom.

Fourthly, As concerning the Moral Law, of which I am now treating, that is partly abrogated, partly not; abrogated as to some of its Circumstances, but not as to any thing of its Substance, Authority, and Obligation.

First, The Moral Law is abrogated to Believers as it was a Covenant of Works: For God in Man's first Creation wrote this Law in his heart, and added this Sanction unto it, If thou dost this, thou shalt live; if not, thou shalt die the Death. Now all Mankind sinning in *Adam*, and thereby contracting an utter Impotency of obeying that Law, that we might not all perish according to the rigorous Sentence of it, God was graciously pleased to enter into another Covenant with us, promising a Saviour to repair our lost and decayed Condition, and Eternal Life upon the easier Terms of Faith and Evangelical Obedience. Indeed all those who either never heard of Jesus Christ, or do reject him, are still under the Law as a Covenant; and therefore their Estate is most wretched and deplorable; for being Transgressors of the Law, there remaineth nothing for them, but a certain fearful looking for of Wrath and fiery Indignation to devour them as the Adversaries of God: but those who are true Believers, are under a better Covenant, even the Covenant of Grace, wherein God hath

hath promiſed unto them Eternal Life upon the Condition of their Faith; and they may with full aſſurance of Hope, to their unſpeakable joy and comfort, expect the performance of it. And therefore,

2. *Secondly*, To them alſo the Moral Law is abrogated, as to its condemning Power. Though it ſentenceth every Sinner to Death, and curſeth every one who continueth not in all things that are written therein, to do them; yet through the Intervention of Chriſt's Satisfaction and Obedience, the Sins of a Believer are graciouſly pardoned, and the venom and malignity of the Curſe is aboliſh'd, it being diſcharged wholly upon Chriſt, and received all into his Body on the Croſs, *Gal.* 3. 13. *Chriſt hath redeemed us from the Curſe of the Law, being made a Curſe for us*; and therefore we may triumphantly exult with the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 8. 1. *There is now no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus.*

In theſe two reſpects Believers are indeed freed from the Moral Law; As it hath the Obligation of a Covenant; and as it hath a Power of Condemnation.

3. But *Thirdly*, As it hath a power of obliging the Conſcience as a ſtanding Rule for our Obedience, ſo it remains ſtill in its full Vigour and Authority; it ſtill directs us what we ought to do, binds the Conſcience to the performance of it, brings guilt upon the Soul, if we tranſgreſs it, and reduceth us to the neceſſity either of bitter Repentance, or of Eternal Condemnation: For in this ſenſe, *Heaven and Earth ſhall ſooner paſs away, than one jot or tittle ſhall paſs from the Law.*

And therefore the *Antinomian* is to be abominated, that derogates from the value and validity of the Law, and contends, That it is to all purpoſes extinct unto Believers, even ſo much as to its preceptive and regulating Power; and that no other obligation to Duty lyes upon them who are in Chriſt Jeſus, but only from the Law of Gratitude: that God requires not Obedience from them upon ſo low and ſordid an account, as the fear of his Wrath and dread Severity, but all is to flow only from the Principle of Love, and the ſweet Temper of a grateful and ingenuous Spirt.

But this is a moſt peſtilent Doctrine which plucks down the Fence of the Law, and opens a Gap for all manner of Licentiouſneſs and Libertiniſm to ruſh in upon the Chriſtian World; for ſeeing that the Moral Law is no other than the Law of Nature written upon Man's heart at the firſt, ſome Poſitives being only ſuper-added, upon the ſame account as we are Men, upon the ſame we owe Obedience to the Dictates of it. And indeed, we may find every part of this Law inforc'd in the Goſpel; charg'd upon us with the ſame Threatnings, and recommended to us by the ſame Promiſes; and all interpreted to us by our Saviour himſelf to the greateſt advantage of Strictneſs and Severity. We find the ſame Rules for our Actions, the ſame Duties required, the ſame Sins forbidden in the Goſpel, as in the Law; only in the Goſpel we have theſe Mitigations, which were not in the Covenant of Works:

1. *Firſt*, That God accepts of our Obedience if it be, *ſincero voto & conamine*, in earneſt deſires and endeavours; although we cannot attain that perfect Exactneſs and ſpotleſs Purity which the Law requires, yet we are accepted through Chriſt, according to what we have, and not according to what we have not, if ſo be we indulge not our ſelves in a wilful Sloth and Contempt of the Law.

2. *Secondly*, The Goſpel admits of Repentance after our Fall, and reſtores us again to the Favour of God upon our true Humiliation: but the Law as a Covenant of Works, left no room for Repentance, but required perfect Obedience without the leaſt Failure; and in caſe of Non-performance, nothing was to be expected but the Execution of that Death it threatned.

Yet withal, an higher degree of Obedience is now required from us under the Diſpenſation of the Goſpel, than was expected under the more obſcure and ſhadowy Exhibitions of Goſpel-Grace, by legal Types and Figures. We confeſs, that the *Iſraelites* before the coming of Chriſt, were no more under a Covenant of Works, than we are now: but yet the Covenant of Grace was more darkly adminiſtred unto them: And therefore we having now received both a clearer Light to diſcover what is our Duty, and a more plentiful Effuſion of the Holy Ghoſt, to enable us to perform it; and better Promiſes, more expreſs and ſignificative Teſtimonies of God's Acceptance, and more full Aſſurance of our own Reward; it lies upon us, having all theſe Helps and Advantages above them, to endeavour that our Holineſs and Obedience ſhould be much ſuperiour to theirs; and that we ſhould ſerve God with more Readineſs and Alacrity, ſince now by Jeſus Chriſt our Yoak is made eaſie, and our Burthen light.

So

So that you see, we are far from being dispensed with for our Obligation to Obedience: but rather that Obligation is made the stricter by Christ's coming into the World, and every Transgression against the Moral Law is inhaunced to an excess of Sin and Guilt, not only by the Authority of God's Injunction, which still continues inviolable, but likewise from the Sanction of our Mediator and Redeemer, who hath invigorated the Precepts of the Law by his express Command, and promised us the assistance of his Spirit to observe and perform them.

Now here before I can come particularly to treat of the Words of the Decalogue, I think it requisite to propound some general Rules for the right Understanding and Expounding of the Commandments, which will be of great use to us for our right apprehending the full Latitude and Extent of them. The Psalmist tells us, That the Commandments of God are exceeding broad. They are exceeding straight, as to any Toleration or Indulgence given to the unruly Lusts and Appetites of Men; but exceeding broad, in the Comprehensiveness of their Injunctions, extending their Authority over all the Actions of our Lives. Now that we may conceive somewhat of this Breadth and Reach of the Law of God, observe these following Rules. *Psal.* 119. 96.

First, All those Precepts which are dispersed in the Holy Scriptures, and concern the regulating of our Lives and Actions, although they are not to be found expressly mentioned in the Decalogue, yet may they very aptly be reduced under one of these Ten Commands. There is no Duty required, nor Sin forbidden by God, but it falls under one, at least, of these ten Words, and sometimes under more than one: and therefore to the right and genuine Interpretation of this Law, we must take in whatsoever the Prophets, Apostles, or our Lord Christ himself hath taught, as Comments and Expositions upon it; for the Decalogue is a Compendium of all that they have taught concerning Moral Worship and Justice; yea, our Saviour doth Epitomize this very Epitome it self, and reduceth those ten Words into two; Love to God, which comprehendeth all the Duties of the first Table; and Love to our Neighbour, which comprehendeth all the Duties of the second Table; and tells us, that upon these two hang all the Law and the Prophets, *Matth.* 22. verse 37. to verse 41. And certainly, a due Love of God, and of our Neighbour, will make us careful to perform all the of Duties Religion to the one, and of Justice to the other, and keep us from attempting any Violation to his Honour, or Violence to their Right. And therefore the Apostle tells us, That Love is the fulfilling of the Law; and, 1 *Tim.* 1. 4. that the end of the Commandment is Charity, or Love; the End, *i. e.* the Completion, or the Consummation of the Commandment, is Love both to God, and one another. But concerning this, I shall have occasion to speak more largely hereafter. I. *Rom.* 13. 10.

Secondly, Since most of the Commandments are delivered in Negative or Prohibiting Terms, and only the Fourth and Fifth in Affirmative or Injoining; We may observe this Rule, That the Affirmative Commands include in them the Prohibition of the contrary Sin; and the Negative Commands include the Injunction of the contrary Duty: for it is necessary that the contrary to what is forbidden, must be commanded; and again, the contrary to what is commanded, must be forbidden; as for instance, God in the Third Commandment, forbids the taking of his Name in vain, therefore by consequence the hallowing and sanctifying his Name is therein commanded. The Fourth requires the sanctifying of the Sabbath-day; therefore it surely followeth, that the Prophanation of it is thereby forbidden. The Fifth commands us to Honour our Parents; therefore it forbids us to be Disobedient or Injurious to them. And so it is easie to collect of the rest. II.

Thirdly, Observe also, That every Negative Command binds *semper* and *ad semper*, as the Schools speak; *i. e.* always and to every moment of time: but the Affirmative Precepts, tho' they bind always, yet they do not bind to every moment; indeed as to the * habit of Obedience they do, but not as to the Acts. To make this plain by instance: The First Commandment. *Thou shalt have no other Gods before Me*, bindeth always, and to every moment of time; so that he is guilty of Idolatry, whosoever shall at any time set up any other God to worship, besides the Lord *Jehovah:* But the Affirmative Precept, which is included in this Negative, *viz.* To Worship, to Love, to Invoke, to depend upon this God, obligeth us always, for we must never act contrary hereunto; and likewise it obligeth us to III.

* *Licet Præceptum affirmativum non obliget ad semper ita ut semper actu impleatur, vel actu de eo cogitatur, obligat tamen ad semper secundum habitum, ita scil. ut homo semper sit ità dispositus, quod semper sit paratus implere præceptum quotiei occurrit faciendum.* Durand. lib. 2. dist. 22. quest. 3. lit m.

every moment of time, in respect of the Habits of Divine Love, and Faith, and Worship, yet it doth not oblige us to every moment in respect of the Acts of these Habits; for it is impossible to be always actually praying, actually praising, and actually worshipping of God; neither is it required that we should, for this would make one Duty shock and interfere with another. So likewise the Fourth Commandment, which is Affirmative, *Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day*, obligeth always; and whosoever at any time prophanes the Sabbath, is guilty of the Violation of this Law: but it doth not, it cannot oblige to every moment of time, since this Day only makes its weekly returns, and every parcel of time is not a Sabbath-day. So likewise the Fifth Commandment is positive, *Honour thy Father and thy Mother*, and binds always, so that we sin if at any time we are refractory and disobedient unto their lawful Commands: but it doth not oblige to the Acts of Honour and Reverence in every moment of time, for that is impossible, or were it not, it would be but mimical and ridiculous.

But now the Negative Precepts oblige us to every moment of time; and whosoever ceaseth the Observation of them for any one moment, is thereby involved in Sin, and becomes guilty, and a Transgressor before God: Such are, *Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain. Thou shalt not Kill. Thou shalt not Steal. Thou shalt not commit Adultery*, &c. Now there is no moment of time whatsoever that can render the Non-observation of these Commands allowable; nor are there any circumstances that can excuse it from Guilt: Whosoever doth prophane the Name of God by rash swearing, or trivial or impertinent uttering of it; whosoever sheds innocent Blood; whosoever purloins from another what is rightly his; whosoever is guilty of any Uncleanness, let it be at what time, in what place, after what manner soever; let it be done passionately or deliberately, whether he be tempted to it or not, yet he is a Transgressour of the Law, and liable to that Curse and Death which God hath threatned to inflict upon every Soul of Man that doth evil: whereas in the Affirmative Precepts there are some times and seasons to which we are not bound, so as actually to perform the Duties enjoined us. This I suppose is clear, and without Exception.

IV. *Fourthly*, Observe this Rule also, That the same Precept which forbids the external and outward Acts of Sin, forbids likewise the inward Desires and Motions of Sin in the Heart; and the same Precepts which require the external Acts of Duty, require likewise those holy Affections of the Soul, that are suitable thereto: As for instance, The same Command that requires me to Worship God, exacts from me not only the outward service of the Lip, or of the Knee, but much more the inward Reverence and Affection of my Soul; that I should prostrate, not my Body only, but my very Heart at his Feet, fearing him as the greatest God, and loving him as the greatest Good, and with all the tenderness and dearness of an amorous and ravish'd Soul, cleaving unto him, and clasping about him as my only Joy and Happiness. And therefore, those are highly guilty of the Violation of this Command, who worship God only with their Bodies, when their Hearts are far estranged from him; offering up only the shell and husk of a Duty, when their pith and substance which should fill it, is given either to the World, or to their Lusts: Such as these are guilty of Idolatry, even in serving and worshipping the true God; for they set up their Idols in their Hearts, when they come to inquire of him; as the Prophet complains, *Ezek.* 14. 7.

So likewise that positive Command, *Honour thy Father and thy Mother*, doth not only require from us the external Acts of Obedience to all the lawful Commands of our Parents, and Magistrates, and those whom God hath set in Authority over us, but requires farther, an inward Love, Veneration, and Esteem for them in our Hearts. For though Men can take no farther cognizance of us, than by our Overt-acts, and if those be regular, they are likewise satisfactory to all Humane Laws; yet this is not sufficient Satisfaction to the Law of God, who is the Discerner and Judge of the Heart and Soul, and whose Law hath this special Prerogative above all others, That it can with Authority prescribe to our very Thoughts, Desires, and Affections.

And then, as for Negative Commands; they do not only forbid the external Acts of Sin, but the inward Motions of Lust, sinful Desires, and evil Concupiscence. And thus we find it at large, *Matth.* 5. where our Saviour makes it a great

part

part of his moſt excellent Sermon upon the Mount, to clear and vindicate the Moral Law from the corrupt Gloſſes and Interpretations of the Scribes and Phariſees; and to ſhew, that the Authority of the Law reached, not only to prohibit ſinful Actions, as that corrupt Generation thought, but ſinful Affections too; conſult Verſe 21. *Ye have heard, that it was ſaid by them of old time, Thou ſhalt not kill: and whoſoever ſhall kill, ſhall be in danger of the Judgment.* Here they ſtopt, in the very bark and rind of the Command; and thought it no Offence, tho' they ſuffered their Hearts to burn with Wrath, and Malice, and Revenge, ſo long as they pent it up there, and did not ſuffer it to break forth into bloody Murther. But what ſaith our Saviour, Verſe 22? *But I ſay unto you, that whoſoever is angry with his brother without a cauſe, ſhall be in danger of the Judgment: and whoſoever ſhall ſay unto his brother, Racha, ſhall be in danger of the Council: but whoſoever ſhall ſay, Thou fool, ſhall be in danger of hell-fire.* You ſee here, that not only the horrid Sin of Murther is forbidden by the Law, but all the Incentives to it, and Degrees of it, as Anger conceived inwardly in the Heart, or expreſs'd outwardly in words.

I cannot paſs this place without giving you ſome Light for the right underſtanding of it:

Here are three Degrees of Sin, ſhort of Murther, yet all forbidden by the ſame Precept which forbids that: Cauſeleſs Anger againſt thy Brother; calling him *Racha*, and calling him, *thou Fool*; whereof the one ſtill exceeds the other in guilt; *Racha* ſignifies a ſimple witleſs Fellow, commonly uſed to upbraid ſuch as were weak and ignorant: Μωρὲ, or *thou Fool*, ſignifies one that is not only ignorant, but wicked and ungodly; as the Scripture frequently uſeth the word in that ſenſe, which is a far greater Reproach, than meerly to call him weak or ſilly. Now according to theſe three degrees of Sins, our Saviour proportions three degrees of Puniſhment to be inflicted on thoſe that are guilty of them, each ſeverer than other: cauſeleſs Anger ſhall bring them in danger of the Judgment; *Racha*, in danger of the Council; and *thou Fool*, in danger of Hell-fire; that is, they ſhall make them liable to the Puniſhments inflicted by theſe.

But now to underſtand the full ſcope and meaning of our Saviour in theſe Alluſions, we muſt have recourſe to the Hiſtory of the *Jewiſh* Commonwealth: and there we find that they had two Courts of Judicature eſtabliſh'd among them, the leſſer and the greater Sanhedrim; the leſſer conſiſted of twenty three Perſons, and was erected not only in *Jeruſalem*, but in every conſiderable City among the *Jews*, where there were ſixſcore Houſholders; theſe had Authority to inflict Capital Puniſhments upon Malefactors: but yet as the higheſt Crimes fell not under their Cognizance, ſo neither their ſevereſt Puniſhments under their Award. And this Conſiſtory our Saviour calls here the Judgment; and tells, That whoſoever is angry with his Brother without a cauſe, ſhall be liable to a Puniſhment correſpondent to that which this Sanhedrim was impower'd to inflict; ſtill applying Temporals to Spirituals, that is, he ſhall be liable to Eternal Death, though not ſo ſeverely executed, as it would be for Crimes of a more heinous nature.

Their greater Sanhedrim was their Supreme Court of Judicature, and conſiſted of ſeventy Elders, beſides their chief Speaker or Moderator. You will find their firſt Inſtitution to have been by Divine Authority, *Numb.* 11. 16. They ſat only in *Jeruſalem*; their Sentence was deciſive and determining, from which there lay no Appeal: they were to Judge of all harder Matters, which could not be determin'd by other Courts, as Cauſes concerning a whole Tribe, or the whole Nation; Cauſes of War and Peace; Cauſes concerning the High-Prieſt, and the Miſſion and Authority of Prophets that ſpake unto them in the Name of the Lord: And this may be the occaſion of that Speech of our Saviour, *It cannot be that a Prophet periſh out of Jeruſalem*; becauſe in *Jeruſalem* alone was the Sanhedrim conſtituted, which was to judge of the Prophets, whether they were true or falſe: this Sanhedrim our Saviour here calls the Council. And they had Power not only of Life and Death, (as the other had) but likewiſe of inflicting Death in a more ſevere and tormenting manner than the other. And therefore our Saviour ſaith, Whoſoever ſhall call his Brother *Racha*, a vain witleſs Fellow, ſhall be in danger of the Council; wherein he ſtill brings the Degrees of Puniſhments among the *Jews*, to allude to the Puniſhment of Sins in Hell; and ſo the meaning is, that as he who ſhall cauſeleſly be angry with his Brother, expoſeth himſelf to the danger of eternal Death; ſo he that ſhall ſuffer his anger to break forth into any reproachful or reviling Language, although

Vide Spanhem dub. Evang. dub. 139.

Luke 13. 33.

his

his Taunts be not very bitter nor biting, only to call him a weak ſilly Perſon, yet hereby he incurs the danger of a ſeverer Sentence, and execution of it upon him for ever.

But now the ſevereſt Sentence which this Sanhedrim could pronounce againſt the greateſt Malefactors, was that they ſhould be burnt alive with Fire. This Execution was always performed in the Valley of *Hinnom*, joining to *Jeruſalem*, which being a place wherein were frequent Fires made, both in Idolatrous times for the ſacrificing of their Children to *Moloch*, and in their Purer times for conſuming the Filth of their City, and that which was as bad, their Malefactors; it is not unfrequent in the Scripture to denote Hell by this *Tophet*, this Valley of *Hinnom*; which for its continual Fires, was a lively Type and Repreſentation of it; yea, the very Scripture name for Hell, Γέεννα, ſeems to be derived from the Valley of *Hinnom*.

Now as Burning of Malefactors in *Gehenna*, or the Valley of *Hinnom*, was among the *Jews* one of their higheſt and ſevereſt Puniſhments, and never inflicted but where the Crime was very groſs and flagitious; ſo ſaith our Saviour, He that ſaith to his Brother, Μωρὲ, *Thou fool*, ſhall be in danger of *Gehenna*, of Hell-fire, *i. e.* of a ſeverer Puniſhment in the true Hell, than thoſe who were either cauſeleſly angry, or expreſſed their anger in more tolerable Reproaches, although even they alſo ſhall (without Repentance) be eternally puniſh'd. So that the ſenſe of our Saviour in all this Alluſion, ſeems to be this: That whereas the Scribes and Phariſees had reſtrain'd that Command, *Thou ſhalt not kill*, only to actual Murther, as if nothing elſe were forbidden beſides open Violence and Blood; our Saviour contrariwiſe teacheth, That not only that furious and barbarous Sin of Murther, but alſo raſh and cauſeleſs Anger, though it only eſtuate and boil in the Heart, much more if it caſt forth its foam at the Mouth in reviling Speeches, fall under that Prohibition, *Thou ſhalt not kill*. All theſe Degrees deſerve to be puniſh'd with eternal Death; but, as among the *Jews*, ſome where puniſh'd with lighter, others with more grievous Penalties, ſo ſhall it be at the great Judgment: Anger in our Hearts ſhall be condemned with eternal Puniſhments; but if it break forth into reviling Expreſſions, the Condemnation ſhall be more intolerable, and by ſo much more, by how much the Reproaches are more bitter and ſarcaſtical.

This, in brief, I take to be the true meaning of this difficult Speech of our Saviour, the whole ſcope whereof ſhews, That not only the groſs Acts of Sin, but alſo the inward Diſpoſitions, and corrupt Affections unto Sin, and every degree and tendency towards it, are forbidden and threatned by the holy Law of God.

So likewiſe, Verſe 27. of this 5th Chapter, *Ye have heard that it was ſaid by them of old time, Thou ſhalt not commit adultery. But I ſay unto you, That whoſoever ſhall look upon a woman to luſt after her, hath committed adultery already with her in his heart.* Here our Saviour brings inward Concupiſcence to the Bar, and makes the Heart and Eye plead guilty, although poſſibly ſhame or fear might reſtrain the groſſer acts of Filthineſs.

Thus, by theſe few Inſtances, although many more might be added, I have ſhewn, that the ſame Precept which forbids the outward acts of Sin, forbids likewiſe the inward deſires and motions of Sin in the Heart.

And indeed, there is a great deal of reaſon for it: For God who is our Lawgiver, is a Spirit; he ſeeth and converſeth with our Spirits. There is not the leaſt thought that flits in thy Soul, not the leaſt ſhadow of an imagination caſt upon thy Fancy, not the ſtilleſt breathing of a deſire in the Heart, but God is privy to it; he ſees to the very bottom of that deep ſpring and ſource of Thoughts that is in thy Heart; he beholds them in their cauſes and occaſions; and knows our thoughts, as the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks, afar off: he beholds our Souls more clearly and diſtinctly than we can behold one anothers Faces; and therefore it is but fit and rational, that his Laws ſhould reach as far as his Knowledge; and that he ſhould preſcribe Rules to that, whoſe irregularity he can obſerve and puniſh. Hence it is that the Apoſtle, conſidering what an Energy the Law had upon that part of Man which ſeemed moſt free and uncontrolled, his Mind and Spirit, calls it a Spiritual Law, *We know*, ſaith he, *that the Law is ſpiritual*; and that, becauſe the ſearching and convincing power of it enters into our Spirits, cites our Thoughts, accuſeth our Deſires, condemns our Affections, which no other Law in the World, beſides this, can do: For how juſtly ridiculous would thoſe be, that ſhould command us not to think diſhonourably

Rom. 7.14.

of

of them, not to desire any thing to their detriment and prejudice; and should threaten us with Punishments in case of Disobedience? but the Law of God comes into our Consciences with Authority, and in the Name of the Great God, requires his Peace to be kept among our tumultuous and seditious Affections, beats down their carnal Weapons, and gives Conscience a power either to suppress all rebellious Insurrections against the Majesty of Heaven, or else to indite, accuse, and torment Men for them. And therefore the Word of God is by the Apostle said to be *quitk and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged Sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.* *Heb.* 4. 12.

That is therefore a fourth Rule for the right understanding of the Extent and Latitude of the Commands.

Fifthly, Another general Rule is this, That the Command doth not only forbid the Sin that is expressly mentioned, but all Occasions and Inducements leading unto that Sin; and therefore we may observe, that there are many Sins that are not expressly forbidden in any one Commandment, but yet are reductively forbidden in every one, towards the Violation of which they may prove Occasions. And as some one Sin may be an occasion to all others, so it may be well said to be forbidden in every Precept of the Decalogue; I shall instance only in two of this kind, and they are, Familiarity with evil Persons, or keeping of evil Company; and that reigning Sin of Drunkenness. V.

For the first of these it is evident, that though it be not expressly and *in terminis* forbidden in any one Commandment, yet as it is a strong Temptation and Inducement to the Violation of each of them, so it is a Sin against them all. There are no such sure Factors for the Devil, as wicked Company, who will strive to rub their Vices upon as many as they can infect: and therefore thou who delightest in the company either of Atheists, or Idolaters, or Swearers, or Sabbath-breakers, or Disobedient Rebels, or Murtherers, or Whoremongers, or Thieves, or Perjured Persons, or Covetous Muck-worms, thou art guilty of the breach of each of these Commandments; for thou runnest thy self into the very Snare of the Devil, and takest the same course to make thy self so, which made them such. And therefore we are all forbidden to keep Company with such prophane and profligate Wretches, by the very same Commandment which forbids their Impieties, whatsoever they be.

And as for the second Sin I mentioned, Drunkenness, it is now-a-days grown to such an height of Impudence, that it confronts the Sun: And whereas in the Apostles days, even among the Heathens themselves, shame so far prevailed upon Vice and Debauchery, that it left Sobriety the Day, and took only the Night to it self, for they that would be drunk were drunk in the Night; yet now among us Christians, Wickedness is grown so profligate, that we meet the Drunkard reeling and staggering even at Noon-day, and ready to discharge his Vomit in our Faces or our Bosoms. Possibly some, who are besotted with this loathsome Vice, may think it no great Wickedness, because it is not expressly forbidden in this Summary of the Law; and so they cry, Peace, Peace to themselves, altho' they go on to add Drunkenness to Thirst.

But of this common Sin I say, that it is not against any one particular Commandment of the Law, but against all; for since the Moral Law is the Law and Rule of right Reason, the whole of it must needs be broken, when Reason it self is perverted by Riot and Intemperance; the Man turned out of Doors, and the Beast taken in. So that indeed Drunkenness is not so much any one Sin, as it is all; never were all the Commandments more surely broken, when *Moses* cast the two Tables out of his hands, than they are, in another sense, broken by the Drunkard. For he hath put off the Man and hath put on the Swine; and into such Swine it is that the Devil enters, as surely as ever he entred into the Herd of the *Gadarenes*; and drives them furiously down the Precipices of all manner of Sins and Vices, till at length he plungeth and drowns them in the Lake of Fire and Brimstone, and there let them drink their fill.

And therefore whatsoever is commanded, or whatsoever is forbidden, Drunkenness is forbidden, as being the greatest Advantage that the Devil hath to prompt Men to those Abominations, that were they in their right Senses, they would abhor and detest. Is he, think you, fit to worship God, and to take him for his own

God, who is not himſelf his own Man? Is not he guilty of Idolatry, who makes *Bacchus* his Deity, giving him the Libations of his Vomits, and falling proſtrate before him? Can he forbear taking the Name of God in vain, who hath taken the Creatures of God to his bane; whoſe Tongue is ſet afloat with his exceſſive Cups, and whoſe Mouth the Devil Taps to let his Blaſphemies, and Oaths, and Curſes, and fearful Execrations run out the more fluently? Can he keep holy the Sabbath-day, whoſe laſt Night's Drunkenneſs and Exceſs, rocks him aſleep either in his own Houſe, or in the Houſe of God? Is he fit to honour his Parents, who diſhonoureth his own Body? Can he abſtain from Murther, who firſt takes the ready way to deſtroy his own Body, and damn his own Soul; and then, through the rage of Wine, is ready upon every ſlight provocation to mingle his Vomit with the Blood of others? Can he keep himſelf from filthy Uncleanneſs, whoſe riotous Table doth but prepare him for a polluted Bed? Shall not he aſſever that which is falſe, whoſe Reaſon is ſo blinded by the fumes of his Intemperance, that he knows no longer the difference between Truth and Falſhood? And finally, what bounds can be ſet to his Concupiſcence, who by thus blinding the eyes of his Reaſon, hath only left him Fancy and Appetite, both which the Devil rules and governs?

Thus you ſee there are ſome Sins, which though they are not expreſly forbidden in the Decalogue, yet are virtually and reductively forbidden, as being the foams and the occaſions of others; and among theſe, Drunkenneſs, eſpecially, which ſtrikes at every Law that God hath injoined us, the Guilt whereof is Univerſal, as well as the Sin Epidemical.

VI. *Sixthly*, Another Rule for the underſtanding of the Decalogue is this, That the Commands of the Firſt Table are not to be kept for the ſake of the Second; but the Commands of the Second are to be kept for the ſake of the Firſt. The firſt Table commands us thoſe Duties which immediately reſpect the Service and Worſhip of God; the Second thoſe which reſpect our Demeanour towards Men: Now the Worſhip and Service of God is not to be performed out of reſpect to Men; but our Duty towards Men, is to be obſerved out of reſpect to God. For he that worſhips God that he might thereby recommend himſelf to Men, is but an Hypocrite and Formaliſt; and he that performs his Duty towards Men, without reſpecting God in it, is but a meer civil Moraliſt. The firſt Table commands us not to worſhip Idols; not to ſwear; not to prophane the Sabbath. The Laws of the Magiſtrate commands the very ſame; and thoſe who are guilty of the breach of them, are liable to Humane Puniſhments: But if we therefore abſtain from theſe Sins, becauſe they will expoſe us to ſhame, or ſuffering among Men; if therefore only we worſhip God, that Men may reſpect and venerate us, all the pomp and oſtentation of our Religion is but Hypocriſie; and as ſuch ſhall have its Reward: for God requireth to be ſerved not for Man's ſake, but for His own.

The ſecond Table preſcribes the right ordering of our Converſation towards Men; that we ſhould be dutiful and obedient to our Superiours; loving and kind to our Equals; charitable and beneficial to our Inferiours; and juſt and righteous towards all. Theſe Duties are not to be done only for Man's ſake, but for God's; and thoſe who perform them without reſpecting Him in them, loſe both their Acceptance and Reward. And therefore our Saviour condemns that love and beneficence which proceeds meerly upon Humane and Prudential Accounts, *Matth.* 5. 46. *If you love them only which love you, what reward have you? Do not even the Publicans the ſame?* And *Luke* 6. 33, 34. *If you do good to them which do good to you, what thanks have you? for ſinners alſo do the ſame. And if you lend to them of whom you hope to receive, what thanks have you? for ſinners lend to ſinners, to receive as much again.*

But we ought not therefore to ſerve God for Man's ſake; but we ought to love Man for God's ſake; and to perform the Duties of the ſecond Table out of conſcience and reſpect to God; and that reſpect is threefold:

Firſt, Obedience to his Authority; for then what we do for Men is an acceptable Work and Service, when we do it out of a ſincere Principle of obeying the Will and Command of God.

Secondly,

Secondly, Conformity unto his Example. And this our Saviour urgeth, *Matth.* 5. 45. *That ye may be the children of your father which is in heaven, for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good; and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust.* 2.

Thirdly, A comfortable Hope and Expectation of his Eternal Reward, *Luke* 6. 35. *Love your enemies, and do good, and your reward shall be great.* 3.

This is the way to exalt Morality to be truly Divine; and to make whatsoever we do towards Men, to be an acceptable Service unto God. By this means we interest Him in all the Acts of our Charity, our Justice, and Temperance; and we may be assured, that what we thus do for His sake, shall in the end be rewarded by his Bounty.

Seventhly, Another Rule is this, That the Commands of the first Table, so far forth as they are purely Moral, supersede our Obedience to the Commands of the second Table, when they are not both consistent. As for instance, We are in the second Table required to obey our Parents, and to maintain and preserve our own Lives: yet if we are brought into such circumstances as that we must necessarily disobey either God or them, either prostitute our Souls to Guilt, or our Lives to Execution, in such a case our Saviour hath instructed us, *Luke* 14. 26. *If any man come unto me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, yea, and his own Life also, he cannot be my disciple.* Indeed, a positive hatred of these is unnatural and impious; but the hatred which our Saviour here intends, is comparative, *i. e.* a loving them less than Christ, than Religion and Piety. And if the Commands of the one, or the Concerns of the other are at any time to be violated, or neglected, it must only be when we are sure that they are incompatible with a good Conscience, and true Godliness. VII.

Again, in the *Eighth* place, Whereas in the first Table there is one Command, partly Moral and Natural, partly Positive and Instituted, and that is our Observation of the Sabbath; we may observe that our Obligation to the Duties of the second Table, doth oftentimes supersede our Obedience unto that Command of the first Table. It frequently happens, that Works of Necessity and Mercy, will not permit us to be imployed in Works of Piety, nor to sanctifie the Sabbath after such a manner, as else we ought: For the Lord requireth Mercy rather than Sacrifice, *Hosea* 6. 6. And this our Saviour alledgeth, *Matth.* 9. 13. In which sense it holds true, That *the sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath*, Mark 2. 27. Whatsoever therefore is a Work of Necessity, or a Work of Charity and Mercy, and that not only towards Man, but even towards brute Beasts themselves, may lawfully be done on the Sabbath-day, without bringing upon us the guilt of Prophanation; for that which is purely Moral in the second Table, doth in a sort derogate from what is but positive and instituted in the first. VIII.

A *Ninth* Rule is this, Whatsoever is forbidden in any Command, both all the signs and symptoms of it, and likewise all the effects and consequents of it, are forbidden in the same. Thus under the Prohibition of Idolatry falls the Prohibition of the feasting in the Idol-Temples, and eating Meats sacrificed to them, as being too evident a sign and *tessera* of our Communion with them. So in the same Command wherein Pride is forbidden, (which is chiefly the first and second, for a proud Man sets up himself for his God, is his own Idol, and is his own Idolater,) in the same are forbidden all the signs and effects of Pride, as a lofty Look, and a mincing Gate, an affected Behaviour, and vain fantastique Apparel; against which the Prophet largely declaims, *Isaiah* 3. the 16. to the end; because although Pride doth not formally consist in these things, yet they are signs and effects of Pride, and contrary unto that Modesty and Decency which God requires. IX.

The *Tenth* and last Rule is this, The Connexion between the Commands is so close and intimate, and they are so link'd together, that whosoever breaketh one of them is guilty of all: Now that Bond which runs thorough them, and knits them thus together, is the Authority and Sovereignty of God injoyning their Observance; so that whosoever fails in his due Obedience to any one, doth virtually and interpretatively transgress them all. Thus we find it expresly affirm'd, *James* 2. 10. *Whosoever* X.

shall

ſhall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, is guilty of all. Not as though the Violation of one Precept were actually the Violation of another, (for many may Steal, and yet not actually Murther; many again may Murther, and yet not actually commit Adultery.) But this place of the Apoſtle muſt be underſtood of violating that Authority which paſſeth through them all, and by which all the Commandments have their Sanction: For ſince the Authority of the great God is one and the ſame in all theſe Laws, he that ſhall ſo far diſreſpect this Authority, as wilfully to break one of them, evidently declares, that he owns it not in any: And although other conſiderations may reſtrain ſuch an one from thoſe Crimes which are forbidden by ſome Commandments, yet his obſervance of them is no part of Obedience; nor can it be interpreted to be performed out of Conſcience and Reſpect towards God; for were it ſo, the ſame Authority which with-held him from Murther, or Theft, or Adultery, would likewiſe reſtrain him from Lying, or taking the Name of God in vain; and he that is guilty of theſe Offences, is likewiſe guilty of all, becauſe the ſame Authority is ſtamp'd upon them all alike, and is alike violated in the tranſgreſſion of each; and this very reaſon the Apoſtle ſubjoins to his aſſertion, *Verſe* 11. *He that ſaid, Do not commit Adultery; ſaid alſo, Do not kill.* Now if thou commit no Adultery, yet if thou Kill, thou art become a Tranſgreſſour of the Law; yea, of the whole Law, as breaking that Fence which God hath ſet about his Law, even his ſovereign and abſolute Authority.

Theſe are the Rules which may direct your Underſtandings to a right Knowledge of the Latitude and Comprehenſiveneſs of the Law. As for the Application of them to particular Caſes, I muſt leave that to the Judgment of Chriſtian Prudence; only in the enſuing Treatiſe you will meet with ſundry Examples of it.

It will be now requiſite that I ſpeak ſomething (and that chiefly becauſe others have ſpoken ſo much) concerning the Order of theſe Commands; the Number of them is no way queſtioned, for God himſelf hath determined them to be Ten Commandments, *Exod.* 34. 28. but the Method and Diſpoſition of them is much controverted; and I think with more Heat and Contention than the Cauſe deſerves; for if all that God hath ſpoken be intirely delivered to us, what great concern is it, whether this or that Command be reckoned the ſecond, third, or fourth? This certainly tends but little to Piety; and we had need rather to imploy our Care how to keep them, than how to reckon them.

Thom. Aquinas, 2. 2. q. 100. Art. 4.

And therefore, waving all other Differences, (as that of *Heſychius*, making the firſt Command to be this, *I am the Lord thy God*; which we with good Reaſon affirm to be only a part of the Preface; and leaving out the fourth concerning the Sanctification of the Sabbath; and that of the ſeventh, placing, *Thou ſhalt not kill*, after, *Thou ſhalt not commit adultery*; *Thou ſhalt not ſteal*; whereas, we, according to the *Hebrew* Verity place it before;) all that I ſhall remark, is, the Difference between the Papiſts and us in the Enumeration of the Ten Commandments: They generally hold, that there are but Three Commands in the firſt Table; and therefore make ſeven in the Second: and to compleat this Number, as they join the firſt and the ſecond into one, ſo they divide the tenth into two. Concerning this Diviſion, or Union, we would not be much contentious with them, were there not a Sacrilegious and Idolatrous Deſign couch'd under it; for finding the ſecond Commandment to ſtrike ſo directly at their Image-Worſhip, they thought it expedient to deny it to be any diſtinct Precept of it ſelf, but only an Appendix or Expoſition of the former, *Thou ſhalt have no other Gods before Me*; that ſo they might with the better colour omit it, as generally they have done in all their Books of Devotion, and for Inſtruction of the People. So that of thoſe few among them that can rehearſe the Decalogue, you ſhall find none that will repeat, *Thou ſhalt not make unto thee any graven Image, thou ſhalt not bow down thy ſelf unto them, nor ſerve them*; as not knowing that any ſuch thing is forbidden them by God. And yet that they may make up the full Number of the Commandments, they divide the tenth into two; one forbidding the coveting of our Neighbour's Wife; and the other, the coveting of any other of his Poſſeſſions.

Aug. Ep. 209. *ad Januar. Sermon* 148. *de tempore. Lib.* 15. *contra. Fauſt. Manich. Tract.* 3. *in Johan.*

The only Authority they produce from Antiquity, for this Order of the Decalogue, is that of St. *Auſtine*; and it is very true, that he doth in many places of his Works ſo conjoin and divide them; but far from any deſign of promoting Idolatry, or keeping the People in Ignorance, that the worſhipping of Images was forbidden: Yet in this particular he went contrary to the current of all former Antiquity;

quity; yea, contrary to the very order of the Scripture; for whereas they ſay, that the ninth Commandment is, *Thou ſhalt not covet thy neighbour's wife*; and the tenth, *Thou ſhalt not covet thy neighbour's houſe, nor his ſervant*, &c. If we conſult *Exod.* 20. 17. we ſhall find that the Command runs thus: *Thou ſhalt not covet thy neighbour's houſe, thou ſhalt not covet thy neighbour's wife*, &c. from which it certainly follows, that they cannot make two Precepts, but appertain to one.

But enough of this, which I had not mentioned, had it not been concealed out of ſuch an impious Deſign.

And now I think my way is clear to the Words themſelves.

In them we have the Preface, and the Precepts.

The Preface in theſe words: *I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the houſe of bondage:*

The Precepts are Ten; whereof the firſt and chief is, *Thou ſhalt have no other gods before me.*

The Preface carries an equal Reſpect and Reverence to all the Commandments, and contains a ſtrong Argument in it to enforce the Obedience of them.

And as Kings and Princes do uſually prefix their Names and Titles before thoſe Laws and Edicts which are ſet forth by them, to gain the more Attention, and the greater Veneration to what they publiſh; ſo here the great God, who is the King of Kings, being to proclaim a Law to his People of *Iſrael*, that he might affect them with the deeper Reverence of his Authority, and make them the more afraid to tranſgreſs thoſe Laws that were enacted by ſo mighty a Potentate, and ſo glorious a Majeſty, He diſplays and blazons his Name and his Stile before them, *I am the Lord thy God which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, and out of the houſe of bondage*; that they might learn to fear his glorious and fearful Name, *The Lord thy God*; as we find it, *Deut.* 28. 58.

Now as all Arguments that are prevalent and cogent, are adapted to work upon one of theſe two Paſſions by which we are ſwayed in all the Actions of our Lives, either our Fear or our Love, ſo here likewiſe God hath accommodated himſelf to our Temper; and proclaims,

Firſt, His Authority to beget Fear, *I am the Lord thy God.* I.

Secondly, His Benefits and Mercies to engage Love, *The Lord thy God, that brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the houſe of bondage.* II.

And by both theſe, that having ſo ſtrong an Obligation upon our very Natures, as the Motives of Love and Fear, he might the more readily work us unto Obedience. For what Motives can be urged more enforcing than theſe, which are drawn both from Power and Goodneſs; the one obliging us to Subjection, the other to Gratitude?

Firſt, He is the Lord God, the great Creator, the only Proprietor, the abſolute Governour and Diſpoſer of all things: and therefore upon this account we owe an awful Obſervance to all his Laws and Injunctions. It is but fit and juſt that we ſhould be ſubject unto Him that created us, and who hath infinite Power for our Contumacies and Rebellions eternally to deſtroy us. He is the Lord God, the great and glorious One, whoſe Kingdom is from Everlaſting to Everlaſting, and whoſe Dominion hath no Bounds, either of Time or Place: *Behold*, ſaith the Prophet, *the nations are but as a drop of the bucket, and are accounted but as the ſmall duſt of the balance: behold, he taketh up the iſles as a very little thing. All nations before him are as nothing, and they are accounted unto him leſs than nothing and vanity*, Iſaiah 40. 15, 17. His Voice ſhakes the Heavens, and removes the Earth out of its place; his way is in the Whirlwind; Storms and Tempeſts are his Harbingers; and the Clouds are the Duſt raiſed by his Feet; the Mountains quake at his Preſence; at his diſpleaſure the Hills melt away; the World and all the Inhabitants of it are diſſolved: His fury is poured out like Fire, and the Rocks are thrown down by him: His hand ſpans the Heavens, and he holds all the Waters of the Sea in the hollow of it. Heaven is the Throne of his Glory, and the Earth his Foot-ſtool; his Pavilion round about him, dark Waters and thick Clouds of the Skie; ten thouſand times ten thouſand glorious Spirits ſtand alway miniſtring before him; they flie on his Errands, and are ready preſt 1.

to execute his Sovereign Will and Pleaſure: Who is like unto thee O Lord, glorious in Holineſs, fearful in thy Praiſes, doing Wonders, and therefore who would not fear thee, O King of Nations, and tremble and be aſtoniſh'd when once thou art angry? Wilt thou then, O vile and wretched Sinner, deſpiſe the Authority and Majeſty of the great God, before whom all the Powers of Heaven and Earth lye proſtrate? Dareſt thou infringe his Laws, and violate his Commands, who is ſo great and terrible a God, that he can deſtroy thee by the very breath of his Noſtrils? *By the breath of his noſtrils they are conſumed*, Job 4. 9. Yea, he can look thee to death: They periſh at the rebuke of thy countenance, *Pſal.* 80. 16. Art thou able to contend with this God? Art thou a fit match for the Almighty? Can thy heart endure, or thy hands be ſtrong, in the day when the Lord ſhall deal with thee, and come to recompence Vengeance upon thee for all thy Tranſgreſſions? Who among you can dwell with the devouring Fire? Who among you can dwell with everlaſting Burnings?

Certainly, did we but frequently thus over-awe our hearts with the ſerious conſideration of the dread Majeſty and ſupreme Authority of the great God, we ſhould not dare ſo preſumptuouſly to provoke him, as we do. Fear is a moſt excellent Preſervative from Sin; and a ſtrong Fence that God hath ſet about his Law, to keep us from breaking thoſe Bounds which he hath preſcribed us. And therefore the wiſe Man gives us this Advice, *Eccleſ.* 12. 13. *Fear God and keep his Commandments.* And the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 4. 4. *Stand in awe and Sin not.*

2. *Secondly*, As the Authority of God is ſet forth to move us to Obedience by working upon our Fear; ſo his Benefits and Mercies are declared to win us to it from a Principle of Love and Gratitude: *The Lord thy God, who hath brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the houſe of bondage.* And indeed this, though it be a ſoft, yet is a moſt powerful and effectual Argument: Hath God ſurrounded thee with Bleſſings, and loaded thee every day with his Benefits; haſt thou received thy Life, thy Being from him, and ſo many Comforts in which thou takeſt delight, and he allows thee ſo to do; haſt thou been delivered by his watchful Providence from many Deaths and Dangers, reſtored from Sickneſs, or preſerved in Health; doth he feed thee at his Table, and cloath thee out of his Wardrobe; nay, what is infinitely more, hath he given thee his only Son, and his Son given thee his Life and moſt precious Blood; hath he ſent thee his Goſpel, and in it the exceeding great and precious Promiſes of eternal Glory, a Glory which Hope durſt not behold enough to expect, nor is Imagination large enough to conceive; hath he ſent thee his Spirit to ſeal and ratifie all theſe Promiſes to thee; hath he crown'd thy Head with many rich Bleſſings here, and will he crown it with Joy and Bleſſedneſs hereafter; and canſt thou, O Soul, be ſo unkind and diſingenuous as to deny any thing to that God, who hath denied nothing to thee? Canſt thou refuſe him the only thing he requires of thee, the only Teſtimony which thou canſt give, that thou haſt any ſenſe of his Favour; and eſpecially conſidering he requires it only that he may reward it with farther Bleſſings? Canſt thou wrong that God who hath been ſo kind and gracious unto thee, and is continually doing thee good? Canſt thou deſpiſe his Precepts, who hath regarded thy Prayers? Wilt not thou hear him ſpeaking unto thee, who hath often heard thee when thou haſt cryed unto him, and hath helped and ſaved thee? Certainly, the Ingenuity of Humane Nature forbids it, the Love of God conſtraineth otherwiſe, eſpecially, ſince he hath required Obedience from us as the evidence and expreſſion of our Love to him, *John* 14. 21. *He that hath my Commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.* And in the Second Epiſtle of St. *John*, ver. 6. *This is love, that we walk after his Commandments.* And that which is a moſt cogent Motive, thine own Intereſt and eternal Concernments engage thee to it: For, *what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, and to love him, and to keep his Commandments, which I command thee this day for thy good*, Deut. 10. 12, 13. God might have required from us the very ſame Obedience which now he doth, without promiſing us any Reward for it; for we owe him all that we can poſſibly do, as he is the Author of our Beings; and every Power and Faculty of our Souls ought to be imployed for him who gave them unto us. But when the great God hath been ſo far pleaſed to condeſcend from his Prerogative, as to command us nothing but what hath already brought us very great Advantages, and will for the future bring us far greater, when his hands ſhall be as full of Bleſſings, as his mouth is of Commands; when he

enjoyns

enjoyns us a Work that in it ſelf is Wages, and yet promiſeth us Wages for doing of that Work; when the Mercies he hath already given us do oblige us, and the Mercies he hath promiſed yet to give us do allure us; certainly, we muſt needs be the moſt diſingenuous of all Creatures, and the greateſt Enemies to our own Happineſs, if theſe Conſiderations do not win us to yield him that Obedience which redounds not at all to his profit and advantage, but our own.

Thus you ſee, how God hath inforced the Obſervation of his Law upon us, both by his Authority and by his Mercy; the one to work upon our Fear, the other upon our Love, and both to engage us to Obedience.

Now here it is obſervable, that in the rehearſal of thoſe Mercies which ſhould oblige unto Duty, mention is made only of thoſe which ſeem to concern the *Iſraelites*, and no other People, *I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the houſe of bondage:* From which ſome would infer, That the Decalogue only reſpects them; and that the Commands then given, do not at all appertain unto us, no more than the Benefits commemorated.

But the Anſwer is eaſie: For this Mercy here mentioned of Deliverance from *Egypt*, and the Houſe of Bondage, is to be underſtood either Literally or Typically.

If we underſtand it Literally, ſo indeed it refers only to the People of *Iſrael*, whom God brought out of *Egypt* with a mighty Hand, and with a ſtretched out Arm; and ſuch a ſeries of Miracles, that they were almoſt as ordinary as the common effects of God's Providence.

But if we underſtand this Typically and Myſtically, ſo it is true, that God hath brought us alſo out of *Egypt*, and out of the Houſe of Bondage; and therefore the inforcement of the Commandments upon this account and conſideration, belongs to us Chriſtians, as well as it did belong to the Church of the *Jews*; for ſhould we run up the Allegory to the Spiritual ſenſe of it, we ſhall find a wonderful Agreement betwixt them, and a near Repreſentation of our State in the State of the *Iſraelites*; let it ſuffice to compare them together only in a few remarkable Inſtances: As they were kept in Bondage under the rigorous Tyranny of *Pharaoh*, who ſought both by Policy and Power to deſtroy them; ſo were we kept in Bondage under the Tyranny of the Devil, of whom *Pharaoh* was a black Type and Shadow; and as God delivered them from his hand by a Temporal Salvation, ſo hath he delivered us from the power of the Devil by a Spiritual Salvation, redeeming us from the ſlaviſh Imployment of lading our ſelves with thick Clay, and leading us through the Red Sea of his Son's Blood, in which all our Spiritual Enemies are deſtroyed, and conducting us through the Wilderneſs of this World, unto the promiſed *Canaan*, that Land that floweth with Milk and Honey, the Seat of Reſt, and Eternal Joy and Felicity, even Heaven it ſelf: and therefore, if the conſideration of a Temporal Deliverance were ſo powerful a Motive to ingage the *Iſraelites* unto Obedience; how much more effectually ſhould we be obliged unto it, whoſe deliverance is far greater than theirs was? for God hath delivered us from the power of Darkneſs, and hath tranſlated us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, *Coloſ.* 1. 13. He hath delivered us from the Wrath to come, 1 *Theſ.* 1. 10. He hath aboliſhed Death for us, and brought Life and Immortality to light through the Goſpel, 2 *Tim.* 1. 10. And therefore, as our Deliverance is Spiritual, ſo ought our Obedience to be; that being delivered from the Juſtice of God, the condemning power of the Law, the reigning power of Sin, the ſting of an accuſing Conſcience, the rage and malice of the Devil, and the intollerable Torments of Hell, we might with all love and thankfulneſs chearfully ſerve that God, whoſe Mercy hath been extended towards us in thoſe things which are of higheſt and moſt precious concernment.

And thus you ſee the reaſon of this Preface, *I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt*; and how it is both applicable and obligatory to us Chriſtians, as well as to the *Jews*; containing a Declaration of God's Authority to inforce, and of his Mercy to oblige us to the Obedience of thoſe Laws which he delivers.

I come now to the Precepts themſelves; whereof the firſt and chiefeſt is, *Thou ſhalt have no other gods before me:* Which becauſe it is a Negative, and all Negatives depend upon, and muſt be meaſured by the Truth of their contrary Affirmative, therefore I ſhall firſt conſider, what Duties are commanded in this Precept; and then, what Sins are prohibited.

Four Things are here required:

Firſt,

I. *Firſt*, That we muſt have a God: Againſt Atheiſm.

II. *Secondly*, That we muſt have the Lord Jehovah for our God: Which forbids Idolatry.

III. *Thirdly*, That we muſt have the only true God the Lord Jehovah alone for our God: And this forbids Politheiſm, or the worſhipping of many Gods; and *Samaritaniſm*, or the worſhipping of falſe Gods together with the True, like thoſe *Samaritans* ſpoken of, 2 *Kings* 17. 33. who feared the Lord, and yet ſerved their own Gods; making a ſtrange Medly in Religion, and blending thoſe things together that were utterly irreconcilable: as if they intended not only to be Partakers themſelves with Devils but to make God ſo too; which is the greateſt Gratification that can be given to that proud and wicked Spirit, whoſe Ambition it is to Emulate and Rival God in Worſhip. The Apoſtle hath told us, *That thoſe things which the Gentiles ſacrifice, they ſacrifice to Devils, and not to God*, 1 Cor. 10. 20.

Now thus to joyn any other thing with God, as the Object of our Worſhip, is infinitely to debaſe and diſparage him; ſince it intimates, that ſomething beſides God is excellent, and perfect as Himſelf. And therefore *Zephan.* 1. 5. God ſeverely threatens to cut off, and to deſtroy thoſe that worſhip and ſwear by the Lord, and that ſwear by *Malcham.*

IV. *Fourthly*, It requires that all theſe Services and Acts of Worſhip which we tender unto the true and only God, be performed with ſincerity and true Devotion: This is implied in that expreſſion before me, *Thou ſhalt have no other gods before me*, or in my ſight: And this forbids both Prophaneneſs on the one hand, and Hypocriſie on the other. For, becauſe the moſt ſecret and retired Apartments of the Heart, are all naked and bare in the ſight of God, and our very Spirits are as it were diſſected, and ſo expoſed to his view and obſervation; therefore to have no other God before him, denotes that our ſerving and worſhipping of him ought to be ſincere and affectionate. It is not enough to have no other God before Men, not to fall down proſtrate before any viſible Idol ſet up in a Temple; but the Law is Spiritual, and ſearcheth the very thoughts and inward parts of the Soul, and if there be any Idol ſet up in the Heart, although it be in the darkeſt corner of it, any ſecret Luſt, or hidden Sin, which is the Soul's Idol, and keeps it from being chaſt and true to its God; any crooked ends and ſiniſter reſpects in the Worſhip of God, this is to have another God in the ſight of Jehovah, and before him: Indeed, we are very apt to reſt contented if we can but approve our ſelves before Men, and carry a fair ſhew of Religion and Godlineſs. But conſider how weak and fooliſh this is: For firſt, we cozen them with our Appearances; and then we cozen our ſelves with their Opinions of us. It is not only before Men (whoſe ſight is terminated in the bark and outſide of things) that we offer up our Services, but before that God who is the Searcher of the Heart, and the Tryer of the Reins, who looks quite through us, and judgeth not according to outward appearance, but judgeth righteous Judgment; For us to regard Men, and ſeek to commend our ſelves to them in the Service of God, is as great a Folly and Irreverence, as it would be for one who is to treat with a mighty Prince, to regard and reverence only the Images in the Tapſtry and Hangings: Alas! Men are but as ſo many blind Images, in reſpect of God; they cannot ſee the Heart, nor the Affections; and thoſe outward Acts of Worſhip which they do ſee and commend without the Heart, are deſpiſed by God; he requireth truth in the inward Parts, and is not delighted with the oſtentation of Performance, but with the ſincerity of Intention: for every one is delighted with that which doth moſt of all declare ſome ſingular Excellency that is in him. But now it is God's Excellency and Prerogative, to contemplate the Heart, to weigh and conſider the Spirits of Men; and therefore he is chiefly delighted in the unfeigned deſires and breathings of the Heart after him, becauſe by theſe we own him to be an All-knowing God: But when we perform Duties of Religion only to be ſeen and applauded of Men, we make God only our Pretence, but Men our Idols; and ſet up as many Gods before him, as we have Spectators and Obſervers.

And thus we have ſeen what poſitive Duties are required of us in this Precept: That we ſhould Worſhip a God, and him the true God; and the true God only, and that in Truth and Sincerity, as doing all our Services before him. So that you ſee this firſt Command reſpects Worſhip.

It would be too long, and indeed almoſt endleſs, to inſiſt particularly on all the Duties that are included in the true and ſincere Worſhip of the true and only God: I ſhall therefore ſpeak only of the three chief and moſt remarkable ones:

Firſt, The Love of God. I.
Secondly, The Fear of God. II.
Thirdly, Invocation of, and rendring Praiſe unto Him. III.

In theſe Three eſpecially, doth conſiſt the having the Lord for our God.

Firſt, In this Command is required of us the moſt ſupream and indeared Love of God; yea, indeed, the Love of God is not only the Sum of this, but of all the Commands of the firſt Table: And therefore (as I lately told you) when our Saviour would give an Abridgment of the Law, he compriſeth all the Ten under Two great Commands, *Matth.* 22. 37, 38, 39. *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy mind. This is the firſt and great Commandment. And the ſecond is like unto it, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thy ſelf.* From whence the Apoſtle deduceth that great Concluſion, *Rom.* 13. 10. That *Love is the fulfilling of the Law.* It is ſo, if not formally, yet virtually and effectively, for it will powerfully and ſweetly ſway us to yield a ready Submiſſion and Obedience to what is required of us; and that not only as it is the Dictate of Divine and Sovereign Authority, but from the free ſpontaneous Tendency of the Soul it ſelf, which when it is once touch'd with this Cœleſtial and ſerene Flame, muſt rebel againſt its own Inclinations, as well as againſt God's Commands, if it be not carried out towards that Object in which alone it can find full acquieſcence and ſatisfaction. 1ſt.

Now this Love of God hath in it three Acts or Degrees; Deſire, Joy, and Zeal:

Firſt, An earneſt and panting Deſire after God, *Pſal.* 42. 1, 2. *As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, ſo panteth my ſoul after thee, O God. My ſoul thirſteth for God, for the living God: Oh! when ſhall I come and appear before God?* As the poor imboſs'd Deer that is cloſely purſued, faints and melts with the heat of the Chace, and haſteth to the known River where it was wont to quench its thirſt, to find both ſafety and refreſhment there; ſo doth the holy amorous Soul reach and breath after God; he thirſteth after the Water-brooks, the ſtreams of his Ordinances, wherein God doth pour out his Grace and his Spirit to refreſh the longing deſires of this holy Impatience: But not being ſatisfied with this, he ſtill makes up to the Fountain, and never reſts contented, till he hath ingulph'd and plung'd himſelf into God, and is ſwallowed up in Beatitude. 1.

Secondly, From the fruition of the beloved Object ſpringeth Joy; for Joy is nothing elſe but the reſt and acquieſcence of Deſire. And therefore, according to the meaſures of God's communicating himſelf to our Souls, ſuch proportionably will be the increaſes of our Joy. Something we enjoy of God in this life, whilſt we are abſent from him in the Body; he is pleaſed to give us tranſient Glances of himſelf, when he fills his Ordinances and our Duties with his Spirit; and yet theſe reſerved Communications are ſo raviſhing, that the diſtended Soul is often forced, by the Agony of Sweetneſs, to cry out with holy *Simeon*, *Now Lord, let thy ſervant depart in peace, for mine eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation.* How over-flowing then will our Joy be, when we come to Heaven, where our fruition of God ſhall be intire and eternal; where we ſhall ſee him as he is, and know him as we are known by him; where the unveiled Glories of the Deity ſhall beat full upon us, and we for ever Sun our ſelves in the Smiles of God? Certainly, the Joy of ſuch a State would be intolerable, but only that God who fills us, will then likewiſe enlarge and ſupport us. 2.

Thirdly, If our fruition of God be hindred and obſtructed, our love to him will then expreſs it ſelf in an holy Zeal: Zeal is the Indignation of the Soul, and a Revenge that it takes upon whatſoever is an impediment to the obtaining its deſires. The earneſt deſire of a true Saint, is the Enjoyment of God, and the Glory of God; and of both theſe, Sin is the only let and hinderance. And therefore a Soul that is paſſionate for God, hath not ſo great an Indignation againſt any thing as againſt Sin: Can he endure to ſee that God whom he loves dearer than his life, daily provoked and injured; to hear his Name blaſphemed, to ſee his Ordinances deſpiſed, his Worſhip neglected, his Servants abuſed, and the moſt ſacred Truths of Religion denied, and the ſacred Myſteries of it derided? He is the moſt meek and patient Man on Earth in his own concerns; unwilling to obſerve the Wrongs that are done him, and much more to revenge them: but when God is injured, the dear Object of his Love and Joy, he can no longer refrain, but whatſoever befalls him, riſeth up to vindi- 3.

cate his Honour, and thruſts himſelf between to receive thoſe ſtrokes which were aimed at God; and what he cannot prevent, or reform, that he bitterly bewails.

This is true Zeal; and he that ſaith he loves God, and yet is not thus zealous for him, is a Lyar.

Now try your Love to God by theſe things: Are your deſires fervent and affectionate after him? Do you find an holy Impatience in your Spirit till you enjoy him? Will nothing elſe content you but God? Can you ſay, That there is none in Heaven nor in Earth that you deſire in compariſon with him; and if the whole World were thrown into your boſoms for your Portion, you would pluck it thence, and caſt it at your feet, reſolving that you will not be put off with ſuch Trifles? Do you find a Joy ſpringing and diffuſing it ſelf through your hearts when you are engaged in Communion with him? A ſweet and potent Delight, to which all the Pleaſures of Sin are but flat and inſipid. Are you jealous for the Lord of Hoſts? Are your anger and grief never ſo much kindled for any Wrongs that are done unto you, as they are for the provocations that are daily committed againſt the great Majeſty of Heaven? Canſt thou mourn and weep for theſe in ſecret, and if thou haſt power and authority to do it, puniſh and avenge them openly? Thou mayſt for thy comfort conclude, that certainly God hath kindled this heavenly flame of Love in thy breaſt; a flame that aſpires Heaven-ward, and will at laſt carry up thy Soul with it, and lodge it there where the Deſire of Love ſhall be ſatisfied, the Joy of Love perfected, and the Zeal of Love eternally rewarded.

So much for the firſt principal Duty required in this firſt Precept, The Love of God.

2dly. *Secondly*, In this Command is required of us the Fear of God; for certainly, we cannot have the Lord for our God, unleſs we ſupremely Fear and Reverence him; yea, as Love, ſo the Fear of God is made the Sum of all the Commandments, and indeed the Subſtance of all Religion: For although it be but one particular Branch and Member of that Worſhip and Service which we owe unto God, yet it is ſuch a remarkable one, and hath ſuch a mighty influence upon all the reſt, that oftentimes in Scripture it is put for the whole; and generally the Character of a true Worſhipper and obedient Servant of God, is given by this Periphraſis, That he is a Man fearing God.

Now the Fear of God is either ſervile or filial; and both are a ſtrong Bond to Duty and Obedience. Thoſe who are acted only by a ſlaviſh Fear, will beware how they ſtir up the dread Wrath and ſevere Juſtice of God againſt themſelves, by any wilful Neglects or known Tranſgreſſions. And how much more thoſe who are acted by a Principle of filial and reverential Fear of God, who fear as much to offend, as to ſuffer for it; and to whom Mercy and Goodneſs proves as powerful motives of Fear, as Wrath and Fury: Yea, there is no Attribute nor Perfection in God, but is very juſtly the object of our Fear; for where this Grace is true and genuine, it works in us rather a ſedate awe and reſpect of God, a profound Reverence and Reſilition of the Soul, than any turbulent and tempeſtuous Paſſions of a Fright and Horrour. And certainly, if we acknowledge that there is a God, it is but reaſon that we ſhould thus fear him according to his eſſential Greatneſs and Glory: For take away the fear of a Deity, and a ſupreme Power, which is able to reward and puniſh the Actions of Men, and you open a Flood-gate for all Villany and Wickedneſs to ruſh out and overflow the whole World. And where this reſtraint of Fear is taken off from the Spirits of Men, all Laws given to curb their Licentiouſneſs, are of no more force, than Fetters of Air to chain up Mad-men; and therefore very fitly doth God injoin the Fear of Himſelf in this firſt Command, as that which will ſeaſon and diſpoſe the Heart to obey Him in all the reſt.

Timor reverentiæ eſt reſilitio ab altitudine Dei ad vitatem propriam par Altiſiod l. 10. Tract. 5.

3dly. *Thirdly*, Another principal Part of Worſhip required in this firſt Precept, is, The Invocation of the Name of God in our Prayers and Praiſes. The two former, *viz.* Love and Fear, reſpect the inward Worſhip of God in our Hearts, but this appertains to his outward Worſhip, and by it we give expreſs Teſtimonies we both Love and Fear him: for Prayer and Praiſes are the Tribute and Homage of Religion; by the one we acknowledge our dependance upon him; by the other we own all our bleſſings and comforts to be from him; and to one of theſe two, all of external Worſhip may be referred. Certainly, ſuch as neither pray unto God, nor praiſe him, cannot be ſaid to have a God; for they acknowledge none, but are Gods unto themſelves:

For

For wherefore do we affirm, that there is a God, if we make no Addreſſes unto him? If we have recourſe only to our own Power or Policy to accompliſh our Deſigns; and when they ſucceed, aſcribe the ſucceſs of them only to our own Wiſdom and Conduct, we make theſe our Idols, and give them the Honour which is due unto God only. And therefore the Prophet *Habak.* 1. 16. ſpeaks of thoſe who ſacrifice to their Net, and burn Incenſe to their Drag, becauſe by them their Portion is fat, and their Meat plenteous.

Now as the Love and Fear of God are often uſed in Scripture for his whole Worſhip and Service, ſo likewiſe is this Invocation of his Name. So we find it *Gen.* 4. 26. *Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord.* That is, (as many learned Expoſitors underſtand it, although ſome take it another way) then began Men ſolemnly and publickly to worſhip God in their Aſſemblies. And, *Jer.* 10. 25. *Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the families that call not on thy name, i. e.* thoſe who do not worſhip nor ſerve thee. And the like we may obſerve in very many other places.

There is but one thing more that I ſhall remark to you, and that is, That as this firſt Command requires in the general, that the true God ſhould be truly worſhipped; ſo the three next following Commands preſcribe the means and branches of his Worſhip, and the way and manner how he would have it performed. For the ſecond Commandment requires us to worſhip God, who is a Spirit, without any viſible Image or Repreſentation of the Deity: For as it is impoſſible that there ſhould be any true reſemblance made of a Spirit; ſo it is moſt impious to give any part of Divine Honour and Reverence unto dumb Idols; which as to their Materials, are but the Creatures of God; as they are Statues, are but the Creatures of Art, and as they are Images, are but the Creatures of Fancy and Superſtition. The third Commandment requires, that we ſhould never mention the Name of the great God ſlightly and impertinently; but whenſoever we have occaſion to utter it, we ſhould do it with all proſtrate Veneration, and ſerious Affection. The Fourth, preſcribes us the time which God hath ſet apart and ſanctified for his ſolemn Worſhip. So that you ſee each Command of the firſt Table is concerned in giving Rules for Divine Worſhip; but the firſt, which injoyns it in the general, is the ground and foundation of the other three.

And thus much ſhall ſuffice concerning the Duties required in this firſt Command, *Thou ſhalt have no other gods before me.*

In the next place, let us ſee what is forbidden in it.

It forbids us four Things:

Firſt, Atheiſm, or the belief and acknowledgment of no God. I.

Secondly, Ignorance of the true God. II.

Thirdly, Prophaneneſs, or the wretched Neglect of the Worſhip and Service of God. III.

Fourthly, Idolatry, or the ſetting up and worſhipping of falſe Gods. IV.

Firſt, Atheiſm, or the acknowledging of no God, is forbidden and condemned by this Command: And well may this be reckoned the firſt Sin forbidden; for certainly Religion and Worſhip will be found to be one of the moſt foppiſh Vanities that ever was impoſed upon the credulous World, if either there be no God, to whom we might direct our Devotions, or only a God of *Epicurus* and *Lucretius*'s ſtamp, that ſits unconcern'd in Heaven, and loaths the Fatigue of Buſineſs, taking no thought nor care of humane affairs. For if there be no God, or only ſuch an one, what difference is there whether we Pray or Blaſpheme; whether we lead holy and pious Lives, or let looſe the Reins to all manner of Lewdneſs and Riot, and wallow in all the impure Delights that Vice and Senſuality can recommend to our corrupted Appetites? For if there be no God, or only ſuch an one, what difference is there whether we Pray or Blaſpheme; whether we lead holy and pious Lives, or let looſe the Reins to all manner of Lewdneſs and Riot, and wallow in all the impure Delights that Vice and Senſuality can recommend to our corrupted Appetites? For if there be no God, there can be no future Cognizance taken of either, no Rewards nor Puniſhments proportioned to either. And therefore it will be here neceſſary to ſhew the Folly and Unreaſonableneſs of Atheiſm, and to convince Men that there is a God, without which all Religion and Worſhip is but folly and Madneſs. 1ſt.

Some

Some perhaps may judge it altogether needleſs to inſiſt upon ſuch a Subject as this, among thoſe who all acknowledge and worſhip the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom he hath ſent. I heartily wiſh it were both unneceſſary and impertinent; but truly if we conſider that uſually the Practices of Men are guided and influenced by their Principles, we ſhall find reaſon enough to ſuſpect that there are ſome Notions of Speculative Atheiſm, that lie at the bottom of all that Practical Atheiſm, which we may obſerve ſo generally to prevail in the World: For any conſiderate Perſon would think it impoſſible that Men ſhould ſo daringly ruſh into all thoſe Prodigious Crimes and Villanies, that every-where rage and reign, were it not that they entertain looſe and wavering Apprehenſions of the Exiſtence of a Deity, and incourage themſelves in their Vices by ſome unform'd and callow Thoughts, that perchance all that Religion teacheth concerning God and a future State, are only politick Devices and Fictions.

Nay, indeed our Age hath too many, who, not only with the Fool, ſay in their hearts, but are arrived to that heighth of deſperate impudence, as to avow it in expreſs words, yea, to diſpute and argue it, that there is no God.

I ſhall therefore confirm this great and primary Truth, upon which depends all our Religion, and all our Hopes, by ſome convincing and demonſtrative Arguments, which I intend to make as plain and obvious as the matter will permit.

1. *Firſt* then, The univerſal conſent of all Nations ſtrongly proves the being of a Deity: For that which all agree in, muſt needs be accounted a Dictate of Nature; and what is ſuch muſt needs be acknowledged to be a Maxim of Truth. Next to the Report of our Senſes, we may credit the Reports that Nature and all Mankind give concerning the Truth and Exiſtence of Things. Now if we ſhould impannel all the Nations of the World upon this Tryal, not only the more civilized, where Cuſtom, or the Authority of Laws might be ſuſpected to introduce this Belief, but thoſe that are the moſt Rude and Savage, they would all with one Conſent return this Verdict, That there is a God. Nay, although one part of Mankind hath ſo ſtrangely diſſented from another, about all other things, as concerning their Laws, Government, and Cuſtoms, yea, and Manner of Worſhip; yet thoſe that differ in all things elſe, ſeem only to agree in theſe two, Humane Nature and the Belief of a Deity. Never was there any Nation ſo wild and barbarous that acknowledged no God; but their great Fault and Folly was, that they acknowledged too many. And it is ſtrange to think, that the whole Race of Mankind in ſo many Generations as have ſucceſſively followed one another ſince the beginning of the World, (yea and if there were no God from all Eternity) ſhould not they have grown wiſe enough to free themſelves from ſo troubleſome an Opinion as that of the Exiſtence of a God; an Opinion that croſſeth their worldly Intereſts, contradicts their ſenſual Deſires, damps their Joys, torments their natural Conſciences, and which thoſe who are wicked would give whatſoever is deareſt to them to have it utterly rooted out of their minds: It is ſtrange (I ſay) that they ſhould not all this while be able to deliver themſelves from the Tyranny and Fetters of this Fancy, were it only impoſed upon them by falſe Reports and Surmiſes.

Nulla gens eſt, neque tam immanſuета, nec tam fera, quæ etiamſi ignoret vellem habere Deum deceat, tamen habendum ſciat. Cicero.

How could the World be ſo eaſily drawn into ſuch ſeveral Shapes and Forms of Religion (which among the Heathen were almoſt infinite, and among others too various and different,) were there not a natural inclination in the Souls of Men to imbrace ſome Religion or other, and an indelible Character of a Deity imprinted on their Minds? Inſomuch, that in the Times of Darkneſs, when the Truth was not clearly revealed to the World, becauſe they knew neither the true Object, nor the right Way for Worſhip, this reſtleſs Notion of a Deity put them upon inventing divers vile, uncouth, and ridiculous Superſtitions. But yet this is ſo far from invalidating, that it ſtrongly confirms to us their Belief of a Deity, in that they ſubmitted themſelves to Obſervances not only unreaſonable, but many times barbarous and inhumane, if they thought them acceptable to the Gods they worſhipt; yea, rather than they would be without a Deity, they would dig them Gods out of their Gardens; or conſecrate Dogs, and Serpents, and any Virmin that firſt met them in the morning, and had the good luck thereby to creep into Honour.

Porrum & cepe nefas violare aut frangere morſu.
O ſanctas gentes! quibus hæc: naſcuntur in hortis.
Numina—— Juven.

What

What then, is it likely that the World received this Notion firſt by Tradition, whereas before Men generally believed there was no God? This cannot be: for would they in reaſon quit their former Perſuaſion, to receive this new falſe one, eſpecially when it is the only thing that fills them with Fears and Torments, and a thouſand Affrights and Horrours; yea, thoſe who would fain wear off this Notion of a God, and perſuade themſelves to be Atheiſts if they could, what violence have they offered to themſelves to do it? And when they thought they had prevailed, yet this Impreſſion hath ſtill returned, when they have been ſtartled with Thunder, or Earthquakes, or Sickneſs, and the dreadful Apprehenſions of approaching Death.

Poſſibly ſome few may have been found in the World, who have diſſented from the reſt of Mankind in this belief of a Deity; yet their diſſent is not ſufficient ground for us to conclude that therefore it is not a Dictate of Nature. For how many are there that violate the Laws of Nature, and do thoſe things which the innate Light and Reaſon of a Man abhor and abominate? Yet none will from thence infer, that there are no ſuch things as Natural Laws; ſo neither, tho' ſome might have utterly razed out of their minds the Notion and Belief of a God, yet it will not hence follow, that this Belief of a Supreme Being is not an Impreſſion of Nature.

But ſuppoſe the number of Atheiſts had been never ſo great, is it not far more probable that it ſhould rather be a Dictate of Nature, that there is a God, than that there is not; ſince the diſ-belief of his Being would open a wide Gap to all manner of Lewdneſs and Licenciouſneſs; yea, and to the bold commiſſion even of thoſe Sins which are againſt Nature it ſelf: Shall ſuch Men be thought to ſpeak the ſenſe of Nature, whoſe Opinion ſo directly tends to bring in Sins contrary to the Light and Laws of Nature? For take away the Belief of a Deity, and it is as much to be doubted, whether the refined Diſcourſes of Reaſon, and the conſideration of Decency, and the intrinſical Rewards of Vertue, will be of force ſufficient to reſtrain Men from the moſt enormous and unnatural Vices. That therefore muſt needs be a Dictate of Nature, which is almoſt the only thing which gives Authority to the Law of Nature; and ſuch is the Belief of a God.

Secondly, Another convincing Demonſtration of the Exiſtence of a Deity, is taken from the ſerious conſideration and review of the Frame and Order of the Univerſe; in which there are as many Wonders, as there are Creatures: and certainly he muſt needs be very blind and ſtupid, that reads not God in every one of them. Caſt but your Eyes upwards, and contemplate the vaſt Expanſion of the Heavens, which are the Canopy of the World, the Roof of this great Houſe the Univerſe, the Lid or Cover that is put over all the Works of Nature. Behold how glorioufly this Canopy is ſtudded; how many glittering Lights are hung up in this Roof to illuminate our inferiour World, and to diſcover to our Eyes all viſible Objects, and to our Mind the Inviſible God. Who hath gilded the Rays of the Sun, or ſilver'd the Face of the Moon? Who hath marſhall'd the huge Hoſt of Heaven, and ſet the Stars in ſuch array, that not one of them hath broken its Rank, nor ſtraid out of its Courſe and Order? Whoſe Hand is it that turns the great Wheels of Heaven, and makes them ſpin out Days, and Months, and Years, and Time, and Life unto us? Who hath ordered the Viciſſitudes of Day and Night, Summer and Winter, that theſe run not into one another, and blind themſelves and the whole World in Confuſion; but with a perpetual Variety obſerve their juſt ſeaſons and interchanges? Do not all theſe wonderful Works proclaim aloud, that certainly there is a great and glorious God, who ſits inthron'd on High, and who hath thus paved the bottom of Heaven with Stars, and adorned the inner parts of it with Glories, yet to us unknown? Upon which very Reflexion the Pſalmiſt tells us, *The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament ſheweth his handy-works*, Pſalm. 19. 1. 2.

But not to carry the Atheiſt up to Heaven, let us deſcend lower, through the vaſt Ocean of liquid Air, and there obſerve how the groſſer Vapours are bound together in Clouds, which, when the drought and thirſt of the Earth calls for refreſhment, diſſolve themſelves into ſmall drops, and are as if it were ſifted into Rain: How comes it to paſs, and whoſe Wiſdom and Providence hath ſo ordered it, that there ſhould not fall whole Clouds of Cataracts, but Drops and Showers? that they ſhould not tumble upon us, but diſtil! An Effect ſo wonderful, that there is ſcarce any other Work of Nature that the Scripture doth more frequently aſcribe unto God as a demonſtration of his Power and Government, than that he ſendeth Rain upon the Earth.

Yea, and theſe Clouds, how often are they charged with Thunder and Lightnings; as tho' it were ſo ordered of purpoſe, that if their Contexture cannot convince, yet their Terrour might affright the Atheiſt? Who can give any ſatisfactory account, how that Artillery came there planted? or how thoſe Terrours of Mankind are there generated? Let the Atheiſt tell me how it comes to paſs, that ſuch contraries meet together in one, and that the ſame Cloud ſhould be both a Fountain of Water, and yet a Furnace of Fire. And therefore the Prophet aſcribes this particularly to God's Almighty Providence, *Jer.* 10. 13. *He maketh lightnings with rain:* and accounteth it ſuch a remarkable inſtance of the Divine Operation, that he repeateth it again, *Chap.* 51. 16.

If we deſcend into the loweſt ſtory of this great Building, the Earth; what a Shop of Wonders ſhall we find there! That the whole Maſs and Globe of it ſhould hang pendulous in the Air without any thing to ſupport it; and whereas ſmall Bodies of little weight fall through the Air, yet that this great and ponderous Body ſhould be fixed for ever in its place, having no foundation, no ſupport, but that Air which every Mote and Flie doth eaſily cut through; that this round Ball of Earth ſhould be inhabited on every part; that the feet of other Men ſhould be oppoſite to ours, and yet they walk as erect, and be as much upon the face of the Earth as we are; that the middle point of the Earth ſhould be the loweſt part of it, and of the Univerſe, and whatſoever is beyond that is upwards: Theſe and many others are ſuch unaccountable Myſteries to our Comprehenſion; and yet are found ſo infallibly certain by Experience, and manifold Proofs, that he muſt be an Atheiſt out of meer ſpight, who ſhall ſeriouſly conſider them, and not be induced by that conſideration to adore the Infinite Power and Wiſdom of the Author of them.

It would be too long to inſtance in the various ſorts of Creatures that we behold; how artificially they are framed; what an excellent Configuration there may be obſerved in their ſeveral parts; what ſubſerviency of one to another; how they are ſuited to the Offices of Nature; what ſecret channels and conveyances for Life and Spirits; what Springs of various motions are included in the ſmall body of a Flie, or of a Mite. Certainly there is not the leaſt thing that an Atheiſt can caſt his Eye upon, but it confutes him; but eſpecially if he ſhall ſeriouſly conſider the wonderful Structure of an humane Body, the excellent contrivance and uſe of all the parts, he cannot chuſe but after he hath admired the Artifice of the Work, admire alſo the Infinite Wiſdom of the Maker, and cry out with holy *David*, * *I am fearfully and wonderfully made, and curiouſly wrought in the loweſt parts of the earth.* Yea, not only a *David*, but *Galen* an Heathen, (one who it is thought was not over credulous in Matters of Religion, yet) when he had minutely inſpected the many Wonders and Miracles that were contained in the Frame of our Body, he could not forbear compoſing an Hymn to the praiſe of our All-wiſe Creator.

* *Pſal.* 139. 15.

Bacon's *Eſſay of Atheiſm.*

And therefore as the Lod *Verulam* obſerves, God never wrought a Miracle to convince an Atheiſt, becauſe his ordinary Works may convince him; and unleſs Men will be wilfully and ſtubbornly blind, they muſt needs ſubſcribe to that of St. *Paul*, God *hath not left himſelf without witneſs, in that he doth good, and gives us rain from heaven, and fruitful ſeaſons, filling our hearts with food and gladneſs.* And *Rom.* 1. 20. *The inviſible things of God are clearly ſeen from the creation of the world, being underſtood by the things that are made, even his eternal Power and God-head; ſo that they are without excuſe.* When we ſee Foot-ſteps evidently imprinted on the Earth, ſhall we not eaſily collect that certainly ſome one hath paſt that way? When we ſee a ſtately Fabrick built, according to all the Rules of Art, and adorned with all the riches and beauty that Magnificence can expend about it; muſt we not preſently conclude, that certainly there was ſome skilful Architect that built it? Truly every Creature is *quoddam veſtigium Dei*; we may obſerve his Foot-ſteps in it, and ſee how his Attributes, his Wiſdom, his Goodneſs, and his Power have paſt along that way. And the whole World, it is a ſtately Fabrick, an Houſe that God hath erected for himſelf; the magnificence and ſplendor of it is ſuitable to the ſtate of the Great King; it is his Palace, built for the Houſe of his Kingdom, and the Honour of his Majeſty. And we may eaſily conclude, that ſo excellent a Structure, muſt needs have an excellent Architect; and that that the Builder and Maker of it is God.

Acts 14. 17.

Now that which makes ſome proud Spirits backward to acknowledge God in the Works of Nature, is, that they think they can by their Reaſon alone give a plauſible account of thoſe Effects and Phænomena which we ſee in the World, by deducing them from

from Second and Natural Cauſes. And therefore many of thoſe who are of an inquiſitive and ſearching Genius, when they find ſuch Effects depend upon, and flow from ſuch and ſuch Natural Cauſes, applaud themſelves in the diſcovery, and look no farther nor higher, but neglect the firſt and chief Cauſe of all, even God.

Hence ſome have thought that Reaſon and Philoſophy are great Enemies to Religion, and Patrons of Atheiſm; but in truth it is far otherwiſe; and the Atheiſt hath not a more ſmart and keen Adverſary (ſince he will not ſubmit his Cauſe to be tryed by Scripture,) than true Reaſon and profound Philoſophy. But if any who ſeem to be knowing and learned Men, are leſs inclined to the Belief of a Deity, it is not their Learning, but their Ignorance that makes them ſo. The ſame Lord *Verulam* hath well obſerved, That a little Philoſophy inclines a Man's mind to Atheiſm, but depth in Philoſophy brings it about again to Religion. And I dare challenge the moſt learned Men in the World, to give a ſatisfactory account of the moſt vulgar and common Appearances in Nature, without reſolving them at laſt into the will and diſpoſal of the God of Nature. If I ſhould ask them, What makes the Graſs green, or a Stone to fall downwards, or the Fire to aſpire upwards, or the Sun to inlighten and warm the World? What anſwer can they give, but that it is the property of their Natures; or what is altogether as inſignificant and untelligible? But if I ſhould queſtion farther, How came their Natures to be diſtinguiſht with ſuch properties? they muſt either here be ſilent, or confeſs a firſt Cauſe which endowed their Natures with ſuch properties and actions: for although a Man may for ſome few ſucceſſions of Cauſes and Effects, find one to depend upon another, yet they muſt all at laſt, be reſolved into, and terminate in God.

And this is the ſecond Demonſtration of the Being and Exiſtence of a Deity.

Thirdly, Unleſs the Being of a God be preſuppoſed, there can no tolerable account be given of the Being of any thing: We ſee innumerable Beings in the World, different from each other both in kind and particular. Now what rational account can the Atheiſt give, how theſe things come to have a Being? There are but two ways imaginable: Either that the World was formed by Chance; or elſe, that it had its Being from all Eternity. And accordingly (as if it were ſtill fatal for them to encounter with the ſame Inconveniencies, for which they diſavow Religion) Atheiſts are divided into two Sects. 3.

Hoc qui exiſtimet fieri potuiſſe, non intelligo; cur non idem putet, ſi innumerabiles unius & viginti literarum formæ aliquo conjiciantur, poſſe ex his in terram excuſſis, annales Ennii, ut deinceps legi poſſint, effici: quod neſcio an in uno quidem verſu poſſit tantum valere fortuna. Cic. de Nat. Deor. lib. 2.

Firſt, There is the *Epicurean* Atheiſt, who affirms that the World indeed had once a beginning, but it was meerly by Chance: for there having been from all Eternity infinite Particles of Matter moving to and fro in an infinite Space, at laſt meeting caſually, they linked one in another; and ſo by meer chance formed this World which we now ſee. A Fancy ſo groſly ridiculous, that were it not now again taken up by ſome who pretend to be great Lights in Reaſon and Philoſophy, I would not condeſcend ſo much as to mention it.

* But as *Cicero* ſaith, both judiciouſly and ingeniouſly: As ſoon ſhall they perſuade me that an innumerable company of looſe and diſordered Letters, being often ſhaken together, and afterwards thrown out upon the ground, ſhould fall into ſuch exquiſite order as to frame a moſt ingenious and heroick Poem, as that Atoms ſtraying to and fro at random, ſhould ever caſually meet together to make a World conſiſting of Heaven, and of Air, and Sea, and Earth, and ſo many ſorts and ſpecies of living Creatures, in the frame and compoſure of which we ſee ſuch wonderful and inimitable Skill. Had *Archimedes*, or † *Poſidonius*'s Sphere, in which were imitated all the motions and converſions of the Sun, Moon, and Planets, been preſented to the moſt ignorant or illiterate Nations under Heaven, they could not be ſo groſly ſtupid as to think ſuch a Piece of Work of meer Chance, but of accurate Art and Study. And ſhall any doubt, when he ſees the great Machine of the World, the ſame and many other Converſions made in a more perfect manner, than they can be repreſented in any ſuch Type, whether it be a Work of uncertain Chance, or elſe the Product of

* *Si in Scythiam, aut in Britanniam Sphæram aliquis tulerit, hanc quam nuper familiaris noſter effecit Poſidonius, cujus ſingulæ converſiones idem efficiunt in ſole, & in luna, & in quinque ſtellis errantibus, quod efficitur in cœlo ſingulis diebus & noctibus quis in illa barbarie dubitet, quin ea Sphera ſit perfecta ratione. Hi autem dubitant de mundo, ex quo oriuntur & fuerint omnia, caſune ipſe ſit effectus, aut neceſſitate aliqua, an ratione, an mente divina; & Archimedem arbitrantur plus voluiſſe in imitandis ſphæræ converſionibus, quam naturam in efficiendis; præſertim cum multis partibus ſint illa perfecta, quam hæc ſimulata ſolertius.* Cicero de Nat. Deor. l. 2.

† *Quod ſi Mundum efficere poteſt concurſus atomorum, cur porticum, cur templum, cur domum, cur urbem non poteſt, quæ ſunt minus operoſa & multa quidem facilliora.* Cic. de Nat. Deor. l. 2.

a moſt perfect Mind, and comprehenſive Underſtanding? For certainly, if a ſtrong and maſtering Reaſon be required only to imitate the Works of Nature, much more then to produce them.

And why had not thoſe Atoms that could thus fortuitouſly frame a World, why had they not built Houſes too, and Cities, and woven us Garments, that ſo by very good Chance we might have found theſe Neceſſaries ready provided to our hands, and ſaved the trouble and labour of making them? Did ever any Atoms fall into ſuch exact order, and knit ſo artificially together, as to frame a Clock or a Watch, or any other piece of ingenious Mechaniſm? And will the Atheiſt then be ſo ſilly as to believe that theſe little duſts of Beings, ſhould by meer hazard meet and join together to frame the whole World, and beſtow ſuch various forms and motions upon Creatures, as we daily ſee and admire? Look but upon the moſt contemptible Worm that crawls, we ſhall find it a far more excellent piece of Mechaniſm, a far more curious Engine, than any that ever the Art or Wit of Man could frame. And ſhall Chance make theſe! yea, Creatures of a more wonderful compoſure, which yet could never make a Watch or a Clock, or any of thoſe Engines which we have contrived for the uſe and ſervice of Life? And what will they ſay to the accurate Operations of Senſe and Reaſon? Is it poſſible that one ſmall Duſt ſhould ſee or feel another? and if not one, then not ten thouſand put together. Shall their Configuration give them this Faculty, which their Being and Subſtance doth not? Which I ſhall then believe, when I ſhall be convinced that a Statue carved the moſt exquiſitly that Art can perform, can any more ſee or taſte, or feel, than it could whilſt it was rude and unformed Wood. But ſuppoſe that Senſe could be caus'd by meer Matter put in motion; yet what ſhall we ſay to the refined Speculations, and profound Diſcourſes of Reaſon? Is it likely, or indeed poſſible, that little Corpuſcles ſhould reflect, and argue, that Atoms ſhould make Syllogiſms, or draw up Parties between Pro and Con? Or will the Atheiſt grant, that there is no other difference between himſelf and a meer ſenſeleſs Block, but only configuration of Parts? and that when he diſputes moſt ſubtily for his Cauſe, all his Reaſons and Arguments are but a little Duſt that flies up and down in his Brains? But that the agitation of material Particles, ſhould produce any ſprightly acts of Wit and Diſcourſe, is ſo monſtrouſly abhorrent to true Reaſon, that I doubt I ſhall never be perſuaded to believe it, until ſome cunning Man convince me, that the High-way too is in a deep Speculation, and teeming with ſome notable Diſcourſe, whenſoever the Duſt is ſtirred and flies about it.

And yet, forſooth, Men muſt own now-a-days be Atheiſts, that they may be rational; and think it an high demonſtration of their Parts and Ingenuity, to Doubt of a Deity, and call all Religion into queſtion. Whereas, were any thing in the Belief of a God, and the moſt myſterious Points of our Religion, half ſo abſurd and ridiculous as there is in Atheiſm, I ſhould moſt readily explode it, and count it altogether unworthy to be entertained by any Man that is ingenious and rational.

2. *Secondly*, Therefore, others being preſt with the huge and monſtrous Abſurdities of this way of giving an account of the Appearances of Nature, they hold, That the World is from Eternity, and never had any beginning at all. And theſe are the *Ariſtotelian* Atheiſts.

1. But *Firſt*, It is altogether unreaſonable to deny a God, and yet grant that very thing for which alone they deny him. The only reaſon that tempts Atheiſts to deny a Deity, is, becauſe they cannot conceive a Being infinite and eternal; and therefore, when they yield the World to be ſo, what do they elſe but run into the ſame Inconveniency which they would avoid; and that they may not grant one Eternal Being, grant innumerable? So fatal it is for Errour to be inconſiſtent with it ſelf, and to trip up its own Principles.

2. *Secondly*, If the World be Eternal, there muſt of neceſſity have been paſt an infinite ſucceſſion of Ages. Now, our Underſtanding is as much non-pluſt to conceive this, as an infinite Being that ſhould create the World: for if the World had no beginning, then an infinite number of Days, and Years, yea, of millions of Years and Generations of Men, are already actually paſt and gon. And if they are paſt, then they are come to an end: and ſo we ſhall have both a number that is actually infinite, and likewiſe ſomewhat infinite and eternal that is come to an end. A very proper Conſequence for one that avoids the Belief of a Deity, becauſe he would be Rational, and cannot conceive a Being that is Infinite.

Again,

Again, *Thirdly*, If there have already been infinite ſucceſſions of Generations in the World, certainly thoſe which are yet to come, will make them more; and ſo we ſhall find a Number greater than that which is allowed to be actually Infinite. Or, if to avoid this Contradiction, the Atheiſt ſhould affirm, That the Generations to *Abraham*, and the Generations to *David*, were both equal, becauſe both infinite; he will thereby fall into two other groſs Contradictions: the one, That a Number added to a Number ſhould make no addition; the other, That ſince the Generations to *Abraham* were but a part of the Generations to *David*, the part ſhould be equal to the whole.

Fourthly, There is no one moment in Succeſſion which was not once preſent; and conſequently, imagine a Duration as long as you pleaſe, yet in it of neceſſity there muſt be ſome one moment, which when it was preſent, all the reſt were future; and if all the reſt were future, this Moment was then the beginning. So that it is impoſſible there ſhould be a ſucceſſive Duration without a beginning, and therefore impoſſible it ſhould be from Eternity. 4. *Mori Metaph. Part* 1. *Cap.* 10.

Again, *Fifthly*, In all the Revolutions of Generation and Corruption that can be imagined, yet the Life of Animals muſt neceſſarily be before their death. For none can die till he hath lived; and none can live, but he muſt paſs ſome time before he dies. There was therefore a time before any Animal died; conſequently their corruption and death was not from Eternity: neither before their death, had they lived an infinite Time, but only ſome few Days or Years; and therefore their generation and life was not from Eternity. 5. *Id. ibid & Place* 9. *Theſ. Salm. De ſtatu Adami ante lapſum.*

Theſe things I do but curſorily mention, to give you a taſte of the Folly and Unreaſonableneſs of Atheiſm; nor perhaps would it be proper to inſiſt on them at large. But by theſe few Arguments you may ſee how unreaſonable it is for an Atheiſt to boggle at the Belief of a Deity; whereas, let him lay down whatſoever Principles he will, he ſhall find his Reaſon more puzled and intangled by theſe Abſurdities that will neceſſarily follow upon them, than he ſhall by any Difficulties that are conſequent upon the Belief of a God.

Which Belief unleſs we entertain, we can give no tolerable account at all of the various Beings that are in the World; for neither are they eternal, neither have they hapned by chance, as I have demonſtrated to you. It is therefore abſolutely neceſſary, that there be ſome firſt Cauſe of all Things which we behold, which is not it ſelf cauſed, nor produced by any other: for if every thing were cauſed by ſome Pre-exiſtent Being, then there never was a Being before which there was not another; and ſo this groſs Abſurdity will follow, that before there was a Being, there was a Being. A fit conſequence for Atheiſts, who pretend only to rational Speculations, to ſwallow. Therefore we muſt neceſſarily reſt in ſome firſt Cauſe from which all other things have their origine, and is it ſelf cauſed by none; and that is the great God whom we adore, the great Creator, and both Governour of Heaven and Earth, and of all things viſible and inviſible.

This is therefore a third Demonſtration of a Deity.

Fourthly, Perhaps it would ſhrewdly puzle the Metaphyſicks of an Atheiſt, to anſwer the Argument of *Bradwardine*. It is poſſible that there ſhould be ſuch a Being as ſhould exiſt neceſſarily; ſince it is no more a Contradiction to exiſt neceſſarily, than to exiſt contingently, and a far higher and more abſolute Perfection: But if it be poſſible that there might be ſuch a Being, then it is certain that there is; becauſe neceſſity of Exiſtence is included in the very eſſential conception of it; or elſe this Contradiction would follow, That it is poſſible for that not to be, which yet is neceſſary to be. This Being therefore muſt needs be Eternal, Independent, and Self-ſufficient; and that is the God whom we adore. 4. Bradward. *de Cauſa Dei. l.* 1. *c.* 1. *& l.* 1. *c.* 14.

But to leave theſe more Abſtruſe and Scholaſtick Notions; in the *Fifth* place, If there be no God, then neither have there been any Miracles performed in the World, nor any Propheſies or Predictions of future Contingencies. 5.

Firſt, There can be no Miracles performed without a Divine and Infinite Power; for certainly, if there be no Being above Nature, there can be no Effects either above, or contrary to the courſe of Nature; for Nature when it is left to it ſelf, cannot act contrary to its own Laws. Now that there have been miraculous Works performed, the Atheiſt cannot deny, unleſs he will deny the truth of all Records, and 1.

think it reaſonable to make all Faith and Credit among Mankind a Sacrifice to his Opinionativeneſs. All Heathen Authors, as well as the Scriptures, give abundant Teſtimony to this: And although they deny the Doctrine of the Scripture, yet there is no reaſon they ſhould disbelieve it, when it only relates matter of Fact. In this behalf, we deſire they would give it as much credit, as they give to the Hiſtories of *Livy*, or *Tacitus*, or any other Author of approved Honeſty; and certainly it is but reaſonable to credit the conſonant Depoſitions of ſeveral plain Men, who all profeſs themſelves to have been Eye-witneſſes of thoſe things they write: Yea, the *Jews* and Heathens who lived in thoſe very times, and were moſt inveterate and canker'd Enemies againſt the Name of Chriſt, would have given whatſoever was deareſt to them in the World, could they have proved any Forgery in thoſe Miracles, or Deceit in the Relaters of them: But the Evidence was ſo clear, that they were forced to confeſs even in ſpight of their own Malice, that ſuch ſtrange Works were done and really effected. But yet their Spleen againſt the Truth was ſuch, that they imputed them only to the power of Magick, and the Operation of evil Spirits. But will our Atheiſt do ſo too? If ſo, he muſt needs acknowledge a God, by acknowledging a Devil; if not, he hath as little reaſon to believe any thing in the World which he himſelf hath not ſeen, as to believe the truth of thoſe Reports, which we have received from undoubted hands, delivered to us by the unqueſtionable Teſtimonies of thoſe who have known and ſeen what they have reported.

Therefore, if ever there have been any ſuch extraordinary Effects, as reſtoring ſight to the Blind, and feet to the Lame, and life it ſelf to the Dead, and that by no other application than only a word's ſpeaking, there muſt certainly be a God. For theſe things are not within the power of ſecond Cauſes, being ſo contrary to the courſe of Nature; and therefore muſt be aſcribed to a Supreme Deity, an Infinite Power, who is the Author and great Controller of Nature.

2. *Secondly*, As there could have been no Miracles performed, ſo neither could there be any Propheſies or Predictions made of contingent Events, unleſs we acknowledge a God, who in his infinite Wiſdom and Counſel foreſees whatſoever ſhall come to
Amos 3. 7. paſs, and revealeth his ſecrets unto his Servants the Prophets. We have many Propheſies recorded which have already had their undoubted Effects: Not to inſtance in all, I ſhall only mention two; the one is that Propheſie of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, concerning the final Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, *Matth.* 24. 2. which received its full accompliſhment about 40 Years after they had crucified the Lord of Life and Glory. And the other, that Prediction concerning *Cyrus*, that he ſhould Re-edifie *Jeruſalem* after it had been deſtroyed by the *Babylonians*, *Iſaiah* 44. 28. and to make this Propheſie the more remarkable, it is ſaid, *Chap.* 45. 4. That for *Iſrael*'s ſake God had called him by his name. This was a famous and very particular Propheſie of a Perſon named near Two hundred Years before he was Born, and thoſe things punctually foretold of him which he ſhould afterwards perform. The like we have 1 *Kings* 13. 2. where the Prophet declaims againſt the Idolatrous Altar and Worſhip of *Bethel*. and foretells that *Joſiah* ſhould deſtroy it; calling him by his very Name Three hundred and forty Years before he was Born, *O altar, altar, thus ſaith the Lord, Behold, a child ſhall be born unto the Houſe of David, Joſiah by name, and upon thee ſhall he offer the prieſts of the high places that burn incenſe upon thee, and mens bones ſhall be burned upon thee*; which we read was exactly fulfilled by the ſame *Joſiah*, 2 *Kings* 23. 20. For *he ſlew all the prieſts of the high places which were there, upon the altars, and burnt mens bones upon them.*
Deut. 2. 28. Now let any Atheiſt give a rational account how theſe future Contingents could be thus certainly and circumſtantially fore-known and predicted, were there not a God in Heaven that revealeth Secrets. They could not certainly ſee ſuch free and contingent events in the Stars, eſpecially ſo long before they were to be produced; or if they might, yet certainly they could not read Names there, nor ſpell the Conſtellations into Words and Syllables. There is therefore a God who giveth knowledge, and declareth things to come, according as it pleaſeth him to illuminate the minds of his Servants the Prophets, to whom, and by whom he ſpake.

And this is a fifth Demonſtration of the being of a Deity.

The *Sixth* and Laſt is this, There is a Conſcience in Man; therefore there is a God in Heaven. Conſcience could have no power at all over us, unleſs it were given it from above. How comes it to paſs that wicked Wretches are ſtill haunted with pale Fears and ghaſtly Horrours, that they are ſometimes a terrour to themſelves, and to all that are about them; they would, if it were poſſible, abandon themſelves, and run

run away from their own Being, but only that they have a Witneſs and a Judge within them of all their Crimes and Impieties, and feel ſuch ſecret ſtings, and unſeen whips laſhing their Souls, that the tortures they indure, and inflict on themſelves, make them ſometimes weary of their lives, and put them upon that deſperate Courſe of choaking both themſelves and their Conſciences too with an Halter? Whence I ſay, ſhould this proceed, were there not a God, a Juſt and Holy Deity whom Conſcience reveres? Theſe Torments and Regrets do not always proceed from fear of Shame, or Puniſhment from Men. No: but Conſcience hath a power to put them upon the rack for their moſt ſecret Sins, which no eye ever ſaw, nor heart ever knew but their own; yea, and it forceth them ſometimes themſelves to confeſs and divulge their own Infamy, and voluntarily to render themſelves to Humane Juſtice: Whence is this, but only from that ſecret influence of a Supreme Being, that hath an awe and authority over Conſcience, and makes it review the ſins of a Man's life with horrour, becauſe it knows the Juſt and Holy God will at laſt review them with Vengeance.

And therefore we find that thoſe who in their proſperity have lived moſt regardleſs of a Deity, yet when their Conſcience hath been awakened by Dangers, or Sickneſs, or any ſurprizing Accident, the apprehenſions of a God have then ſtrongly returned upon them, and filled them with Amazement and Confuſion. * Thus the Hiſtorian reports of that mad wicked Emperour *Caligula*, who made an open mock and ſcorn of Religion, yet when it Thundred would creep under his Bed to hide himſelf from the Vengeance of that *Jupiter*, whom at other times he would not ſpare to deride and † threaten. And therefore certainly if there be any ſuch thing as natural Conſcience in all Men, it will neceſſarily follow that there muſt be a God; for were there no God, there would be no Conſcience.

* *Nam qui Deos tantopere contemneret, ad minima tonitrua & fulgura commi-*

vere, caput obvolvere; adverò majora, proripere ſe è ſtrato ſub lectumque condere ſolebat. Suet. in Cal. cap. 51.

† *Cum Jove Capitolino ſecreto fabulabatur* ——*nec ſine jurgiis, nam vox comminantis audita eſt* εἰς χαῖαν δαναῦν *πεφώτε.* Id. c. 22.

And thus I have given you theſe Six rational Demonſtrations, that there is ſuch a Supreme and Infinite Being as a Deity. Many others might be added; but theſe I account ſufficient to convince any Atheiſt, who will indeed be ſwayed by that Reaſon which he ſo much deifies and adores, that there is another GOD beſides and above it.

Well then, what remains, but that as we have evinced the Folly and Unreaſonableneſs of Speculative Atheiſm, ſo we condemn the Impiety of Practical Atheiſm; the Prophaneneſs and Irreligion of thoſe that, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, live as without God in the World; that live as though there were no God, nor Devil, nor Heaven, nor Hell, nor future State, nor any diſtribution of Rewards in it: Indeed every wicked Man is in this Senſe an Atheiſt, and ſuch the Apoſtle hath condemned, *Tit.* 1. 16. *They profeſs that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and diſobedient, and to every good work reprobate.* Did they really and cordially believe, that there is a juſt and holy God that takes notice of all their Actions, a great and terrible Majeſty, who will call them to a ſtrict account for all their Cogitations, all their Diſcourſes, and all their Works; an Almighty God who hath prepared Wrath and Vengeance to inflict on all thoſe who deſpiſe his Authority, and tranſgreſs his Law; would they dare to prophane his glorious and reverend Name by impertinent uſing of it in their trivial talk? Would they dare to rend and tear it by their Oaths and Blaſphemies, and helliſh Execrations and Curſes? Did they believe that he had prepared *Tophet* of old, that the pile thereof is Fire and much Wood, and that all the Wicked of the World ſhall be caſt into it, and there be made an everlaſting Burnt-ſacrifice to the incenſed Wrath of the great God: Did Men believe the horrours and torments of the Fire and Sulphur, the ſtench and darkneſs, the burning chains and fiery whips, the woes and anguiſh of the Damned in Hell, which are as far from being utterable, as they are from being tolerable; did they but as certainly believe theſe things, as it is certain that if they believe them not, they ſhall eternally feel them, would they dare ſtill venture on to treaſure up to themſelves Wrath againſt the Day of Wrath? Would Swearing, and Lying, and Stealing, and Drunkenneſs, and Uncleanneſs ſo generally reign among us as they do? Indeed we perſuade our ſelves that we do believe theſe things; we profeſs that there is a God, and that God infinitely Holy, and infinitely Juſt; and that he will recompenſe Tribulation, Anguiſh, and Wrath upon

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every Soul of Man that doeth evil. But alas, this is only a Verbal Belief, contradicted and born down by a Practical Atheiſm. The little influence that the Belief of an Holy and Juſt God hath upon us, to regulate our Actions, and to cauſe us to walk in an holy awe and dread of his Divine Majeſty, clearly evinceth, that we may poſſibly fancy theſe things, but do not believe them; for if thou diſt ſeriouſly and heartily believe that there is a Great and a Jealous God who hath ſaid, *Vengeance is mine, and I will repay it*; what is there in the World that could perſuade thee to offend him?

Poſſibly, though thou believeſt that there is a God, yet thou art not fully perſuaded that he is ſo Holy, nor ſo Juſt as his Word declares him to be; not ſo holy in hating of thy ſins, nor ſo juſt in puniſhing them. But if thou relieſt on this confidence, know,

1. *Firſt*, That this is only to hope in his Mercy in ſpight of his Truth. He hath ſworn that he will take Vengeance on all impenitent Wretches, and wound the hairy Scalp of ſuch an one that goeth on ſtill in his Sins. And God will be true to his Threatnings, as well as to his Promiſes, although thou, and ten thouſand others like thy ſelf, eternally periſh.

2. Nay, *Secondly*, If thou believeſt there is a God, and yet thinkeſt that this God will ſpare thee, though thou go on in the preſumption of thy heart, to add Iniquity unto Sin, thou art far worſe than an Atheiſt; for it is better to have no Opinion of God at all, than to have ſuch an Opinion as is unworthy of him; for the one is but Infidelity, the other is Contumely. * Even *Plutarch*, an Heathen, could ſay, That it were far leſs injurious to him, if any ſhould deny that there is ſuch a Man in the World as *Plutarch*, than if he ſhould grant, that ſuch an one indeed there is, but that he is Faithleſs, Inconſtant, Cruel, or Revengeful. So it is not ſo heinous an Affront againſt the Divine Majeſty, to deny that there is any ſuch Supreme Being, as to acknowledge that there is indeed a God, but this God is not either infinitely holy in hating thy Sins, or infinitely true to his Threatnings, or infinitely juſt in puniſhing Mens Impenitency and Diſobedience. This is a degree of Impiety worſe than Atheiſm; and yet this, are all ungodly Sinners guilty of.

* Ἐγωγ' ἂν ἂν ἐθέλοιμι μᾶλλον τὸς ἀνθρώπους λέγειν περὶ ἐμὲ μήτε γεγονέναι τὸ παράπαν μηδὲ εἶναι Πλούταρχον, ἢ λέγειν ὅτι Πλούταρχός ἐστιν ἄνθρωπος ἄβέβαιος καὶ μεταβολὸς, καὶ χερσὶν πρὸς ὀργὴν, ὅτι τοῖς τυχοῦσι τιμωρητικὸς, &c. *Plut. περὶ δεισιδαίμ.*

Know then, O Sinner, and tremble, that there is a God who ſees and obſerves all thy Actions, who writes them down in the Book of his Remembrance, and will call thee to a ſtrict account for them: God will then judge thee out of thine own mouth, thou wicked Servant. Thou believeſt that there is a God, why doſt thou not then fear and ſerve him? Thou believeſt that there is an Heaven, and an Hell, and an Eternity to come, why then doſt thou not live anſwerably to this Belief? Either blot it out of your Creed, and avow that you do not believe in God the Father Almighty, or elſe live as thoſe ſhould do, who own ſo Great and Terrible, ſo Pure and Holy a God. For a Speculative Atheiſt to be prophane and wicked, is but conſonant to his Principles: for wherefore ſhould not he gratifie all his luſts and ſenſual deſires, whoſe only hope is in this Life, and who doth not look upon himſelf as accountable for any thing hereafter? But for thee who acknowledgeſt a Deity, to live as without God in the World, to break his Laws, to ſlight his Promiſes, to deſpiſe his Threatnings, is the greateſt and moſt deſperate Madneſs in the World: Thou ſheweſt thy ſelf hereby to be worſe not only than an Atheiſt, but worſe than a Devil; for the very Devils believe and tremble, and yet thou who profeſſeſt thy ſelf to believe, doſt not tremble.

If therefore we would not be inexcuſable, ſince we know God, let us glorifie him as God, yielding all holy Obedience to his Laws, and humble Submiſſion to his Will; conforming our ſelves to his Purity, depending upon his Power and Providence, and truſting in his infinite Mercy and Goodneſs, till we at laſt arrive unto that ſtate of perfect Bliſs and Felicity, where we ſhall fully know the ineffable Myſtery of the Deity, ſee Him that is now inviſible, and live there as much by Senſe and Sight, as here we do by Faith and Expectation.

And thus much for the firſt Sin forbidden in this firſt Commandment, which is Atheiſm.

The ſecond Sin that it forbids, is, Ignorance of the true God. For this Precept which requires us to have the Lord Jehovah for our God, as well includes the having of him in our underſtandings, by knowing him aright, as in our wills and affections,

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by loving, fearing, and worshipping him; the right Worship of God must of necessity presuppose the knowledge of the Object to which we direct that Worship, or otherwise we do but erect an Altar to the unknown God, and all our Adoration is but Superstition; yea, and we our selves are but Idolaters, altho' we worship the true Deity: For all that Service which is not directed to the Supreme Essence, whom we conceive to be the infinitely and eternally Holy, Just, Merciful, and Glorious, beyond what we can conceive, is not tendered to the true God, but to an Idol of our own making, shaped out in the Ignorance and Blindness of our Minds. And therefore our Saviour Christ lays this as a black Brand upon the *Samaritan* Worship, *John* 4.22. *Ye worship ye know not what*; and that because with other Gods they worshipped the true God, under a confused Notion of the God of the Land, as you may read 2 *Kings* 17. 26. without any distinct knowledge of his Nature, Will, and Attributes.

It hath been a Proverbial Speech, that Ignorance is the Mother of Devotion; but certainly such a blind Mother must needs bring forth a blind and deformed Daughter; a Devotion more rightly called Superstition than Devotion; a Devotion shaped only by the Fancy, and imposed by irrational Fear or Humour.

Now because the Being and Existence of a Deity, is a Notion so common and natural to Mankind, as I have already demonstrated; and that we are strongly inclined to the worship of a God, it will be necessary rightly to know that God, to whom this Homage of our Souls, and all our Affection and Veneration is due. For while we remain ignorant of this, it is impossible but that we should be Idolaters, giving that which is proper to God alone, to some vain created Fiction of our own deluded Understandings.

Idolatry therefore is a Sin more common among us than we imagine. For as many ignorant Persons as there are, so many Idolaters there are, who though they fall not down before Stocks and Stones, yet form such uncouth Ideas and strange Images of God in their minds, that no more represent his infinite Perfections and Excellencies, than those dumb Idols that the Heathens worship.

In prosecution of this general, I shall lay down these following Propositions:

First, That it is a very hard and difficult matter to have right and genuine Conceptions of the Divine Majesty, when we address our selves unto him to worship him. I think I may here appeal to the common Experience of Christians, whether their most difficult part of the Duties be not rightly to apprehend the Object of them. Our Fancy is bold and busie, and still ready to make too much use of its Pencil, and to delineate a God in some shape or other, before whom we present our Services; so that when we should be wholly intent upon our Adoration, we must necessarily be ingaged in Reformation; to pull down, and break in pieces those false Images that we had set up: And yet as soon as we have done this, our Imagination falls to work again, makes new Pictures of a God, and sets them full before our Eyes, as so many Idols for us to Worship. And although both Reason and Religion endeavour to correct these bold attempts of Fancy, yet it is a mighty distraction in our Duty, to be then disputing the Object, when we should be adoring it. I shall only instance in one Duty, and that is Prayer: How few are there that do not fashion God in some bodily shape, when they come to pray unto him! We are too apt to Figure out his Limbs, and to conceive him a Man like our selves. All the proportions that Fancy hath to draw with are Gorporeal; and whensoever we frame a Notion of Angels, or God, or any spiritual Substance, we do it by sensible Resemblances. Now this is infinitely derogatory to God who is a Spirit; and therefore cannot be represented in any Form without a vast incongruity: and he is the Father of Spirits, infinitely more spiritual than Spirits themselves, in comparison with whom Angels and the Souls of Men are but drossie and feculent Beings, and therefore cannot be worshipped under any Form without Idolatry: for that is not a God which we can shape and mould in our Imaginations. 1.

We read how jealous God is lest any Resemblance should be made of him, *Deut.* 4. 15, 16. *Take ye good heed unto your selves (for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb, out of the midst of the fire) lest ye corrupt your selves, and make you a graven Image, the similitude of any figure.* And certainly if the erecting of a visible Image of God be gross Idolatry, it is no less than a mental and spiritual Idolatry, to frame an invisible Image of God in our Fancy and Conceptions.

And therefore although the Scripture frequently aſcribes to God the members and lineaments of a Man, as Eyes, and Mouth, and Ears, and Hands, and Feet, *&c.* yet we muſt not be ſo ſtupidly ignorant as to believe that theſe are properly appertaining to the Divine Eſſence, (which was the old exploded Hereſie of the *Anthropomorphitæ*) but theſe deſcriptions are given us only in condeſcenſion to our Weakneſſes and Infirmities; and though they are ſpoken ἀνθρωποπαθῶς, after the manner of Men, yet they muſt be underſtood θεοπρεπῶς, after ſuch a manner as becomes the Majeſty of the Divine Nature: And by ſuch expreſſions the Scripture only means, that all thoſe powers and faculties which are in us, are likewiſe to be found, although in an infinite and tranſcendent eminency in the Being of God. He hears and ſees, and is able to effect whatſoever he pleaſeth; and that without any configuration of Parts, or Organs, which are utterly repugnant to the Simplicity and Spirituality of his Eſſence. And therefore to ſhape and faſhion out ſuch a God in our thoughts, when we pray unto him, is but to make and worſhip an Idol: And unleſs Faith and Religion demoliſh ſuch Images which we ſet up in our Fancy, the Worſhip which we direct unto them, is hardly to be eſteemed the Worſhip of the true God, but the worſhipping the Work of our own making, and a Creature of our own Imagination.

And yet unleſs we do repreſent God to our ſelves, when we worſhip him, it is very hard, if not altogether impoſſible, to keep up the intention of our Spirit, and to hinder our Mind from ſtraying and gadding. Therefore,

2. *Secondly*, The right way to attain unto a true Notion, and a ſound Underſtanding of the Divine Nature, is by a ſerious conſideration of his Attributes. For theſe are his very Nature; and when we know them, we know as much of God as can be known by us in this our weak and imperfect Eſtate. Theſe Attributes of the Divine Nature are manifold, and commonly are diſtinguiſhed into Negative, Relative, and Poſitive; I ſhall only enumerate the chief of them, Simplicity, Eternity, Unchangeableneſs, Immenſity, Dominion, All-ſufficiency, Holineſs, Truth, Omnipotence, Omniſcience, Juſtice, and Mercy: Of which the principal, and that moſt reſpect us, are Mercy and Juſtice; all the other are declared to us in order to the Illuſtration of theſe. For the glory of theſe hath God created the World, and all things in it; eſpecially thoſe two capital kinds of Creatures, Angels and Men: for theſe hath he permitted Sin, which is ſo odious and deteſtable to his infinite Purity: for theſe hath he ſent his Son into the World to taſte of Death for every Creature: for theſe hath he proclaimed his Law, and declared his Goſpel, the Threatnings of the one, and the Promiſes of the other: for theſe hath he appointed a Day, and will erect a Tribunal of Judgment, that he may make the Glory of his Mercy and of his Juſtice conſpicuous; his Juſtice in the eternal Damnation of impenitent Wretches, who are Veſſels of Wrath fitted by their own ſins for deſtruction; his Mercy in the Salvation of penitent and believing Souls, who are Veſſels of Mercy fitted by his Grace for eternal Glory. All other Attributes, I ſay, ſerve to illuſtrate theſe two; and as we conjoin them either to Mercy or Juſtice, ſo they are moſt inforcing Motives either of Hope or Fear: It is a mighty ſupport to our Hope, when we reflect upon the Mercy of God accompanied with the Attributes of Eternity, Immutability, Truth, and Omnipotence. And again, it will affect us with a profound Fear and Dread of this Great and Glorious God, to conſider that the ſame Attributes attend on his Juſtice; ſo that both are Almighty; the one to ſave, the other to deſtroy.

Now if we would conceive aright of God, when we come to worſhip him, let us not frame any Idea of him in our Imaginations, (for all ſuch Repreſentations are falſe and fooliſh,) but labour to poſſeſs our Hearts with an awful eſteem of his Attributes; and when we have with all poſſible reverence collected our Thoughs, and fix'd them upon the Contemplation of infinite Juſtice, infinite Mercy, infinite Truth, infinite Power, and the reſt; let us then fall proſtrate, and adore it, for this is our God: And therefore the Apoſtle tells us, 1 *John* 4. 8. *God is love*; not only loving, but Love it ſelf in the abſtract. And, 1 *John* 1. 5. *God is light.*

3. *Thirdly*, All the knowledge that we have, or can have of God here, is collected from what he hath been pleaſed to diſcover of himſelf, either in his Works, or in his Word.

We have but two Books to inſtruct us; the Book of the Creatures and the Book of the Scriptures. From the Works of Creation and Providence, we may come to know much of God, even his eternal Being and Godhead; and the Lectures which

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are read out of this Book, are ſo convincing and demonſtrative of many of the glorious Attributes of God, that the Apoſtle tells us, The very Heathens themſelves were left without Excuſe, becauſe they did not worſhip him as God, when by the things which they ſaw, they knew him to be God, *Rom.* 1. 21.

But to us God hath vouchſafed more clear and lively Diſcoveries of himſelf, declaring to us thoſe Attributes by his Word, the knowledge of which we could never have attained by his Works alone. And therefore the Scriptures are called the lively Oracles of God, *Acts* 7. 38. And they are the Glaſs wherein with open face we behold the Glory of the Lord, 2 *Corinth.* 3. 18.

Fourthly, When we have improved our Underſtandings to the higheſt advantage, and ſtretch'd them to the largeſt and moſt comprehenſive ſize, yet ſtill we ſhall be left in the dark, and it will be utterly impoſſible to know God as he is in himſelf: He dwelleth in that Light to which no mortal Eye can approach: he hides and veils himſelf with Light and Glory: it is his alone Privilege and Prerogative, as to love, ſo to know himſelf, for nothing better can be loved, nothing greater can be known. God is incomprehenſible to all his Creatures, but is comprehended by himſelf; and that Ever Bleſſed Eſſence which is Infinite to all others, is yet Finite to its own view and meaſure. All the Diſcoveries we receive of God, are not ſo much to ſatisfie an inquiſitive Curioſity, as to excite pious Affections and Devotion. For Reaſon, which is the eye of the intellectual Soul, glimmers and is dazled when it attempts to look ſtedfaſtly on Him who is the Father of Lights; and its weakneſs is ſuch, that that Light which makes it ſee, doth alſo ſtrike it blind. Yea, our Faith which is a ſtronger Eye than that of Reaſon, and given us that we might ſee Him who is inviſible, yet here in this life it hath ſo much duſt and aſhes in it, that it diſcerns but imperfectly, and receives the Diſcoveries of a Deity refracted through the Glaſs of the Scriptures, ſo allayed and attemper'd, that tho' they are not moſt expreſſive of his Glory, yet they are fitteſt for our Capacity. The full manifeſtation of his Brightneſs, is reſerved for Heaven: This beatifical Viſion is the Happineſs and Perfection of Saints and Angels, on whom the Godhead diſplays it ſelf in its cleareſt Rays. There we ſhall ſee him as he is, and know him as we are known by him. Here we could not ſubſiſt, if God ſhould let out upon us the full Beams of his exceſſive Light and Glory. And therefore we read in Scripture, what dreadful apprehenſions the beſt of God's Saints have been poſſeſs'd withal, after ſome extraordinary Diſcoveries that God had made of himſelf unto them. Thus *Iſaiah* cries out, *Iſaiah* 6. 5. *Wo is me, for I am undone, becauſe I am a man of unclean lips, and mine eyes have ſeen the King, the Lord of hoſts.* And when our Saviour Chriſt put forth his Divine Power but in the working of a Miracle, the Glory of it was ſo terrible and inſupportable, even to holy *Peter*, that he cries out, *Luke* 6. 8. *Depart from me, for I am a ſinful man, O Lord.* Tho' God be the very life of our Souls, and the manifeſtations of his Love and Favour better than life it ſelf; yet ſuch is our limited Eſtate here in this World, that we cannot ſee God and live. Frail Nature is too weak to contain its own Happineſs, until Heaven and eternal Glory inlarge it; and then it ſhall ſee thoſe inconceivable Myſteries of the Trinity and Unity, the Hypoſtatical Union of the Humane Nature with the Divine; then it ſhall view and ſurround the Incomprehenſible God, and be able to bear the unchecked Rays of the Deity beating full upon it. In the mean time, we muſt humbly content our ſelves with thoſe imperfect Diſcoveries that God is pleaſed to allow us, ſtill breathing after that Eſtate where we ſhall enjoy perfect Viſion, and in it an intire Satisfaction and Happineſs. 4.

Let us then moſt earneſtly covet the knowledge of God, and endeavour to make our ſelves here as like to what we hope to be hereafter, as the frailty of Humane Condition will permit. This is the chief Glory of a Man, one of the higheſt Ornaments and Perfections of a rational Soul; that which doth in ſome ſort repair the Decays of our fallen Eſtate, and renews thoſe Primitive Characters which Ignorance and Errour have obliterated in our Souls. And indeed, without the knowledge of God, we can never be brought to love him, to truſt and confide in him, nor to ſerve him as we ought: And altho' there may be a great deal of Zeal in ignorant Perſons, yet Zeal without Knowledge, is but a religious Frenzy; it is Religion frighted out of its Wits. A Man that knows not the bounds of Sin and Duty, is a fit Subject for the Devil to work upon, who will be ſure ſo to manage him, that he ſhall do a great deal of miſchief very honeſtly, and with very good intentions.

Thirdly,

3dly. *Thirdly*, A third heinous Violation of this firſt Command, is by Prophaneneſs. Now Prophaneneſs may be taken either in a more large and general, or in a more proper and reſtrained ſenſe; if we take it properly ſo, it ſignifies only the neglect, or deſpiſing of Spiritual Things; for in a ſtrict acceptation he is a prophane Perſon, who either ſlights the Duties of God's Service, or the Privileges of God's Servants. But in the larger and more common ſenſe of the word, every ungodly Sinner who gives up himſelf to work Wickedneſs, and lives in a courſe of infamous and flagitious Crimes, is called and reputed a prophane Perſon. And indeed, ſuch an one is prophane in the higheſt degree, that not only neglects the more ſpiritual Duties of Religion, but the natural Duties of Moral Honeſty, Temperance, and Sobriety: For as there are but two things in Practicals, which make an excellent and accompliſh'd Chriſtian, Religion and Vertue; the one directing our Worſhip towards God, the other our Converſation towards Men: ſo on the contrary, the deſpiſing of Religion, and neglect of Vertue, make up that conſummate and accompliſh'd Prophaneneſs which we ſee ſo common and prevalent in the World.

But concerning the Wickedneſſes which uſually meet together, and are concerned in this ſort of prophane Perſons, I ſhall not now ſpeak, reſerving them to be treated of in their proper place, when I come to inſiſt on thoſe Commands which each of their Sins tranſgreſſeth.

At preſent I ſhall only take notice of that which is properly called Prophaneneſs, and ſpeak of it as a diſtinct Sin, diſtinctly prohibited in this Precept. And here I ſhall firſt give you ſome account of the Name, and then of the Thing.

* Prophane hath its Notion or Etymology, *Quaſi porro*, or *procul à fano*; which ſignifies far from the Temple.

* *Profanum omnes pene conſentiunt id eſſe quod extra fanaticam cauſam ſit, quaſi porro à fano, & à religione ſecretum.* Macrob. Saturnal. *lib.* 3. *cap.* 3.

Now becauſe their Temples were the uſual places wherein they ſolemnly worſhipped, therefore the word Prophane is transferred to denote thoſe who neglect and put far from them the Worſhip of God: and ſo according to this propriety of ſignification, many others beſides lewd and debauch'd Wretches, will be found to be Prophane: For not only thoſe who let looſe the reins to all manner of Villanies, but even thoſe whoſe Morality is unblameable, and perhaps exemplary; who lead a ſober and rational life, and ſcorn a vitious Action, as a baſeneſs below the Nature, and unworthy the Spirit of a Man; yet ſuch grave, prudent, and honeſt Perſons do, too many of them, eſpecially in theſe our days, deſerve the Cenſure and black Brand of being Prophane. And therefore, that we may the better judge who are the Prophane, and on whom that Imputation juſtly lies, let us conſider firſt, What the Sin of Prophaneneſs is; and ſecondly, what are the true and proper Charecters of a prophane Perſon.

I. *Firſt*, What Prophaneneſs is; I anſwer in the general, Prophaneneſs is the ſlighting and neglecting of Things holy and ſacred; an undervaluing and contemning of thoſe Things that are ſpiritual and excellent. And whoſoever is guilty of this, let his outward Demeanour in the World be as fair and plauſible as Morality or Hypocriſie can adorn it, yet he is a prophane Perſon; and heinouſly violates this firſt Command which injoins us to worſhip, reverence, and honour the moſt high God, whom we profeſs to own.

Now the ſpiritual and ſacred Things are:

1. *Firſt*, God himſelf in his Nature and Eſſence, whom we prophane, whenſoever we entertain any blaſphemous or unworthy thoughts of him, derogatory to his infinite Perfections.

2. *Secondly*, God in his Name; which we prophane when in our trivial and impertinent Diſcourſes we raſhly bolt out that great and terrible Name, at which all the Powers of Heaven and Hell tremble: And how much more do we prophane it by Oaths and Execrations; which are now grown the familiar Dialect of every Mouth, and look'd on only as a Grace and Ornament of ſpeaking! Scarce can we hear any Diſcourſe, but theſe Flowers are ſprinkled among it; and the Name of God muſt be brought in either as an Expletive, or an Oath: And what doth ſadly fore-bode the growing Prophaneneſs of the next Age, Children are taught or ſuffered to call upon God in their Play, before they are taught to call upon him in their Prayers.

Thirdly, God in his Attributes; which we then prophane, when our affections or actions are oppoſite or unſuitable unto them. We prophane his Holineſs by our Impurity; his Omnipotence by our Deſpondency; his Omniſcience by our Hypocriſie; his Mercy by our Deſpair; his Juſtice by our Preſumption; his Wiſdom by our ſinful Policy; his Truth by our Security, notwithſtanding his Threatnings; and our Slothfulneſs notwithſtanding his Promiſes. And in this ſenſe every ſin that we commit is a kind of Prophaneneſs, as it manifeſts a contempt of the infinite Perfections and Excellencies of the Deity: for there is no Man whoſe heart is poſſeſſed with a reverential and due Eſteem of the great God, that can be induced by any Temptations to ſin againſt him, and provoke him. Every ſin is a ſlighting of God, either a ſlighting of his Juſtice, or Mercy, or Holineſs, or Power, or all of them: For what doſt thou elſe when thou ſinneſt, but prefer ſome baſe Pleaſure, or ſome ſordid Advantage, before the Great God of Heaven? The Devil repreſents the Delights of Sin, or the Profits of the World unto thee to intice thee; but thy Conſcience repreſents unto thee the everlaſting Wrath of the great God if thou conſenteſt; his Juſtice ready to ſentence thee to everlaſting Torments, and his Power arm'd to inflict them. Now if thou yieldeſt, what doſt thou but vilifie and deſpiſe the Almighty God; as if his dread Power and ſevere Juſtice were not ſo conſiderable as to out-weigh either the impure pleaſures of a vile Luſt, or the ſordid gain and advantage of a little tranſitory Pelf? Nay, couldſt thou by one act of Sin make all the Treaſures and Delights of the whole World tributary to thee; ſhould the Devil take thee when he tempts, as he took Chriſt, and ſhew thee all the Kingdoms of the World, and the Glory of them, and promiſe to inſtate it all upon thee; yet to prefer the whole World before the Authority of God, who hath ſtrictly forbidden thee to think any thing in it worth the venturing upon his Diſpleaſure, and the hazarding his Wrath and Vengeance, is a moſt notorious ſlighting and contemning the great God, and argues a prophane Spirit: How much more then when we ſin againſt God for nothing, and defie his Wrath and Juſtice, without being provoked to it by any Temptation? We find how heinouſly God takes it, and ſpeaks of it as a mighty Affront and Indignity, that our Lord Chriſt ſhould be ſo undervalued as to be ſold for Thirty pieces of Silver; for it argued not only Treaſon but Contempt, *Zech.* 11. 13. *A goodly price that I was prized at by them.* And yet truly *Judas* was a very thrifty Sinner in compariſon with many among us, who not only betray Chriſt to the mocks and injuries of others, but crucifie him daily, and put him to open ſhame for far leſs. Yea, there are many that would not ſuffer ſo much as an hair of their heads to be twich'd off for that, for which they will not ſtick to lie, and ſwear, and blaſpheme. What ſhould tempt the impious Buffoon to deride Religion, traverſe the Holy Scriptures, and turn whatſoever is Sacred and Venerable, into Burleſque and Drollery; but only that he may gain a little grinning and ſneering Applauſe to his Wit, from a company of mad Fools like himſelf? Or, What ſhould tempt the cheap Swearer to open his black Throat as wide as Hell, and to belch out his Blaſphemies againſt Heaven, and the God of Heaven, but only that he fanſies that a well-mouth'd Oath will make his Speech the more ſtately and genteel? And are theſe Matters of ſuch conſequence, as to be called or accounted Temptations? Certainly, there can be nothing elſe in theſe ſins beſides a meer mad humour of ſinning; which declares a moſt wretched contempt of God, when we do that for nothing which his Soul hates, and his Law forbids; and a moſt prophane Spirit, in making that common and trivial, which is infinitely holy and ſacred. 3.

Thus you ſee how God is prophaned in his Nature, in his Name, and in his Attributes.

Fourthly, The Time which God hath ſet apart and conſecrated for his own Worſhip and Service, is Sacred and Holy; which we prophane when we imploy any part of it in the unneceſſary Affairs of this Life, but much more in the ſervice of Sin. This is a ſacrilegious robbing God of what is dedicated intirely to him; and that either by his immediate appointment, as the Sabbath; or by the appointment of thoſe whom God hath ſet over us, and intruſted not only to preſerve our Rights and Properties, but alſo his Worſhip, inviolate, as ſpecial Days of Joy or Mourning, Thankſgiving or Humiliation. 4.

Fifthly, The Ordinances of Jeſus Chriſt are holy and ſacred; which we prophane when either we neglect them, or are remiſs and careleſs in our attendance on them. But of this I ſhall ſpeak more anon. 5.

Thus I have ſhewn you what Prophaneneſs is; it is a ſlighting and deſpiſing of ſpiritual and ſacred Things, ſuch as are holy originally, as God, his Name and Attributes; and ſuch as are holy by Inſtitution, as his Sabbaths and Ordinances.

II. By what we have thus ſpoken concerning Prophaneneſs, we may the eaſier diſpatch the ſecond General propounded, which was, To give you ſome particular Characters of a prophane Perſon; that we may be the better able to look into our own Hearts and Lives, and both obſerve and correct that Prophaneneſs that reſides there.

1. *Firſt*, Therefore, he is a prophane Perſon that thinks and ſpeaks but ſlightly of Religion. Religion is the higheſt Perfection of Humane Nature; by it he differs more from brute Beaſts, than he doth by his Reaſon; for brute Creatures have ſome notable reſemblances and hints of Reaſon, but none at all of Religion. They Glorifie God as all the Works of the Creation do, by ſhewing forth his infinite Attributes in their frame and production; but they cannot Adore nor Worſhip him: This is a Pre-eminence peculiar to the moſt perfect Pieces of the Creation, Men and Angels. For as it is a Perfection of the Deity to be the Object of Worſhip, to whom all Adoration both in Heaven and Earth ought to be directed, ſo it is the Perfection of rational Creatures to aſcribe Honour, and Glory, and Praiſe, and Worſhip to him who ſitteth upon the Throne, and the Lamb for ever and ever. And therefore they who deſpiſe Religion, deſpiſe that which is their own chiefeſt Excellency, and prophane that which is the very Crown of their Natures and Beings.

But, alas! have we not many ſuch prophane Perſons among us, who deride Piety, and make a ſcoff of Religion, that look upon it only as a Politick Invention to keep the rude and ignorant Vulgar in awe?

Yea, and thoſe who take up their Religion, not by choice, but meerly by chance, either as a Patrimony left them by their Fathers, or as a received Cuſtom of the Country wherein they were Born, never troubling themſelves to examine the reaſonableneſs and certainty of it; theſe likewiſe are prophane ſpirited Men, who do not believe Religion to be a matter of that concernment as to require their exacteſt ſtudy and induſtry in ſearching into its Grounds and Principles, but think that any may ſuffice, whatſoever it be.

Again, thoſe who do ſecretly deſpiſe the holineſs and ſtrictneſs of others, and think they are too preciſe, and make more adoe to get to Heaven than needs. But indeed, they are not too preciſe, but theſe are too prophane, who thus contemn Religion as unneceſſary and ſuperfluous.

2. *Secondly*, He is a prophane Perſon who neglects the publick Worſhip and Service of God, when he hath opportunity and ability to frequent it. And, alas! how many ſuch are there, who yet think it foul ſcorn to have this black Name fix'd upon them; yea, and are the readieſt in the World to brand others with it, that are not of their Way and Sentiments? But let them be who they will that deſpiſe and forſake the ſolemn Aſſemblies, they do interpretatively deſpiſe and forſake God, whoſe eſpecial Preſence is only in two places, Heaven and the Church, in the one by his Glory, in the other by his Preſence.

Now theſe are of two ſorts; ſome that abſent themſelves out of a wretched Sloth, and Contempt of the Word and Ordinances of Jeſus Chriſt; others that withdraw themſelves out of a pretended Diſſatisfaction and Scruple of Conſcience. Both are Prophane; but the one ſort ſtrangely mingles Prophaneneſs and Hypocriſie together; and the other is Prophane out of Ignorance or Atheiſm.

1. *Firſt*, Some are negligently Prophane, and abſent themſelves from the Ordinances of Jeſus Chriſt, and the ſolemn Worſhip of God, upon meer Sloth and Reachleſneſs. And how many ſuch careleſly prophane are in theſe Parts, the Thinneſs of our Congregations doth too evidently declare. If we ſhould now go from Houſe to Houſe, ſhould we not find the far greater part of the Inhabitants idly lolling at Home? who after they had ſnorted out the Forenoon in their Beds, and thereby perhaps digeſted their laſt Night's Drunkenneſs, ſpend the Afternoon in their Chapel, the Chimny, either with vain Chat, or intemperate Cups, and ſacrifice to their God, their Belly, while they ſhould be worſhipping the great God of Heaven: Poſſibly a fair Day, or want of other Diverſion, may ſometimes bring theſe Droans to Church, yet this is ſo ſeldom, that we may well ſuſpect they come, not indeed for Cuſtom-ſake, but rather out of Novelty, than Devotion: But if it prove a wet or louring Day, theſe tender People, whom neither Rain nor Cold can prejudice at a Fair or Market, dare not ſtir out of their Doors, nor ſtep over their own Threſhold into God's, leſt they

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ſhould hazard their Health, inſtead of gaining their Salvation. What ſhall I ſay to ſuch Brutes and Heathens as theſe are, who not only deny the Power, but the very Form of Godlineſs, (ſome few of them may perhaps be now preſent to hear me, and may my Word, nay, not mine, but the Word of the Living God ſtrike them:) *God will pour out his wrath upon the heathen, and upon the families that call not on his name.*

2. *Secondly*, Some again are humourſomly Prophane, who withdraw themſelves from the publick Worſhip of God, meerly upon pretended Scruple and Diſſatisfaction. I think it is no Uncharitableneſs to ſay, That where ſcruple at the Adminiſtration of Ordinances, is only pretended to colour Contempt of the Ordinances, there Religion is only made a Maſque and Vizer for Hypocriſie: for he that ſhall ſcruple to pray by a Set Form, and yet not ſcruple to ſwear Extempore; he that ſhall ſcruple to eat and drink at the Lord's Table kneeling, and yet not ſcruple to drink at his own Table, or at an Ale-bench, till he cannot ſtand; he that ſhall ſcruple the Croſs in Baptiſm, and yet not ſcruple the breaking his Baptiſmal Vow; he that ſhall Scruple Obedience to Man's Laws, and yet not ſcruple Diſobedience to God's, but ſhall lie, and defraud, and perjure, and oppreſs, and look upon it as the privilege of his Perverſeneſs and Contradiction, to do ſo; I ſhall make no ſcruple to call ſuch a ſcrupulous Swearer, or Drunkard, or Cheat, a groſs and prophane Hypocrite.

I do not, I dare not ſay, that all thoſe that ſeparate from our Communion, are of this Note, no more than that all who joyn with us, are free from theſe Crimes: no, I believe, and know the contrary; and that very many who have in the ſimplicity of their hearts followed *Abſalom* in a Rebellion, do now likewiſe follow *Corah* in a Schiſm. Towards ſuch I would take up words of Meekneſs, and in the bowels of Love expoſtulate with them; but, alas! they do not, they will not hear me: I would beſeech them to account of us as Miniſters of Chriſt, and Stewards of the Myſteries of God, as well as others: And if they cannot deny that we are ſo, will they deny us Audience when we come as Ambaſſadours from the great King of Heaven, to deliver his Meſſage to them in his Name? Do we not preach the ſame Truths, and exhort you as far as we are able, to the practice of the ſame Holineſs? Do we not Adminiſter the ſame Sacraments wherein are repreſented and ſealed to all believing Partakers, the Benefits of the Death of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt? What is it then? Are we therefore rejected becauſe as we have our Commiſſion from God, ſo we have our Miſſion by Law, and Authority from Men? If it be ſo, this is not Zeal, but Contumacy and Perverſeneſs; or are they our own Perſonal Faults and Miſcarriages, the neglect of our Miniſtery, or the ſcandal of our Lives, that makes Men to abhor the Offerings of the Lord, and forſake his Tabernacle? Indeed, I had much rather deplore than excuſe them. Yet ſince this Imputation cannot without great Wrong and Injuſtice be laid upon all, why is the Defection from all? Why are godly, laborious, and conſciencious Miniſters forſaken and deſpiſed as well as the reſt? But ſuppoſe they were all as black as Aſperſions and Calumnies would render them; yet certainly they cannot be thought worſe than the Scribes and Phariſees, who were not only vicious in their Lives, but corrupt in many principal parts of their Doctrine; yet ſuch was the Authority and Reverence of *Moſes*'s Chair, that our Lord Chriſt himſelf, who was the great Teacher of the World, ſends his own Scholars to learn of them; only becauſe they were the allowed and authorized Inſtructers of the People, *Matth.* 23. 2. *The Scribes and the Phariſees ſit in Moſes ſeat. All therefore whatſoever they bid you obſerve, that obſerve and do; but do not ye after their works: for they ſay, and do not.* Or finally, is it that the Ordinances of Jeſus Chriſt are (as they ſay) burthened with ſome Obſervances which they cannot ſo well digeſt and comply with? Not now to defend theſe Things in particular, let me only ſay, That they nothing hinder the Energy of the Goſpel, where it is attended on with an humble ſubmiſs Soul, and tractable and docile Affections: And what ſlight Opinions ſoever the over-weening Fancies of the Men of this Generation may have taken up concerning our way of Worſhip, yet I am ſure that many thouſands of Souls have been converted and ſaved ſince our happy and bleſſed Reformation from Popery, by the Ordinances of Jeſus Chriſt, adminiſtred with all the ſame Obſervances which are now ſo much vilified and condemned. And I pray God Prophaneneſs be not laid to the charge of a great many who not only neglect, but deride and deſpiſe that Worſhip which God hath accepted and rewarded; and that way of Adminiſtration which he hath ſanctified in the Converſion, and ſealed in the Salvation of many bleſſed and glorious Saints now in Heaven.

2 Sam. 15. 11.

Yet I do not think all thoſe who do as yet refrain from our publick Aſſemblies meerly out of the Diſſatisfaction of their Conſciences, who do deſire and endeavour

to

to be ſatisfied, and would willingly cloſe with their Duty as ſoon as it is diſcovered to them, without ſticking at the Examples of others, or their own former contrary Practice; I dare not, I ſay, think them guilty of Prophaneneſs; although for the preſent they may be very much miſguided.

But for others, that either abſent themſelves out of meer Careleſneſs, and a wretched neglect of the Commands of Chriſt, or only out of Humour and Frowardneſs, and becauſe they have been of another way, therefore they will ſtiffly and pertinaciouſly maintain it; and caſt all the Odium they can deviſe, and all the Dirt they can rake together, though it be with Lyes and Slanders, upon us; ſuch as ſearch for all manner of Arguments, not ſo much to ſatisfie their Conſciences, as meerly to cavil againſt our Worſhip; and when they can neither condemn it by Scripture nor Reaſon, do it by bitter Invectives, odious Reflexions, and a ſcoffing Contempt, on purpoſe to make it both hateful and ridiculous to the People; ſuch I ſhall be bold in the Lord to pronounce Prophane and Irreligious Wretches. And whereas they cry out upon the Prophaneneſs of others, and make that a Pretence why they ſeparate, and rend the Body of Chriſt into Schiſm, they themſelves are moſt prophane, deſpiſing the Holy Ordinances of Jeſus Chriſt, and thereby making themſelves unworthy to be admitted to ſuch Holy Myſteries, and worthy to be excluded, and not only by their own voluntary Obſtinacy, but by a judicial Cenſure.

So much for the ſecond Character of a prophane Perſon.

3. *Thirdly*, He is alſo a prophane Perſon who neglects the performances of religious Duties in private. Every Houſe ought to be a Temple dedicated to God, and every Maſter a Prieſt, who ſhould offer unto God the daily Sacrifices of Prayers and Praiſes. But alas, how many prophane Perſons have we, and how many prophane Families, who ſcarce ever make mention of God but in an Oath, nor never call upon his Name but when they imprecate ſome Curſe upon others? How many who wholly neglect the Duty of Prayer, and think they ſufficiently diſcharge their Truſt, if they provide for the Temporal Subſiſtence of their Families, though they utterly neglect the Care of their Souls, and their Spiritual Concernments? Such prophane Families as theſe, God ranks with Infidels and Heathens, and devotes them to the ſame common Deſtruction.

Jer. 10. 25.

Nor ought our Family Duties to be ſeldomer performed by us than Morning and Evening. In the Morning Prayer is the Key that opens unto us the Treaſury of God's Mercies and Bleſſings; in the Evening it is the Key that ſhuts us up under his Protection and Safe-Guard. God is the great Lord of the whole Family both in Heaven and Earth; other Maſters are but under him intruſted to ſee that thoſe who belong to their Charge, perform their Duties both to him and them. One of the greateſt Services that we can do for God, is to pray unto him, and praiſe him: And how unjuſt and tyrannical is it for a Maſter of a Family to exact Service to himſelf, when he takes no care to do Service to his great Lord and Maſter, to whom it is infinitely more due?

Neither is there any Excuſe that can prevail to take off your Obligation from this Duty.

Not that thou art ignorant, and knoweſt not how to pray; for many are the Helps that God hath afforded thee: Do but bring breath and holy Affections, others have already brought to thy hands Words and Expreſſions proper enough for the Concerns of moſt Families: and beſides, uſe and common practice will facilitate this Duty, and by an inceſſant conſciencious performance of it, thou wilt through the promiſed aſſiſtance of the Holy Ghoſt, be ſoon able to ſuit thy Affections with pertinent Expreſſions, and to preſent both in a becoming manner unto the Throne of Grace.

Not the multiplicity and incumbrance of thine Affairs: For the the more and the weightier they are, the more need haſt thou to ask counſel and direction of God, and to beg his bleſſing upon thee in them; without which thou wilt but labour in the fire, and weary thy ſelf for very vanity.

Not thy Baſhfulneſs and Modeſty: For will it not be a far greater ſhame to thee, that thoſe whom thou governeſt, and perhaps over-aweſt even by thy raſh and unreaſonable Paſſions, ſhould be able to over-awe thee from ſo excellent and neceſſary a Duty? Be aſhamed to ſin before them; be aſhamed to talk looſly, to prophane the Name of God, to be intemperate, or unjuſt before them, to defile thy Mouth and their Ears with unclean and ſcurrilous Diſcourſes; be aſhamed to neglect thy

Duty;

Duty; but be not aſhamed to pray; for our Saviour hath told us, *Mark* 8. 38. That *whoſoever ſhall be aſhamed of him in this adulterous and ſinful generation, of him alſo ſhall the Son of man be aſhamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with his holy Angels.* And therefore ſince there is no juſt Reaſon why thou ſhouldſt refrain Prayer from the Almighty, whoſoever thou art that doeſt ſo, be thy Converſation in all other reſpects never ſo blameleſs, (which yet is not very probable that it ſhould be, when thou beggeſt not Grace from God to direct it) thou art a prophane Perſon, and declareſt thy ſelf to be ſo by thy neglect of the moſt Holy and Spiritual of all thoſe Duties wherein we are to draw nigh unto God.

Fourthly, He is a prophane Perſon, that performs holy Duties ſlightly and ſuperficially: All our Duties ought to be warmed with Zeal, wing'd with Affection, and ſhot up to Heaven from the whole bent of the Soul. Our whole Hearts muſt go into them; and the ſtrength and vigour of our Spirits muſt diffuſe themſelves into every part of them, to animate and quicken them: And therefore the Apoſtle commands us, *Rom.* 12. 11. To *be fervent in ſpirit, ſerving the Lord.* Sacrifices (which under the *Jewiſh* Oeconomy were the greateſt part of God's ſolemn Worſhip) were commanded to be offered up with Fire; and no other fire could ſanctifie them, but that which miraculouſly ſhot it ſelf down from Heaven, or from the preſence of God in the Sanctuary, which was ever after kept burning for that very uſe: So truly all our Chriſtian Sacrifices both of Praiſe and of Prayer, muſt be offer'd up unto God with fire; and that fire which alone can ſanctifie them, muſt be darted down from Heaven; the celeſtial flame of Zeal and Love, which comes down from Heaven, and hath a natural tendency to aſcend thither again, and to carry up our Hearts and Souls upon its wings with it. 4. *Lev.* 9.24. *Lev.* 6. 4.

But indeed commonly our Duties are either, *Firſt*, offered up with ſtrange unhallow'd fire; they are fired by ſome unruly paſſion of hatred, or ſelf-love, or pride and vain glory. Like thoſe cholerick Diſciples that preſently would command fire to come down from Heaven to conſume thoſe who had affronted them by refuſing to give them entertainment; only that God by ſuch a ſevere Miracle might vindicate their Reputation, and revenge the Contumely that was done them. But this is a fire kindled from beneath, and ſmells ſtrong of Brimſtone; and therefore our Saviour himſelf ſharply checks their furious Zeal, *Ye know not what manner of ſpirit ye are of.* And certainly whenſoever we pray thus in the bitterneſs of our Spirits, devoting our Enemies to deſtruction, and that becauſe they are ours, rather than God's, when we pour out a great deal of Gall mingled with our Petitions, ſuch a Prayer cannot be from the Dove-like Spirit of God, which is meek and gentle; and makes thoſe ſo who are led and inſpired by him. Every party and perſuaſion of Men is very ready boldly to preſcribe unto God thoſe Ways and Methods by which he ought to be glorified; and if any ſhall but queſtion their Principles, or oppoſe their raſh and unwarrantable Proceedings, their touchy Zeal is ſtraight kindled, and nothing leſs than ſolemn Prayers muſt be made, to devote ſuch an one to ruin and deſtruction, as an Enemy to God and to Religion. Here's fire indeed! but it is Wildfire kindled from beneath, the Fewel of it is Faction, Popularity, Pride, Contention, and vain Glory; and it ſends forth a great deal of ſmoak from corrupt and inordinate Paſſions. 1. *Luke* 9.54. *Luke* 9.55.

Or *Secondly*, If there be none of the former Incentives to heat them; then our Duties are commonly very cold and heartleſs; our Prayers are dull and yawning, and drop over our Lips without any ſpirit or life in them: How often do we beg God to hear us, when we ſcarce hear our ſelves; and to grant us an anſwer, when we ſcarce know what it is that we have askt? We make our Requeſts ſo coldly and indifferently, as if we only begg'd a Denial. So likewiſe in our hearing of the Word, we bring with us very ſlight and prophane Spirits to thoſe holy and lively Oracles: what elſe means the vagrancy and wanderings of our Thoughts, our lazy and unbeſeeming Poſtures, which would be counted rude and unmannerly to be uſed in the preſence of ſome of thoſe that are here with us, were they any where elſe but in the Church? What means our wearineſs, our watching every Sand that runs, our deſpiſing the Simplicity of the Goſpel, our prizing the ſound of Words more than the weight of Things, but eſpecially our indulged Sloth and Drowzineſs? a Sin that I have obſerved too common in this place. What, cannot you watch with God one hour? Do we ſpeak Poppy and Opium to you? Or do you expect that God will now reveal himſelf to you in Dreams? Have ye not Houſes, have ye not Beds to ſleep in; or do you deſpiſe the Church of Chriſt? Certainly God requires our moſt wake- 2.

ful and vigilant Attention when he delivers to us the moſt important things of his Law, and of our Salvation. Theſe and many other things, which to particularize would perhaps be to deſcend below the Majeſty of this Work, do too evidently declare, that the pretious Truths of the Goſpel are grown vile among us, that we have taken a Surfeit of this heavenly Manna, this Bread of Life, and now begin to loath it. Beware leſt this Surfeit bring not a Famine after it.

It plainly argues much Prophaneneſs in our Spirits, when we bring only our outward Man, our dull and heavy Carcaſſes to attend upon God, while our Hearts and Minds are ſtraying and wandring from him: This is a ſign that we deſpiſe God, and account any thing good enough, the Lame and the Blind to be offer'd up unto him. Againſt ſuch God hath thundred out a moſt dreadful Curſe, *Curſed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth and ſacrificeth to the Lord a corrupt thing; for I am a great King, ſaith the Lord of hoſts, and my name is dreadful.* Thou who ſuffereſt thy Thoughts or thine Eyes, which are the Index of them, to rove in Prayer, or to be ſeal'd up with ſleep in hearing, thou deſpiſeſt the great God before whom thou appeareſt, and thinkeſt it enough if thou affordeſt him thy bodily preſence, although thy heart be with the eyes of the Fools in the ends of the Earth: For ſuch a Service is but Mockery; and it is leſs irriſion to tender God no Service than to perform it ſlightly and perfunctorily; the one is Diſobedience, but the other is Contempt.

Malac. 1. 14.

This is a fourth Character of a prophane Perſon.

5. *Fifthly*, He is a prophane Perſon that performs holy Duties for worldly Ends and Advantages: For what greater contempt of God can there be, than to make his Service truckle under the baſe and low deſigns of this preſent Life? This is to make Religion tributary to Intereſt, and God himſelf an Homage to Mammon. And this all Hypocrites are guilty of; tho' they maſque their Deſigns with ſpecious Pretences, and draw the Veil of Religion over their ſordid and wicked Contrivances, yet they cry out with *Jehu*, *Come ſee my zeal for the Lord of hoſts*; when he drove on ſo furiouſly only for the Kingdom.

Indeed an Hypocrite (tho' he be not commonly ſo eſteemed) is the moſt prophane Wretch that lives; the groſs profligate Sinner offers not half ſo much Indignity to Religion as he doth; For,

1. *Firſt*, The Hypocrite calls in God to be a Complice and Partaker with him in his Crimes, and intitles his Majeſty who is infinitely pure and holy, to the Wickedneſs he commits, as if they were done for his ſake, and meerly upon his account; and ſo makes God to be the Patron of Sin, who will be the Judge and Condemner of Sinners. All his Injuſtice, Rapine, and Rebellion, are coloured over with the fair pretences of the Glory of God, the Intereſt of the Kingdom of Chriſt, the Advancement of the Power of Godlineſs, Reformation of Idolatry and Superſtition, *&c.* and there is no act of Fraud or Violence, Faction or Sedition, but he thinks it juſtified and hallowed by theſe glorious Names; which is nothing elſe but to rob Men, and make God the Receiver, who is the Deteſter, and will be the Puniſher of ſuch Crimes. Now the open and flagitious Wretch, altho' he hates God as much as the Hypocrite, yet he doth not ſo much deride him; his Wickedneſſes are plain and avowed; and every one may ſee from whence they proceed, and whither they tend, that they come from Hell, and directly tend thither: Religion is not at all concerned to colour, but only to condemn them. And judge ye, which doth moſt deſpiſe God and Godlineſs, either he who profeſſeth it not at all, or he who profeſſeth it only that he may abuſe and abaſe it, and make it ſubſervient to ſuch vile and ſordid ends as are infinitely unworthy of it.

2. *Secondly*, The wound that Religion receives from Hypocrites is far more dangerous and incurable, than that which the open and ſcandalous Sinner inflicts upon it. For Religion is never brought into queſtion by the enormous Vices of an infamous Perſon: all ſee, and all abhor his Lewdneſs. But when a Man ſhall have his mouth full of Piety, and hands full of Wickedneſs, when he ſhall ſpeak Scripture, and live Deviliſm, Profeſs ſtrictly and Walk looſly; this lays a grievous Stumbling-block in the way of others, and tempts them to think that all Religion is but Mockery, and that the Profeſſors of it are but Hypocrites, and ſo imbitters their hearts againſt it, as a ſolemn Cheat put upon the credulous World. Certainly ſuch Men are the cauſes of all that Contempt which is caſt upon the Ways and Ordinances of God; and their ſecret Prophaneneſs hath given occaſion to the groſs and open Prophaneneſs that now abounds in the World; and the Hypocriſie of former Years, hath too fatally introduced the Atheiſm of theſe. Nay,

Nay, an Hypocrite muſt needs be an Atheiſt, and in his heart deny many of God's glorious Attributes, but eſpecially his Omniſcience, and ſay within himſelf as thoſe, *Pſ.* 73. 11. *Tuſh, God ſhall not know; and is there knowledge in the moſt High?* For did they but believe that Good looks through all their Diſguiſes, and that his Eye, which is Light unto it ſelf, pierceth into their very Souls; did they but ſeriouſly conſider that all things are naked and before him; that he knows our thoughts afar off, and is privy to our cloſeſt deſigns, they would not certainly be either ſo daringly wicked, or ſo childiſhly fooliſh, as to plot upon God, and ſeek to cozen and delude Omniſcience.

Now this Prophaneneſs of the Hypocrite in ſeeking Temporal Things by Spiritual Pretences, is much more abominable than the Prophaneneſs of others who ſeek them by unjuſt and unlawful means; for the one only makes Impiety, but the other Piety it ſelf an Inſtrument of his vile and ſordid Profit, than which there cannot be a greater ſcorn and contempt put upon Religion.

Sixthly, He is a prophane Perſon who makes what God hath ſanctified, common and unhallowed: And have we not many ſuch prophane Perſons among us? Many that abuſe the holy and reverend Name of God, which ought to be had in the higheſt eſteem and veneration, about light and frivolous matters; who only make mention of him in their idle Chat, but are mute and dumb when any thing ſhould be ſpoken to his praiſe; many that prophane his Sabbaths, and altho' God hath liberally allowed them ſix Days for the Affairs of Earth, yet will not ſpare the ſeventh for the Affairs of Heaven, but impiouſly invade what he hath ſet apart and conſecrated for himſelf, and his own immediate Worſhip and Service. Many that never ſpeak Scripture, but when they abuſe it, making the Bible their Jeſt-book, and proſtituting thoſe Phraſes and Expreſſions, which God hath ſanctified to convey unto us the knowledge of himſelf, and eternal Life, to the Laughter and Mirth of their looſe Companions: So that thoſe very words which the Holy Ghoſt inſpired into the Pen-men of the ſacred Scriptures, for the Edification of the Church, the Devil inſpires into theſe Wretches for their own Damnation, and the Damnation of thoſe that have pleaſure in ſuch horrid Prophaneneſs. 6.

Seventhly, He is a prophane Perſon who deſpiſeth Spiritual Privileges and Enjoyments: Upon this very account the Scripture ſets that black and indelible Brand upon *Eſau*, *Leſt there be any prophane perſons among you, as Eſau, who for one morſel of meat ſold his birth-right*. And why is *Eſau* ſtigmatized as prohane for ſelling his Birthright, but becauſe in thoſe firſt Ages of the World, the Firſt-born or Eldeſt of the Family was a Prieſt, and that ſacred Function by right of Primogeniture belonged unto him? And therefore, we read that the Tribe of *Levi* were taken by God to be his Prieſts and Miniſters, in exchange for the Firſt-born: Now to ſlight and undervalue an Office ſo Holy and Sacred, a Privilege ſo eminent, a Dignity ſo ſublime and Spiritual, to part with it only for the ſatisfying of his Hunger, was a ſign of a prophane Spirit, in preferring the God his Belly, before the God of Heaven, and for ever renouncing his Right of Sacrificing to the true God, only that he might Sacrifice one pleaſant Morſel to his impatient Appetite. 7. Heb. 11. 16.

And certainly, if it were ſo prophane in *Eſau* to ſlight and contemn the Prieſthood in himſelf, they are alſo prophane who vilifie it in others, and make thoſe the Objects of their loweſt Scorn and Contempt, whoſe Office it is to Stand and Miniſter before God and Chriſt. Certainly, if a Diſhonour done to an Ambaſſador, reflects upon the Prince that ſent him, will not Chriſt account it as an Affront and Injury done unto him, when you affront and injure thoſe his Meſſengers and Ambaſſadors whom he hath ſent to treat with you in his Name, and about the Concernments of his Kingdom?

But not to ſpeak more of this, leſt we ſhould be thought to plead for our ſelves: Are not thoſe prophane who deſpiſe and contemn the high Privileges and Dignity of the Children of God; who deſpiſe thoſe whom God ſo highly honours as to adopt them into his own Family, admit them into near Communion and Indearments with himſelf, to make them his own Sons, and give them the Privilege of Heirs of eternal Glory? Doubtleſs, he who deſpiſeth him that is begotten, deſpiſeth him likewiſe that begetteth; and the common Diſreſpect which is ſhewn to the Servants and Children of God, argues a ſecret Contempt of him who is their Maſter and their Father.

Now lay theſe things to your own Hearts, and bring them home to your own Conſciences, and ſee whether you are in none of theſe particulars guilty of Prophaneneſs:

phaneneſs: Do none of you think ſlightly of Religion, accounting it either a Politick Deſign, or a needleſs Preciſeneſs? Are none of you negligent in the publick Worſhip and Service of God; nor yet in Private and Family Duties; or if you perform them, is it not very careleſly and perfunctorily; or if you ſeem zealous in them, is not your Zeal excited by ſome Temporal Advantages, and low baſe Worldly Ends and Deſigns? Do you not make that common and unhallowed, which God hath made holy, either by abuſing his Name, polluting his Sabbaths, or vilifying his Word in your ordinary Railery? And laſtly, do none of you deſpiſe Spiritual Privileges and Enjoyments, and thoſe likewiſe who are inveſted with them? If ſo, how fair and ſpecious ſoever your Lives and Actions may be, altho' you may think the rude debauch'd Sinner at a vaſt diſtance from your ſelves, and account him the only prophane Perſon, yet certainly this black Stile belons as properly to you, and you are prophane Violaters of this firſt Command which requires you to take the Lord for your God, and accordingly to honour and reverence him, and whatſoever appertains unto him.

And thus much for the Third notable Tranſgreſſion of this Command, Prophaneneſs.

4thly. The *Fourth* and laſt breach of this Command is by Idolatry, *Thou ſhalt have no other gods beſides me*; which they tranſgreſs who ſet up any other God beſides the Lord Jehovah. Idolatry according to its Etymology and Uſe, ſignifies a ſerving of Images, or Idols; now, an Idol, tho' it properly ſignifies an artificial Effigies or Reſemblance made to repreſent any thing or perſon, yet in Divinity it ſignifies any thing beſides the true God, unto which we aſcribe Divine Honour and Worſhip.

And as an Idol is twofold, one internal in the fiction and imagination of the Mind; another external and viſible, either the Work of Mens hands, as Statues and Images, or elſe the Work of God's hands, as the Sun, Moon and Stars, or any other Creature; ſo there is a twofold Idolatry, the one Internal, when in our Minds and Affections we honour and venerate that as God which indeed is not ſo, but is either a Creature of the true God, or a Fiction of a deluded Fancy: The other External, which we are then guilty of when we expreſs the inward Veneration of our Souls, by outward Acts of Adoration. As for inſtance: Whoſoever ſhall believe the conſecrated Bread in the Sacrament to be tranſubſtantiated and changed into the true and proper Body of Jeſus Chriſt, and upon this belief, ſhall in his mind revere and honour it as his God (as the Papiſts do) he is guilty of internal Idolatry: But if to this internal Veneration, he add any external Rites of Worſhip, as Proſtration, Invocation, *&c.* he is then likewiſe guilty of external Idolatry.

It is the former of theſe two kinds of Idolatry, which is here prohibited in this firſt Commandment, *Thou ſhalt have no other gods before me*; that is, thou ſhalt not give unto any thing either in Heaven or Earth, that inward Heart-worſhip of Affiance, Love, Fear, Veneration, and Dependence, which is due only to the true God, the Lord Jehovah: The imperate Acts, or outward Expreſſions of this inward Worſhip, is that which we call external Idolatry, which is ſpecially forbidden in the ſecond Commandment, of which I ſhall treat in its place and order.

Now concerning this Internal Idolatry, obſerve theſe following Propoſitions:

Firſt, Whoſoever acknowledgeth, and in his heart worſhipeth another God different from that God who hath revealed himſelf unto us in his holy Scriptures, he is guilty of this Internal Idolatry, and the breach of this firſt Commandment. And therefore not only thoſe miſerable Creatures who worſhip the Devil, or thoſe that have recourſe to Diabolical Arts and Charms, or thoſe who worſhip Men whoſe Vices were their ἀποθέωσις, and their Crimes their Conſecration, as *Bacchus*, and *Venus*, and others of the Heatheniſh Gods; nor thoſe who worſhip'd Men famous for their Vertues, as the Heathens did their Hero's, and the Papiſts do their Saints; or thoſe who worſhip any of the Creatures of God, as the Hoſt of Heaven, Fire as the *Perſians*, or Water as the *Egyptians*, or the Creatures of Art, as Statues and Images, as if poſſeſt and animated by their Deities; in which reſpect *Triſmegiſtus* called Images the Bodies of the Gods: And with the ſame Madneſs are the Papiſts poſſeſt, who are perſuaded that God, and Chriſt, and the Saints dwell in certain Images made to repreſent them, and by thoſe Images give anſwers to their Votaries, and perform many wonderful and miraculous Works; whereas if there be any Spirit that poſſeſſeth them (as perhaps there may) we have reaſon to believe that ſince their Worſhip of them is the very ſame with the Heathens, thoſe Spirits are likewiſe the ſame, *viz.* not God, nor Saints, but Devils and damned Spirits. But I ſay, not only theſe are Idolaters

Aug. de Civ. Dei. l. 8. c. 23.

laters and Tranſgreſſors of this firſt Command, but thoſe alſo who compound a God partly of the figment of their own erroneous Minds, and partly out of his own Infinite Attributes: And thus are all *Arians*, *Socinians*, and *Antitrinitarians* guilty of Idolatry; for they acknowledge one Infinite and Eternal Being, but denying the Perſons of the Son and the Holy Ghoſt, they worſhip an Idol, and not the true God, for the only true God, is both Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt.

Secondly, Whoſoever acknowledgeth, and in his heart worſhippeth more Gods than the only Lord Jehovah, is guilty of Idolatry, and the Violation of this firſt Commandment. Thus was the Idolatry of thoſe Nations which the King of *Aſſyria* planted in *Iſrael* after he had carried away the ten Tribes into Captivity; for it is ſaid, 2 *Kings* 17. 33. *That they feared the Lord, and ſerved their own gods.* And upon this account alſo are all *Arians* and *Socinians*, who deny the Natural Divinity of Jeſus Chriſt, juſtly charged with Idolatry; for ſince they ſay that Chriſt is God, and do worſhip him as God, yet deny that he is of the ſame Nature and Subſtance with the Lord Jehovah, they muſt of neceſſity make more Gods than one, and thoſe of a divers Eſſence and Being; and therefore are not only guilty of Blaſphemy, but Idolatry; of Blaſphemy in robbing Chriſt of his Eternal Sonſhip and the Divine Nature; of Idolatry in attributing Divine Honour and Worſhip unto him whom they believe to be but a Creature, and not God by Nature. 2.

Thirdly, Whoſoever doth aſcribe or render to any Creature, that which is proper and due only unto God, he is an Idolater, and guilty of the Tranſgreſſion of this firſt Commandment. Now this Attribution of the Divine Properties to the Creatures, is either Explicite or Implicite; Explicite when we do avow the Attributes of the Divine Nature to be in thoſe things which are not capable of them; as thoſe who hold the Body of Chriſt to be Omnipreſent. Implicite when we render unto any Creature that inward Worſhip, Eſteem, and Affection which is due only unto the infinite Perfections of the Deity. And although our Reformed Religion be very well purged from the former Idolatry, yet certainly the Profeſſours of it are not well purged from this latter Idolatry; for even among Proteſtants themſelves we ſhall find very many that are in this ſenſe Idolaters: For, 3.

Firſt, Whoſoever chiefly and ſupremely loves any Creature, is an Idolater; becauſe our chiefeſt love is due only unto God. Hence the covetous Perſon is expreſly called an Idolater, and Covetouſneſs Idolatry, *Col.* 3. 5. *Mortifie your earthly members, uncleanneſs, evil concupiſcence, and covetouſneſs, which is idolatry.* And the ſenſual Epicure is likewiſe an Idolater, *Phil.* 3. 19. His Belly, ſaith the Apoſtle, is his God: The proud Perſon is an Idolater, for he loves himſelf ſupremely, ſets up himſelf for his own Idol, and falls proſtrate before that Image which he hath pourtrayed of his own Perfections in his own Fancy and Imagination. And generally all ſuch who love and admire any thing above God, or eſteem any thing ſo dear that they would not willingly part with it for his ſake, they have ſet up another God before him, to which they give that Service and Reſpect which is due only to the great God of Heaven. 1.

Secondly, Whoſoever puts his truſt and confidence in any Creature more than in God, is guilty of this inward Heart-Idolatry; as when we depend upon Intereſt, or Power, or Policy for our ſafe-guard and ſucceſs, more than on that God, who is able both with and without created helps and means to relieve us: And that we do ſo appears, when we are ſecure and confident in the Enjoyment of ſuch created Comforts and Supports, but altogether diffident and dejected when we are deprived of them: For ſince God is always the ſame, we ſhould likewiſe have the ſame Courage and Spirit, did we place our whole Affiance in him. 2.

Thirdly, He is an Idolater, and a very groſs one, who ſets up any Creature in his heart, whether Saint or Angel, to pray unto it, and to betake himſelf unto that vain Refuge in our ſtraights and neceſſities: For Invocation properly belongs to God alone, as an Act of Worſhip which he hath challenged to himſelf, and the higheſt Glory that we can give to his Divine Majeſty: And therefore he commanded us, *Pſal.* 50. 15. *Call upon me*, not upon any Saint or Angel, *in the time of trouble, and I will deliver thee.* And therefore the Papiſts are moſt groſs and ſtupid Idolaters, who direct their Petitions not unto God, but unto Saints and Angels; which is nothing elſe but to advance them in his Throne, and to aſcribe unto them his infinite Perfections; for Prayer and Adoration ſuppoſeth the Object of it to be Omnipreſent and Omnipotent; Omnipreſent to hear, and Omnipotent to ſave, or elſe they are in vain. 3.

Thus much for the Firſt Commandment.

phaneneſs: Do none of you think ſlightly of Religion, accounting it either a Politick Deſign, or a needleſs Preciſeneſs? Are none of you negligent in the publick Worſhip and Service of God; nor yet in Private and Family Duties; or if you perform them, is it not very careleſly and perfunctorily; or if you ſeem zealous in them, is not your Zeal excited by ſome Temporal Advantages, and low baſe Worldly Ends and Deſigns? Do you not make that common and unhallowed, which God hath made holy, either by abuſing his Name, polluting his Sabbaths, or vilifying his Word in your ordinary Railery? And laſtly, do none of you deſpiſe Spiritual Privileges and Enjoyments, and thoſe likewiſe who are inveſted with them? If ſo, how fair and ſpecious ſoever your Lives and Actions may be, altho' you may think the rude debauch'd Sinner at a vaſt diſtance from your ſelves, and account him the only prophane Perſon, yet certainly this black Stile belons as properly to you, and you are prophane Violaters of this firſt Command which requires you to take the Lord for your God, and accordingly to honour and reverence him, and whatſoever appertains unto him.

And thus much for the Third notable Tranſgreſſion of this Command, Prophaneneſs.

4thly. The *Fourth* and laſt breach of this Command is by Idolatry, *Thou ſhalt have no other gods beſides me*; which they tranſgreſs who ſet up any other God beſides the Lord Jehovah. Idolatry according to its Etymology and Uſe, ſignifies a ſerving of Images, or Idols; now, an Idol, tho' it properly ſignifies an artificial Effigies or Reſemblance made to repreſent any thing or perſon, yet in Divinity it ſignifies any thing beſides the true God, unto which we aſcribe Divine Honour and Worſhip.

And as an Idol is twofold, one internal in the fiction and imagination of the Mind; another external and viſible, either the Work of Mens hands, as Statues and Images, or elſe the Work of God's hands, as the Sun, Moon and Stars, or any other Creature; ſo there is a twofold Idolatry, the one Internal, when in our Minds and Affections we honour and venerate that as God which indeed is not ſo, but is either a Creature of the true God, or a Fiction of a deluded Fancy: The other External, which we are then guilty of when we expreſs the inward Veneration of our Souls, by outward Acts of Adoration. As for inſtance: Whoſoever ſhall believe the conſecrated Bread in the Sacrament to be tranſubſtantiated and changed into the true and proper Body of Jeſus Chriſt, and upon this belief, ſhall in his mind revere and honour it as his God (as the Papiſts do) he is guilty of internal Idolatry: But if to this internal Veneration, he add any external Rites of Worſhip, as Proſtration, Invocation, *&c.* he is then likewiſe guilty of external Idolatry.

It is the former of theſe two kinds of Idolatry, which is here prohibited in this firſt Commandment, *Thou ſhalt have no other gods before me*; that is, thou ſhalt not give unto any thing either in Heaven or Earth, that inward Heart-worſhip of Affiance, Love, Fear, Veneration, and Dependence, which is due only to the true God, the Lord Jehovah: The imperate Acts, or outward Expreſſions of this inward Worſhip, is that which we call external Idolatry, which is ſpecially forbidden in the ſecond Commandment, of which I ſhall treat in its place and order.

Now concerning this Internal Idolatry, obſerve theſe following Propoſitions:

Firſt, Whoſoever acknowledgeth, and in his heart worſhipeth another God different from that God who hath revealed himſelf unto us in his holy Scriptures, he is guilty of this Internal Idolatry, and the breach of this firſt Commandment. And therefore not only thoſe miſerable Creatures who worſhip the Devil, or thoſe that have recourſe to Diabolical Arts and Charms, or thoſe who worſhip Men whoſe Vices were their ἀποθέωσις, and their Crimes their Conſecration, as *Bacchus*, and *Venus*, and others of the Heatheniſh Gods; nor thoſe who worſhip'd Men famous for their Vertues, as the Heathens did their Hero's, and the Papiſts do their Saints; or thoſe who worſhip any of the Creatures of God, as the Hoſt of Heaven, Fire as the *Perſians*, or Water as the *Egyptians*, or the Creatures of Art, as Statues and Images, as if poſſeſt and animated by their Deities; in which reſpect *Triſmegiſtus* called Images the Bodies of the Gods: And with the ſame Madneſs are the Papiſts poſſeſt, who are perſuaded that God, and Chriſt, and the Saints dwell in certain Images made to repreſent them, and by thoſe Images give anſwers to their Votaries, and perform many wonderful and miraculous Works; whereas if there be any Spirit that poſſeſſeth them (as perhaps there may) we have reaſon to believe that ſince their Worſhip of them is the very ſame with the Heathens, thoſe Spirits are likewiſe the ſame, *viz.* not God, nor Saints, but Devils and damned Spirits. But I ſay, not only theſe are Idolaters

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laters and Tranſgreſſors of this firſt Command, but thoſe alſo who compound a God partly of the figment of their own erroneous Minds, and partly out of his own Infinite Attributes: And thus are all *Arians*, *Socinians*, and *Antitrinitarians* guilty of Idolatry; for they acknowledge one Infinite and Eternal Being, but denying the Perſons of the Son and the Holy Ghoſt, they worſhip an Idol, and not the true God, for the only true God, is both Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt.

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Secondly, Whoſoever puts his truſt and confidence in any Creature more than in God, is guilty of this inward Heart-Idolatry; as when we depend upon Intereſt, or Power, or Policy for our ſafe-guard and ſucceſs, more than on that God, who is able both with and without created helps and means to relieve us: And that we do ſo appears, when we are ſecure and confident in the Enjoyment of ſuch created Comforts and Supports, but altogether diffident and dejected when we are deprived of them: For ſince God is always the ſame, we ſhould likewiſe have the ſame Courage and Spirit, did we place our whole Affiance in him. 2.

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Thus much for the Firſt Commandment.

The Second Commandment.

Thou ſhalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeneſs of any thing, which is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou ſhalt not bow down thy ſelf to them, nor ſerve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, viſiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and ſhewing mercy unto thouſands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

IDolatry is twofold; either Spiritual and Internal, reſiding in the Affections and Diſpoſition of the Soul; which we are guilty of when we devote our ſupreme Love, Fear, and dependance unto any created Being, which are due only unto the true and only God. And this Idolatry is forbidden in the firſt Commandment, as we have already ſeen.

Or elſe it is more Groſs and External, conſiſting in a viſible Adoration of any thing beſides God; who as he challengeth the Affections of the Soul, ſo requires alſo the Homage and Reverence of our Bodies, in thoſe Services which we perform unto him. And this Idolatry is particularly forbidden in this Second Commandment, which I have now read unto you.

In which we have theſe Three Parts.

I. *Firſt*, The Precept it ſelf, which runs negatively, and is branched forth into two ſeveral Prohibitions; but both tending to the ſame end and effect: The one forbidding Images to be made, *Thou ſhalt not make to thee any graven Image, or any likeneſs of any thing*; the other forbidding them to be worſhiped, *Thou ſhalt not bow down thy ſelf before them, nor ſerve them.*

II. *Secondly*, Here is added a ſevere Commination againſt thoſe that ſhall preſume to violate this Command, *I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, viſiting the ſins of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation.*

III. *Thirdly*, Here is likewiſe for the incouragement of Obedience, the addition of a gracious Promiſe of *Shewing mercy unto thouſands that love God, and keep his commandments.*

I. I ſhall begin with the Command, or Prohibition, which is twofold: Thou ſhalt not make Images; Thou ſhalt not worſhip them. Not that the Carvers or Painters Art, but only the Peoples Idolatry; not the Ingenuity in making, but the Stupidity in worſhiping thoſe dumb Repreſentations, is here forbidden. The brazen Serpent in the Wilderneſs, the Cherubims, and other Reſemblances in the Temple, are a ſufficient proof and evidence of this.

The Prohibition therefore muſt be interpreted according to the ſubject matter which is here ſpoken of; and that being only Divine Worſhip, it is plain that it is not unlawful to repreſent to the eye any viſible thing by an artificial Image of it; but only when God ſaith, Thou ſhalt not make; and, Thou ſhalt not worſhip; the meaning is, thou ſhalt not make any thing with an intention of Worſhip; and thou ſhalt not worſhip any thing which thou or others have made. But concerning the Prohibition of this Command, I ſhall ſpeak more hereafter.

Now for the more full and clear underſtanding of this Precept, I muſt deſire you to recall to mind one of thoſe ſeveral general Rules which I formerly gave you, as helpful to inſtruct you in the due Extent and Latitude of the Commandments; and that was, that the Negative Commands do all of them include the Injunction of the contrary poſitive Duties; as when God forbids the taking of his Name in vain, by conſequence he commands the hallowing and ſanctifying of his Name; where he forbids Murther, he commands all lawful care and endeavour to preſerve our own, and the life of others; where in the firſt Precept he forbids the owning and cleaving unto any other God beſides himſelf; he injoyns us to acknowledge him as our God; to love, fear, and hope in him only: So here in this ſecond Command, where he forbids the worſhipping of Images, by conſequence he requires to worſhip him according to the Rules which he hath preſcribed us. And therefore as under the firſt Command is comprehended whatſoever appertains to the Internal Worſhip of God; ſo under this ſecond is comprehended whatſoever appertains to the External and Viſible Worſhip of God.

Now

Now here I ſhall firſt ſpeak concerning the External Worſhip of God; and then of thoſe Sins which are contrary unto it, and condemned in this Commandment.

Concerning the Worſhip of God I ſhall lay down the following Propoſitions:

Firſt, The true and ſpiritual Worſhip of God in the general, is an Action of a pious Soul, wrought and excited in us by the Holy Ghoſt, whereby with godly Love and Fear we ſerve God acceptably according to his Will revealed in his Word; by Faith embracing his Promiſes, and in Obedience performing his Commands, to his Glory, the Edification of others, and our own eternal Salvation. This is the true ſpiritual Worſhip of the true God, who is a Spirit; and it comprehends in both the inward Worſhip of our Hearts and Souls, and likewiſe the outward Worſhip of holy and religious Performances; of which I am now particularly to treat. 1.

Secondly, Therefore this external Worſhip of God is a ſacred Action of a pious Soul, wrought and excited by the Holy Ghoſt, whereby with all reverence we ſerve God both in Words and Deeds according to his revealed Will, in partaking of his Sacraments, attending on his Ordinances, and performing thoſe holy Duties which he hath required from us, to his Glory, the Edification of others, and our own eternal Salvation. This Worſhip of God although it be external, is nevertheleſs ſpiritual; for it proceeds from the Spirit of God exciting our Spirits to the performance of it, and is directed by a ſpiritual Rule, unto a ſpiritual End, the Glory of God, and our own Salvation. 2.

Thirdly, The parts of this external Worſhip are divers and manifold; whereof the moſt principal and eſſential are the Celebration of the Sacraments, Solemn Prayer, and Solemn Praiſe and Thankſgiving: But beſides theſe, there be many other things which belong to the Service of God, yea, as many as there are Duties of Religion and Piety; ſuch are a free, open, and undaunted profeſſion of the Truth, a Religious Vowing unto God things that are Lawful, and in our own Power, an Invoking of the Teſtimony of God to the Truth of what we aſſert, or to the faithful Diſcharge of what we promiſe, when we are duly called to do it by lawful Authority; a diligent reading of the Word of God, and a conſtant and reverent Attendance on it when it is read and preached; and divers other Duties too long to be here particularly enumerated; ſome of which belong to the proper Worſhip of God, immediately as parts of it, others mediately, as means and helps to it. 3.

Fourthly, Although God doth eſpecially delight in the acts of our internal Worſhip, and principally regards the eſteem and veneration that we have for his great and glorious Majeſty in our Hearts; yet this alone ſufficeth not, without the performance of thoſe parts of external Worſhip and viſible acts of Piety and Religion, which may to the Glory of God expreſs the devout diſpoſitions of our Souls. The inward acts of Piety are thoſe of Faith in believing, of Hope in expecting our Reward, of Charity in loving both God and our Neighbour, of Fear in reverencing him, of Patience in a contented bearing whatſoever burthens it ſhall pleaſe the All-wiſe Providence of God to lay upon us, and of a chearful Willingneſs to perform all the Duties of Obedience which he injoyns us. Theſe belong to the internal Worſhip and Service of God, and are eſpecially pleaſing and acceptable unto him. And indeed, without theſe all other acts of Worſhip are both dead and unſavory; for as the Spirit of a Man is his Life, ſo the internal and ſpiritual Piety of the Heart, our Love, Fear, and Reverence of God is the Life of all our Duties, without which they are but as a dead Carcaſs, ſo far from being a ſweet ſmelling ſavour, that they are noiſom and offenſive to that God to whom we offer them. 4.

But of this internal Worſhip I have already ſpoken.

That which we are now to conſider, is the external Worſhip of God, which he hath abſolutely required from us, when we have ability and opportunity to perform it.

For although there need no overt-actions to make the ſincerity of our affections and intentions known unto God, yet it is neceſſary for his Glory, and the good Example of others, to declare that to the World by viſible Signs and Expreſſions, which was before known unto him in the ſecret Purpoſes and Thoughts of our Hearts.

For *Firſt*, God hath no leſs ſtrictly injoyned his external Worſhip, than he hath his internal: What can be more external than the Ceremonial part of the Evangelical Law, the Participation of Baptiſm and the Lord's Supper? Both of which are yet moſt expreſly commanded, *Matth.* 28. 19. *Go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt.* *Acts* 2. 38. *Repent, and be baptized* 1.

baptized every one of you in the name of Jeſus Chriſt. And for the Communion of the Body and Blood of Chriſt, ſee *Luke* 22. 19. *Do this in remembrance of me.* Which Command they do heinouſly violate, and refuſe to give the moſt evident Sign and *Teſſera* that they are Chriſtians, who either totally neglect, or elſe very ſeldom attend this moſt Holy and Spiritual Ordinance.

2. *Secondly*, We find that God doth ſeverely both threaten and puniſh ſuch as give external Worſhip to any other but himſelf: How often are the *Iſraelites* reproved for bowing the Knee to *Baal*, for baking Cakes to the Queen of Heaven? Yea, and very uſually Idolatry is ſet forth in Scripture by ſome of thoſe viſible Actions which ſome of theſe falſe Worſhipers uſed to expreſs their Devotion towards their falſe Deities, as bowing the Body unto them; *Joſh.* 23. 16. *Served other gods, and bowed your ſelves unto them, Judges* 2. 12, 17, &c. *Kiſſing the hand unto them in token of reverence. Job* 31. 26, 27. *If I beheld the ſun when it ſhined, or the moon walking in brightneſs; and my heart hath been ſecretly inticed, or my mouth hath kiſſed my hand: This alſo were an iniquity to be puniſhed by the judge; for I ſhould have denied the God that is above.* So likewiſe bowing the Knee to any Idol, and kiſſing it; *Hoſ.* 13. 2. *Let the men that ſacrifice, kiſs the calves.* And ſo when *Elijah* complained of the total defection of the *Iſraelites* from the Service of the true God, unto Idolatry; God to comfort and encourage him, tells him, That he alone was not ſingular, but that there were *ſeven thouſand in Iſrael, all the knees that had not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which had not kiſſed him,* 1 Kings 19. 18. And therefore certainly ſince he makes ſo punctual a Computation of thoſe who had not alienated their Bodily Worſhip to the Service of an Idol he doth reſpect and accept thoſe who in Faith and Sincerity tender it to himſelf.

3. *Thirdly*, God hath created the whole Man, both Soul and Body for himſelf, and he ſuſtains both in their being; and therefore he expects Homage and Service from both: from the Soul as the chief ſeat of Worſhip; from the Body as the beſt Teſtimony of it.

4. *Fourthly*, Not only our Souls, but our Bodies too are redeemed by Chriſt; and therefore both ſhould be imployed in his Worſhip and Service: The whole Man is bought with a Price, the whole is juſtified, the whole is ſanctified; yea, our very Bodies are ſaid to be the Temples of the Holy Ghoſt, 1 *Cor.* 6. 19. And where ſhould God be worſhiped, or that Worſhip appear, but in his Temple? And therefore upon the account of that Purchaſe which Chriſt hath made of us to himſelf, the Apoſtle draws this Inference in the afore-mentioned place, *Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price; wherefore glorifie God in your bodies, and in your ſpirits, which are God's.*

5. *Fifthly*, The Body is likewiſe to partake of the Bleſſings of Obedience, and therefore it is but reaſonable it ſhould partake of the Service of Obedience. Many Bleſſings are promiſed to our outward Man here in this life, and hereafter it is to be made a glorious and incorruptible Body, like unto the Body of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: It is to be cloathed with Light, and crown'd with Rays, never more to ſuffer injuries without, or Diſeaſes within; and therefore certainly Duty belongs to it, ſince ſo many great and unſpeakable Privileges belong unto it.

Thus you ſee how reaſonably God requires from us the Service not only of the inward, but of the outward Man: And therefore we are not to ſlight that outward Reverence which is neceſſary to teſtifie a due ſenſe of his glorious preſence when we come before him; neither muſt we rob him of any part either of his Service, or of his Servant, but ſacrifice our ſelves intirely unto him; our Bodies upon the Altar of our Souls, Hearts and Affections, and both Soul and Body upon that Altar which alone can make both acceptable, even the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

This is a fourth Poſition.

5. *Fifthly*, All that outward Reverence which we ſhew towards God in his Worſhip and Service, muſt be meaſured and eſtimated according to the Cuſtoms and Uſage of Places and Countries; ſo that what they uſe as a ſign and expreſſion of Honour to their Superiors, they ought much more to uſe it in the preſence of the great God, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. And therefore uncovering of the Head, bowing of the Body, an humble, ſubmiſs and ſettled compoſure of the whole Man, which among us are but fitting ſigns of Reſpect and Reverence, when we appear in the preſence of thoſe who are much our Superiours, ought likewiſe to be uſed by us in the preſence of God, who is infinitely ſuch, not indeed that they are eſſential parts of Worſhip, but Signs and Teſtimonies of it.

Sixthly,

Sixthly, The laſt Poſition is this: We ought not to worſhip God with any other external Worſhip, than what himſelf hath commanded and appointed us in his holy Word. The Scripture hath ſet us our Bounds for Worſhip, to which we muſt not add, and from which we ought not to diminiſh; for whoſoever doth either the one or the other, muſt needs accuſe the Rule, either of Defect in things neceſſary, or of Superfluity in things unneceſſary; which is an high Affront to the Wiſdom of God, who as he is the object ſo he is the Preſcriber of all that Worſhip which he will accept and reward. 6.

I well know that this Rule hath given (I cannot ſay Cauſe, but) Occaſion to many hot Diſputes abut Eccleſiaſtical Rites and Conſtitutions; ſome condemning whatſoever is preſcribed or uſed in the Service of God, beſides things expreſly commanded in Scripture, for Incroachments upon the Authority of God, and Additions unto his Worſhip, which he requires to be performed according to the Pattern in the Mount, and the Model he hath delineated for it: Others again maintaining the Privilege and Authority of the Church in ordaining ſome things for the more decent and reverent performing of the Service of God, which are not particularly required in the holy Scriptures.

I ſhall not plunge my ſelf into this angry and quarrelſom Controverſy: Only give me leave to ſay, and ſadly to lament, that the Seamleſs-Coat of Chriſt is rent in pieces among them, whilſt ſome think it more decent to ſew on Loops and Fringes to it, and others will have none. And truly I think our Differences are of no great importance in themſelves, tho' too woful in their Conſequents, than this amounts unto. I ſhall clearly expreſs my ſenſe of this Matter in a few words, without any Reflexion or Bitterneſs, and ſo leave it to the Judgment of every ordinary Diſcretion.

Things which belong to the Worſhip of God, may be conſidered either as Parts of that Worſhip, or only as Circumſtances and Modifications of it.

Firſt therefore, Whatſoever is impoſed on us as a ſubſtantial part of the Worſhip of God, if it be not expreſly required of us in the holy Scriptures, is to be not only refuſed, but abominated: For this is a plain Addition to what God hath commanded, and by it we lay an Imputation upon him, as tho' he wanted Wiſdom to ordain what is neceſſary for his own Service. 1.

Then, and then only is any Conſtitution of Man impoſed for a part of Divine Worſhip, when Obedience unto it is urged upon us, not only from the Authority enjoining it, but alſo from the Neceſſity of the thing conſidered ſimply and nakedly in its own Nature: For as it is with God's Laws, ſome things are commanded becauſe they are good, and ſome things are good only becauſe they are commanded; ſo is it with Laws and Impoſitions of Men about Matters of Religion and Worſhip, ſome things they command us to obſerve, becauſe they are in themſelves neceſſary antecedently to their Command, as ejoined us before by God; and therefore this is no Ordinance or Doctrine of Man, but of God; unto which the Magiſtrate, who is the Guardian of both Tables, doth well to add the Sanction of Secular Rewards and Puniſhments: Other things are neceſſary for our Obſervance, only becauſe they are commanded by their Authority, to whom we owe conſciencious Obedience in things lawful and indifferent. But we utterly deny that the impoſition of any ſuch things makes them any Parts of Worſhip, of which they are only Circumſtances; or that theſe Obſervances are neceſſary to us, or acceptable to God antecedently to the command of Authority; or that the Worſhip of God were imperfect, defective, unacceptable, and invalid to the ends for which it is appointed, were not theſe Obſervances commanded, and performed: If indeed we thought otherwiſe, the bittereſt of all their Invectives, and the loudeſt of all their Exclamations in calling our Worſhip, Superſtition, Will-worſhip, and Idolatry, would not ſhew ſo much Paſſion, as a juſt and rational Zeal. But God for ever forbid that any ſuch Ordinances of Man ſhould be introduced into our Church. We all join in this Vote; and do utterly renounce any ſuch Authority, and deny any ſuch Practice. We uſurp not upon the Conſciences of any, nor indeavour to perſwade them that that is in it ſelf neceſſary, which is not ſo by God's Commands, or the Law of Nature; or that that is unlawful which is not condemned by either. We endeavour to keep our ſelves and you as much from a Poſitive, as a Negative Superſtition; we endeavour to put due bounds between things ſimply neceſſary, either by the Command of God, or their own natural Reaſon and Goodneſs, and ſuch as are in themſelves indifferent. We ſay, that nothing is a part of Worſhip, but what belongs to the former; but ſome

things that belong to the latter, may be used in Worship as fit and decent Circumstances: And when such things are imposed, they become necessary; not indeed in themselves (for no Humane Authority can alter the nature of things) but to our Practice, and our Consciences are obliged to them: But how? not indeed simply and absolutely, so that it shall never be lawful to omit them; but only in two Cases, in case of Scandal, and Contempt. We ought not to omit them, if we judge any Offence will be taken by others at our Neglect; we ought not to omit them at any time out of a Contempt and Disrespect towards them. And thus you see, we put a vast difference between that which is a Part of Worship, and that which is but a Circumstance of Worship: If any thing be commanded us by Men, as a Part of Worship, which is not commanded us by God, we ought not to submit unto it. But,

2. *Secondly*, If any thing be imposed on us not as a Part of Worship, but as a Circumstance and Modification of Worship, we may and we ought to submit unto it.

1. *First*, If the things so imposed be in themselves lawful and honest; which they are, if not condemned by the Scripture.

2. *Secondly*, If they tend to Order and Decency in the Church. Of which, certainly they are as fit to be Judges who have Authority both in Church and State, as every private, and perhaps less-knowing Christian.

3. *Thirdly*, If they are imposed by the Command of a lawful Power, to whom we ought to submit in all things that are lawful.

4. *Fourthly*, If they are such as neither for their levity nor number, eat out or distract the Seriousness and Devotion of our Spiritual Worship: Which I think cannot justly be imputed to the Observances of our Church, being very few for Number, and very grave and modest for Use.

If such things as these be imposed upon us, the Worship of God is not thereby either changed or adulterated, neither is there any addition made unto it; but the Substance of that Worship is still in Conformity to God's Laws, when yet the outward and indifferent manner of it is in Conformity to Man's. Certainly, it is no addition to Baptism, to give a Name to the Baptized, tho' we find no express command for it. And I much wonder among our carping Brethren, some or other had not scrupled this, as well as another Observance. It is no addition to the Ordinances of Jesus Christ, to appoint at what hour they shall be celebrated, or in what Garment, or in what decent Posture; for all these things are extrinsical to the Worship of God, and fall under the Cognizance and Direction of our Superiours.

Certainly, did we but rightly weigh what is required as a Part of Worship, and what only is a Circumstance of Worship, a great deal of Heat, and Contention, and uncharitable Prejudice would be removed and prevented. It is true, our Saviour, *Matth.* 15. 9. condemns the Scribes and Pharisees, that taught for Doctrines the Commandments of Men: that is, they taught those things which were but the Traditions and Ordinances of their Elders, to be in themselves absolutely necessary to the serving and worshiping of God. But certainly, this Reproof falls not upon these, who tho' they do injoin what they judge fit for Order, yet do not teach them for Doctrines; and are so far from thinking their Commandments an essential part of Worship, that they would Abhor and Anathematize all those that do so. Necessary they are to be submitted unto, and practised, because injoined by that Authority to which God hath committed the Care of the first Table, as well as the second; but not necessary in themselves as any Part of the Worship and Service of God, without which, altho' they were not imposed by Men, it would be unacceptable to him: And whosoever thinks so, let him be accursed.

And now that I have delivered my Judgment without Bitterness, give me leave to make some few Lamentations in the Grief and Bitterness of my Soul: Is it not to be bitterly lamented, that in a Reformed and Orthodox Church there should be such Schisms, Rents, and Divisions; Altar against Altar, Pulpit against Pulpit, and one Congregation against another? And what is all this Contention and Separation for? O! they will tell you, it is for the Purity of Religion, for the true and sincere Worship of God, that they may serve him purely without Humane Additions or Inventions. Thus goes the Cry; and a company of poor ignorant well-meaning Souls, because it is very demurely and gravely spoken, take it up, and join with it, never examining the grounds and bottom of it; but conclude, that these must needs be in the right, who complain of Corruptions, and pretend to a happy and glorious Reformation. Alas, my Brethren, was there ever any Schism in the World that did

not

not plead the ſame? Did not others upon the ſame Pretences ſeparate from their Communion, upon which they now ſeparate from ours? And may not the ſame Argument ſerve to crumble them into infinite Fractions and Sub-diviſions, till at laſt we come to have almoſt as many Churches as Men, and ſcarce a Man conſtant and coherent to himſelf?

But, what is it in our Worſhip which they diſlike? The Subſtantials of it are all the ſame with their own: We utterly diſavow, that we make that any Part of Worſhip which the Scripture hath not; and I think that Man very much forſaken of Reaſon and common Underſtanding, who ſhall endeavour to perſuade us, that we intend Worſhip, when we our ſelves moſt earneſtly and ſeriouſly profeſs the contrary.

Is it then that we differ about meer Accidents and Circumſtances? I confeſs we do; but aſſert withal, that theſe things are not a juſt Cauſe of Separation from us. * If we look back upon the Primitive Times, we ſhall find that almoſt every Church had its different Rites and Obſervances; and yet under that Diverſity maintained Unity and Communion: Yea, and at this day, the reformed Churches obſerve different Cuſtoms one from another, and yet they inviolably hold Communion together, and we with them. The *Gallican*, *Belgick*, *Helvetian*, and *German* Churches reject us not, nor we them, altho' we differ in Rites and Diſcipline, and thoſe things which are left to the prudence of every Church to conſtitute as they ſhall judge moſt neceſſary for Order and Edification. Now certainly, if theſe different Rites and Obſervances be no ground for one National Church to ſeparate from the Communion of another, they can be no ground for private Perſons to ſeparate from the Communion of that Church to which they belonged. Nay, altho' they might with reaſon diſlike many Uſages either as frivolous or incongruous, yet it becomes the temper and modeſty of a pious Chriſtian, in things meerly circumſtantial, to ſubmit his Practice to the Judgment of that Authority under which he lives, and not to ſeparate from the Communion of the Church, to forſake its Aſſemblies, to diſown its Adminiſtrations, only becauſe he thinks ſome things might be more conveniently ordered, according to the Model of his own, or other Men's apprehenſions: Which in the Folly and ſad Conſequences of it, would be to act like him who took up a Beetle, and ſtruck with all his force to kill a Flie that he ſaw on his Friend's Forehead. What elſe were this but to rend the Body of Chriſt by an angry contending about the Faſhion of its Garments; and to tear away its Limbs by a violent ſtriving to ſtriv off thoſe Cloaths which they think indecent? For my part, I freely profeſs, That were my Lot caſt among any of the Reformed Churches beyond the Seas, I would preſently join in their Communion, and not at all ſcruple to conform my ſelf to their received Cuſtoms, altho' perhaps in my own private Perſuaſion, I may judge ſome of them to be leſs ſerious, and leſs reverent than thoſe of the Church of *England*, which are now ſo paſſionately decried and condemned. * I have ever venerated that Oracular Advice of St. *Ambroſe* to St. *Auſtin*: *If thou wilt neither give Offence, nor take Offence, conform thy ſelf to all the lawful Cuſtoms of the Churches where thou comeſt.*

* *Alii jejunant Sabbato; alii verò non: alii quotidie communicant corpori & ſanguini Dominico; alii certis diebus accipiunt; alibi nullus dies intermittitur quo non offeratur; alibi ſabbato tantum & Dominico.* Aug. Ep. ad Januarium Ep 118.

* *Nec diſciplina ulla eſt in his melior gravi prudentique Chriſtiano, quàm ut eo modo agat, quo agere viderit Eccleſiam ad quamcunque fortè devenerit. Quod enim neque contra fidem, neque contra bonos mores injungitur, indifferenter eſt habendum, & pro eorum inter quos vivitur ſocietate ſervandum eſt.* ——*Mater mea Mediolanum me conſecuta, invenit Eccleſiam Sabbato non jejunantem; ceperit perturbari, & fluctuare; quid agerit, cùm ego talia non curabam, ſed propter ipſam conſului de hâc re beatiſſimæ memoriæ virum Ambroſium; reſpondit ſe nihil docere me poſſe niſi quod ipſe faceret, quia ſi melius noſſet, id potiùs obſervaret. Cumque ego putaſſem, nullâ redditâ ratione, autoritate ſolâ ſuâ, nos voluiſſe admonere de Sabbato, jejunarennne, ſubſecutus eſt, & ait mihi, Cum Romæ venio jejuno Sabbato cùm hic ſum non jejuno. Sic etiam tu, ad quam fortè Eccleſiam veneris, ejus morem ſerva, ſi cuiquam nonvis eſſe ſcandalo, nec quenquam tibi.—— Ego verò de hâc ſententiâ etiam atque etiam cogitans, ità ſemper habui tanquam eam cæleſti oraculo ſuſceperim.* Aug. ad Jan. Ep. 118.

But I will not farther inlarge on this cholerick and touchy Controverſie; only I pray, that our wanton Diſſentions about theſe leſs important Matters, may not provoke God to deprive us of the Subſtance and Eſſentials of our Religion; and reduce us to ſuch a condition wherein we ſhould be heartily glad, could we enjoy the Liberty of the Goſpel, and the Ordinances of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, under any of thoſe Forms of Adminiſtration, which are now ſo furiouſly debated amongſt us. It were juſt with God to extinguiſh the Light of the Goſpel, when we uſe it not to work by, but all our ſtudy and ſtrife is how to ſnuff it.

And

And thus much in the general, touching the External Worſhip of God required in this Commandment.

The Sins forbidden by it are Two:

Contempt of the Worſhip of God; and

Superſtition in performing it.

Concerning the former, I have already ſpoken largely, in giving you the Characters of a Prophane Perſon.

I ſhall therefore at preſent ſpeak only of Superſtition.

Concerning the Etymology of the Word, both *Tully* and *Lactantius* are agreed, That it is derived from *Superſtites, Survivors*; but about the reaſon of the Notion they much differ: *Tully* ſaith, *Qui totos dies precabantur & immolobant, ut ſibi ſui liberi ſuperſtites eſſent, ſuperſtitioſi ſunt appellati: i. e.* They who immoderately prayed and ſacrificed, that their Children might ſurvive them. But *Lactantius* is not content with this Reaſon, and therefore gives another: *Superſtitioſi autem vocantur, non qui filios ſuos ſuperſtites optant (omnes enim optamus, ſed aut ii qui ſuperſtitem memoriam defunctorum colunt; aut qui parentibus ſuis ſuperſtites celebrant) imagines eorum domi tanquam Deos Penates: i. e.* Men were called ſuperſtitious not from deſiring that their Children might ſurvive them, but becauſe they celebrated the ſurviving Memory of the Dead; or becauſe that ſurviving their Parents they worſhip'd their Images as their Houſhold Gods.

Cicero de Nat Deor. lib. 2.

Lactant. Inſtit. lib. 4. c. 28.

But whatſoever be the Etymology of the Word, we may take this ſhort Deſcription of it, That it is a needleſs and erroneous fear in matters of Religion; and this is twofold, either Negative or Poſitive.

Negative Superſtition is, when Men do fearfully abſtain from, and abhor thoſe things as wicked and abominable, which God hath not forbidden, and therefore are in themſelves lawful and harmleſs. And thoſe who are biggoted with this Superſtition, will be ſure to cry out againſt all that do obſerve ſuch things as they condemn, for miſerably ſeduced and ſuperſtitious Souls. Which is the exact humour of the Men of our Days, who (as *Diogenes* is ſaid to have trampled upon *Plato*'s Pride with far greater Pride) ſo theſe exclaim againſt Superſtition with far greater Superſtition. For Superſtition is not either the obſerving, or not obſerving of ſuch things, but the doing of either with an erroneous fear leſt God ſhould be diſpleaſed and provoked, if we did otherwiſe: He is therefore negatively Superſtitious who makes the not doing of that which is lawful and harmleſs, a matter of Conſcience, and of Religion.

Poſitive Superſtition is, when Men do fearfully obſerve and perform thoſe things which either are forbidden, or at leaſt no where commanded by God: Or, if you will, it is a reſtleſs fear of the Mind, putting Men upon Acts of Religion which are not due, or not convenient.

Now this Poſitive Superſtition expreſſeth it ſelf Two ways: For ſometimes it gives Divine Honours to that which is not God: And ſometimes it performs needleſs and ſuperfluous Services to the true God. Both theſe are the effects of Superſtition; but are commonly known by their proper names, the one being Idolatry, and the other Will-Worſhip. And both theſe are forbidden in this Commandment.

1. *Firſt*, Idolatry is a part and ſpecies of Superſtition; ſo we find it expreſly, *Acts* 17. 16. compared with Verſe 22. In the 16th it is ſaid, That *Paul*'s *ſpirit was ſtirred in him, when he ſaw the city of Athens wholly given to idolatry* And in the 22d it is ſaid, That *Paul* reproved them as being too ſuperſtitious. And therefore though all Superſtition be not Idolatry, yet all Idolatry is Superſtition, yea, and the blackeſt kind of it.

Now Idolatry is nothing elſe, but the giving of religious Worſhip unto an Idol; and an Idol is not only an artificial Image or Repreſentation of any thing, whether real or fictitious, ſet up to be worſhiped, but any Creature of God, whether Angels or Men, Sun, or Moon, or Stars, *&c.* to which we give any religious Honour and Service. The worſhiping of any Creature, whether in Heaven above, or in the Earth beneath, or in the Water under the Earth, is Idolatry; which is particularly and by name forbidden in this Commandment. And indeed, this is a Sin ſo abſurd and ſtupid, that it is a wonder it ſhould ever be ſo bewitching as to inveigle the far greater part of the World. The Prophet *Iſaiah* doth very frequently deride the folly and madneſs of Idolaters, eſpecially *Chap.* 44. 16. He burneth part of his wooden God in the fire; he roſteth his meat with it, and is ſatisfied; he warmeth himſelf; and the reſidue thereof he maketh a God, he falleth down unto it and worſhipeth it, and prayeth unto it, and ſaith, Deliver me, for thou art my God. A moſt groſs and beſtial

beſtial ſtupidity; as if there were more Divinity in one end of a Stick than the other; and yet a Sin moſt ſtrangely bewitching, after which all the Heathen World ran a Whoring; and from which all the Remonſtrances and Threatnings which God makes to his own People of *Iſrael*, could not reſtrain them: yea, and ſo ſtrangely beſotting is it, that a very great part even of thoſe who profeſs the Name and Doctrine of Jeſus Chriſt, are moſt foully guilty of it; I mean the Papiſts; who to hide their ſhame in this particular from the notice of the People, have covered it with a greater, and thought fit rather to expunge this Second Commandment, than to leave their Image-Worſhip to be cenſured and condemned by it: For in all their Catechiſms and Books of Devotion, which they have Publiſhed for the uſe of the Vulgar, they have ſacrilegiouſly omitted this Second Commandment, as fearing that the Evidence of it would convict and condemn them of Idolatry in the Conſciences of the moſt ignorant and illiterate that ſhould but hear it rehearſed.

Let us now proceed to conſider, who may juſtly be condemned of Idolatry, and the Violation of this Precept.

Firſt, He is an Idolater that prays unto any Saint or Angel; for he aſcribes that unto the Creature which is an Honour due only unto God the Creator. Our Faith and our Invocation ought to be terminated in the ſame Object, *Rom.* 10. 14. *How ſhall they call on him in whom they have not believed.* And therefore, if we cannot without Blaſphemy ſay, that we believe in ſuch a Saint, or Angel, neither can we without Idolatry, pray unto that Saint or Angel. 1.

Secondly, The moſt execrable Idolatry that is, is that of entring into League and Correſpondence with the Devil; to conſult and invoke him, and by any wicked Arts implore, or make uſe of his Help and Aſſiſtance. And of this are thoſe guilty in the higheſt degree, who enter into any expreſs Compact with the Devil; which is always ratified with ſome Homage of Worſhip given to him: And in a ſecondary and more low degree, thoſe who apply themſelves to ſeek help from ſuch forlorn Wretches, ſuch as uſe Traditionary Charms and Incantations, or any vain Obſervances, to free them from Pains and Diſeaſes, or other Troubles that moleſt them. For all thoſe things which have not a natural Efficiency to produce that Effect for which they are uſed, may very reaſonably be ſuſpected to have been agreed on formerly between the Devil and ſome of his eſpecial Servants, and that all the Vertue they retain, is only from that Compact; which as it was Explicite in thoſe that made it, ſo it is Implicite in thoſe that uſe them; for they ſtill act in the power of that firſt Stipulation and Agreement. 2.

Thirdly, Whoſoever bows down his Body in religious Adoration of any Image, or other Creature, is guilty of Idolatry; and doth moſt expreſly tranſgreſs the very Letter of this Command, *Thou ſhalt not bow down before them, nor worſhip them.* It is but here a vain Refuge unto which the Papiſts betake themſelves, when they excuſe themſelves from being guilty of Idolatry, becauſe although they worſhip Images, yet they worſhip the true God by them. 3.

For, *Firſt*, they worſhip the Images of very many Creatures, both Men and Angels. For me now to examine their Evaſion concerning λατρεία δουλία, and ὑπερδουλία, would perhaps be as improper in this Auditory, as the Diſtinction it ſelf is vain and frivolous. 1.

Secondly, Whereas they pretend to worſhip the true God by an Image, we reply, That it is moſt impious to attempt to repreſent God by any viſible Reſemblance, and therefore much more to worſhip him, could he be ſo repreſented. For God who is infinite, cannot be circumſcribed by Lines and Lineaments; and being inviſible cannot be reſembled: And therefore God doth again and again inculcate it upon the *Iſraelites*, that when he delivered the Law unto them, he appeared not in any ſhape, that they might not audaciouſly attempt to delineate him, and ſo be inticed to Idolatry: Thus, *Deut.* 4. 12. *Ye heard the voice of words, but ſaw no ſimilitude, only ye heard a voice,* And Verſe 15. *Take ye therefore good heed unto your ſelves, (for ye ſaw no manner of ſimilitude in the day that the Lord ſpake unto you in Horeb, out of the midſt of the fire) leſt ye corrupt your ſelves, and make you a graven Image, the ſimilitude of any figure.* When therefore they plead, That they worſhip the only true God by Images; this is no better than to excuſe one horrid Sin, by the commiſſion of another. 2.

Thirdly, To worſhip the true and only God by an Image, is groſs Idolatry. This the Papiſts deny; and place Idolatry in worſhiping of Images ſet up to repreſent falſe and fictitious Gods; or elſe in worſhiping them with a belief that they themſelves are Gods. But, 3.

1. *Firſt*, Upon the ſame account the *Iſraelites* were not Idolaters in worſhiping the Golden Calf; for they were not ſo brutiſh as to believe that Calf it ſelf to be their God: Nay, it is moſt evident, that they intended to worſhip the true God under that Repreſentation. See *Exod.* 32. 4, 5. *Theſe be thy gods, O Iſrael, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt.* They could not be ſo ſtupid as to think that that very Calf which they themſelves had made, had delivered them from *Egypt*; but they worſhipt the true God who had given them that great Deliverance, under this Hieroglyphick Sign and Reſemblance; which appears Verſe the 5th, *Aaron made Proclamation and ſaid, To morrow is a feaſt to the Lord*; in the Original it is Jehovah, the proper and incommunicable Name of the true God. And yet that this worſhip of theirs, although directed unto the true God, was horrid Idolatry the Scripture abundantly teſtifies, Verſe 31. *Oh, this People have ſinned a great ſin.* 1 *Cor.* 10. 7. *Neither be ye Idolatets, as were ſome of them; as it is written, The People ſat down to eat and drink, and roſe up to play.* Acts 7. 41. *They made a calf in thoſe days, and offered ſacrifice to the idol.*

2. Again, *Secondly*, *Michah* and his Mother were certainly guilty of Idolatry in making and worſhiping their Images; and yet that they were made to be Symbolical Repreſentations of the true God, and erected to this very purpoſe, that he might be worſhipt by them, appears clearly from the Hiſtory, as we have it recorded, *Judges* 17. 3, 4. *I had wholly dedicated* (ſaith ſhe) *the ſilver unto the Lord*, (Jehovah Hebr.) *for my ſon to make a graven and a molten Image: Which when he had done he hired a Levite to be his prieſt.* And in confidence of the Reward of ſo much Piety, concludes, Verſe 13. That certainly *now the Lord Jehovah would bleſs him, and do him good.* Nothing can be clearer than that all this worſhip was intended by him to the true and only God, yet being performed by Images, it was no better than rank Idolatry.

3. *Thirdly*, If the Papiſts in worſhiping the true God by Images be not Idolaters, then neither was *Jeroboam*, who made *Iſrael* to ſin, an Idolater, in ſetting up his Calves at *Dan* and *Bethel*. For whoſoever rationally conſiders the occaſion and Political grounds of this Innovation, muſt needs conclude, that *Jeroboam* intended not to introduce a new God, (which would have made the People to fall faſter from him, than Tyranny and Oppreſſion did from *Rehoboam*) but only to ſet up ſome viſible Signs and Repreſentations of the true God, and to perſuade the People that they need not go to *Jeruſalem* to ſeek his Preſence, and to offer their Gifts and Sacrifices; for the ſame God was as much preſent with them in thoſe Figures as he was at the Temple of *Jeruſalem* between the Cherubims. And therefore we find that the Idolatry of *Jeroboam* is diſtinguiſhed from the Idolatry of thoſe who worſhiped *Baal* and other falſe Gods: See 1 *Kings* 16. 31. where God ſpeaks concerning *Ahab*, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the ſins of *Jeroboam* the Son of *Nebat*, he went and ſerved *Baal*, and worſhiped him.

Joſeph. Antiq. Jud. lib. 8. c. 3.

4. Nay, *Fourthly*, Although ſome among the Heathens might be ſo groſly ſtupid as to ſuppoſe the Images themſelves to be Gods, and ſo to worſhip them, yet their wiſe and learned Philoſophers were far enough from ſuch a ſenſeleſs Errour; yea, they were forced to uſe as many Diſtinctions and ſubtile Evaſions concerning their worſhiping of Images, as now the Papiſts do; and truly moſt of them are the very ſame, and ſeem but borrowed out of the Schools of the Heathens. But eſpecially they inſiſt on this, That they venerated not their Statues, not as they were made of ſuch or ſuch Materials, but only as they were the Houſes and Bodies of God, where his Preſence reſided, and by which his Power was manifeſted: That they worſhiped not the viſible Sign, but the inviſible Deity by it. And what doth the Papiſt ſay more than this? *viz.* That they worſhip the Images of God, not as if they were themſelves God, but only as they are the viſible Signs and Symbols of the Divine Preſence; and ſo all their Worſhip is directed unto God through them. So that in matters of Idolatry, I profeſs, I can find no difference at all between Heathens and Papiſts: For as the more learned Papiſts do profeſs that they worſhip the true God by the Image,

Non hoc viſibile colo, ſed numen quod in illis inviſibiliter habitat. Et qui videbantur ſibi purgatioris eſſe religionis, dicebant; nec ſimulachrum, nec dæmonium colo, ſed per effigiem corporalem, ejus rei ſignum intueor quam colere debeo. Arnob. lib. 6.

Dio. Chryſoſtom. Orat. 12. de primâ Dei notitiâ.

mage, ſo likewiſe did the more * learned Heathens. And for the ignorant and vulgar Papiſts, I am very apt to ſuſpect that they do, as the ignorant Heathen, terminate and limit their Worſhip in the very Images before which they fall proſtrate, eſteeming them to have Divine Power and Virtue of their own. For they are moſt groſly blinded and infatuated in this their Image-worſhip, and may as well take a Stone or a Block to be a God, as the great Dragon to be a Saint; as the poor Woman did, who offered one Candle to St. *Michael*, and another to his Dragon, that is, the Devil. And therefore certainly if the Heathen World were ever guilty of Idolatry, ſo is now the Popiſh Church, their Worſhip, and all the Reaſons of it being ſo exactly parallel.

* Τὲς γδ εἰμὴ πάντα νήπιος τάυτα ἡγεῖτο τὲς θεὲς, ἀλλα θεῶν ἀναθήμαθα ϗ ἀγάλματα. *Orig. Cont. Celſ. lib.* 7. Where he likewiſe proves, that it is lawful to make Images of God. becauſe according to the Doctrine of Chriſtians themſelves, God made Man according to his own Image: The very Argument urged by the Papiſts, and made uſe of by the ſecond Council of *Nice*.

Eſtienne Apol. pour Herodote.

And thus much concerning the firſt Branch of Superſtition, which is Idolatry.

The *Second* is Will-worſhip: Concerning this I ſhall ſpeak but very little, having already prevented my ſelf. Now Will-worſhip is nothing elſe but the inventing and aſcribing any other Worſhip unto God, beſides what he hath been pleaſed to command and inſtitute: God will not be worſhiped according to our fancies, but his own appointment: For as we muſt have no other God beſides the true, ſo that God muſt have no other Service performed unto him, beſides what himſelf hath required and preſcribed; for this were to impute folly and weakneſs unto him, as if indeed he would have Servants, but knew not what ſervice to injoyn them. 2.

And thus we have finiſht the Prohibition, *Thou ſhalt not make unto thee any graven Image*, &c.

Let us now conſider the Sanction of this Precept; and that is Twofold:

Firſt, By denouncing a ſevere and fearful Threatning againſt all thoſe who ſhould preſume to violate this Precept: *For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, viſiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me.* I.

Secondly, By making a gracious Promiſe of Mercy to the careful and conſciencious Obſervers of this Precept: *Shewing mercy unto thouſands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.* II.

In the Threatnings we have theſe things conſiderable:

Firſt, Who it is that denounceth it: *I the Lord thy God.* 1.

Secondly, What it is that he denounceth and threatens: *To viſit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children.* 2.

Thirdly, The Perſons againſt whom this Threatning is directed: *Thoſe that hate him.* And by the Context they are ſuch as contemning the only true God, proſtitute themſelves unto Idols. 3.

Fourthly, The Duration and Continuance of that Vengeance which he will take upon them: *It ſhall be to the third and fourth generation.* His wrath ſhall extend to their Children, and their Childrens Children. 4.

Firſt, Let us conſider who it is that denounceth this Threatning; *I the Lord thy God am a jealous God*: So moſt read the words, as our *Engliſh* Tranſlation renders them. But others no leſs rightly read them thus: *For I the Lord thy God am ſtrong and jealous:* For the word *El*, which is here uſed, ſignifies the mighty God. And according to this Acceptation, the words contain in them a Deſcription of God. 1.

Firſt,

1. *Firſt*, By his relation to us, *Thy God*; a God who hath ſeparated thee from all People of the Earth, to be his peculiar Treaſure; who hath brought thee near unto himſelf, even into the Bond of the Covenant; who hath betrothed thee in Righteouſneſs, and is not only thy Maker, but thy Husband, as the Prophet ſpeaks, *Iſai.* 54. 5. This God it is who commands thee faithfully to perform the Marriage-vow that is between thee and him; and not to go a whoring after the Vanities of the Gentiles, nor to expoſe thy ſhame and nakedneſs before any Falſe or Idol-God. For Idolatry is Spiritual Adultery, and moſt frequently ſet forth under that Name and Notion in the Holy Scriptures.

2. *Secondly*, Thy God is deſcribed by the mightineſs of his Power: He is *El kana*, a ſtrong and jealous God; able to revenge any diſhonour that is done him by thy unchaſt lewdneſs.

3. *Thirdly*, He is deſcribed by that violent Paſſion which in Men is called Jealouſy; *I the Lord thy God am ſtrong and jealous.* Now Jealouſy is an affection or paſſion of the Mind, by which we are ſtirred up and provoked againſt whatſoever hinders the enjoyment of that which we love and deſire: The Cauſe and Original of it is Love; and the Effect of it is Revenge. Now God to deter the *Iſraelites* from Idolatry, ſets forth himſelf as a ſtrong and jealous God, that they might be aſſured not to eſcape Puniſhment; for he is ſtrong, and therefore can inflict it, and he is jealous, and therefore will inflict it, if they ſhall dare to abuſe and injure that love which he hath placed upon them.

Now this Jealouſy is not to be aſcribed unto God, as if there were properly any ſuch weak and diſturbing paſſion in him, but only by way of accommodation and ſimilitude, ſpeaking after the manner of Men: So that there is not *idem affectus*, but *idem effectus*; not the ſame inward affection, but the ſame outward effect. And ſo likewiſe it is to be underſtood when God is ſaid to be angry, to be grieved, to repent, *&c.* that is, his actions towards us are like the actions of one that is angry, or grieved, or repents; although the infinite Serenity of the Divine Eſſence is not liable to be diſcompoſed or ruffled by the tempeſts of any ſuch-like paſſions as are incident to us mutable Creatures.

Now the reaſon why God calls himſelf a jealous God, you will find in theſe following Particulars:

1. *Firſt*, Jealouſy is diſtruſtful and ſuſpicious; it dares not rely upon the truth and fidelity of the Perſon of whom we are jealous, but is full of miſgiving doubts and fears. And ſo God (although in propriety of Speech he can doubt nothing, nor fear any thing, yet) is pleaſed to expreſs his Jealouſy by ſuch ſpeeches as intimate diſtruſt and diffidence. And therefore when the *Iſraelites* made that ſolemn Promiſe to the Lord, *Deut.* 5. 27. *All that the Lord our God ſhall ſpeak unto us, we will hear it and do it.* God returns anſwer, as one that miſdoubted the real performance of ſo fair a Promiſe, Verſe 28, 29. *I have heard the voice of the words of this people; they have well ſpoken all that they have ſpoken: O that there were ſuch an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever.*

2. *Secondly*, Jealouſy is ſearching and inquiſitive: It is an hard matter to eſcape the diſcovery of a jealous Eye, which is ſtill prying and ſeeking after that which it would be loth to find. So the Eye of the All-ſeeing, and All-knowing God is continually upon us; he critically obſerves every look, and every kind of glance that we caſt upon our ſelves; Not the leaſt motion of our hearts, not the leaſt twinkling of our thoughts can eſcape his notice and cenſure. And of all ſins, there is none that God doth more jealouſly obſerve than that of Idolatry; for this is the violation of that Marriage-Faith which we have plighted to him. And therefore we find that the idolatrous *Iſraelites*, as though they were conſcious of the great Abuſe they offered to their Maker, their Husband, (as the Prophet Stiles God, *Iſai.* 54. 5.) ſought out dark and obſcure Groves to act their Wickedneſs in; that although they were not chaſt, yet they might ſeem to be cautious. But in vain is it to draw the Curtains or a thin Shade about them; a few Leaves could not cover their Shame, nor their Nakedneſs from him who is all Eye every-where, and whoſe Eye is every-where light-

to it ſelf: *God is light, and in him there is no darkneſs at all,* 1 John 1. 5. It is not poſſible to conceal from him the proſtitution of an unchaſt and impudent Idolatry. And therefore ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 44. 20, 21. *If we have forgotten the name of our God, or ſtretched forth our hands to a falſe God; ſhall not God ſearch out this? for he knoweth the ſecrets of the heart.*

Thirdly, Jealouſie as it is ſearching and inquiſitive, ſo it is an angry and revengeful paſſion: And therefore *Solomon* calls it, *The rage of a man;* * *therefore he will not ſpare in the day of vengeance.* And *Cant.* 8. 6. *Jealouſie is cruel as the grave; the coals thereof are as coals of fire, which have a moſt vehement flame.* For as Love is the moſt ſoft and tendereſt affection of Humane Nature, ſo Jealouſie, which is the ſowring of Love, and turning it into Vinegar, is the moſt wild and furious. 3. * *Prov.* 6. 34.

Now God is pleaſed to ſtile himſelf a jealous God, to expreſs the heat of his Wrath and Indignation againſt Sinners. So *Deut.* 29. 20. *The Lord will not ſpare him, but the anger of the Lord, and his jealouſie ſhall ſmoke againſt that man, and all the curſes that are written in this Book ſhall lie upon him, and the Lord ſhall blot out his name from under heaven.* See what dreadful effects this ſmoking Jealouſie hath, when it breaks forth into a flame, *Zeph.* 1. 18. *Neither their ſilver nor their gold ſhall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath, but the whole land ſhall be devoured by the fire of his jealouſie; for he ſhall make a ſpeedy riddance even of all that dwell in the land.* And what ſignal revenge this devouring Jealouſie of the Almighty God hath taken upon Sinners, the whole World is full of ſad inſtances: This Fire hath kindled the eternal and unquenchable Flames of Hell. When the proud and rebellious Angels aſpired to be Gods, God turned them into Devils, and theſe Devils into Hell; for his Jealouſie could not indure to have Rivals in his Glory. All the Ruins and Calamities that have ever happned to Perſons or Nations, are but the effects of God's Jealouſie againſt Sin. And of all other Sins, his Jealouſy takes moſt remarkable Vengeance againſt Idolatry; for this is ſpiritual Whoredom, a provocation which the jealous God can leaſt indure. See *Deut.* 32. 16, 17, 19. *They provoked him to jealouſie with ſtrange gods; they ſacrificed to devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up: And when the Lord ſaw it, he abhorred them, becauſe of the provoking of his ſons, and of his daughters.* And Verſe 21. *They have moved me to jealouſie with that which is not god, they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: A fire is kindled in mine anger, and ſhall burn to the loweſt hell, and ſhall conſume the earth with her increaſe, and ſet on fire the foundations of the mountains.* And ſo in the following Verſes God exaggerates thoſe ſore and heavy judgments which he would bring upon them in the fury of his Jealouſie, becauſe of this heinous Sin of Idolatry.

And thus we have ſeen in what reſpects God is ſaid to be a Jealous God.

What remains now, but that Expoſtulation of the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 10. 22. *Do we provoke the Lord to jealouſie? are we ſtronger than he?* We who are but as duſt before the Whirlwind, and as dry ſtubble before the conſuming Fire, ſhall we dare by our ſins to affront and challenge that God who hath ſaid, *Vengeance is mine, and I will repay it?* And yet ſuch is the madneſs of every deſperate Sinner, that he ruſheth upon God's neck, and upon the thick boſſes of his Buckler, and daily provokes him who is infinitely able to deſtroy both Body and Soul in Hell-fire: Indeed, Jealouſie of it ſelf, without power to wreke Revenge, is but a weak and contemptible paſſion; but when it is armed with Almighty Strength, it is juſtly terrible: Now the Lord thy God is אל קנא, a ſtrong and jealous God. Every ſin thou committeſt is an horrid wrong done unto him, and a violation of that Faith which thou oweſt him: He hath wooed thy affections, ſought thy conſent; and this thou haſt vowed unto him in thy Baptiſm; and yet thou perfidiouſly followeſt other Lovers, and giveſt thy heart unto the World and the Devil, which are God's greateſt Corrivals. The higheſt indignity that can be done againſt Love, is to contemn and ſlight it, and to imbrace thoſe who are far more baſe and ſordid: And how notoriouſly then doſt thou affront God, when thou deſpiſeſt his Love, and thy own Faith, to caſt thy ſelf into the imbraces of every vile Luſt, which now pollutes thy Soul, and will hereafter damn it? O fooliſh and unkind that thou art, to neglect the Love of the Great King of Heaven and Earth, and to make choice of the Devil, who is but the Slave of God, and ſolicites thee only to make thee his Slave! Yet were it ſomewhat if thou couldſt defend thy ſelf, and maintain thy choice againſt the jealouſie and wrath of the great God

whom thou thus deſpiſeſt and provokeſt. But aſſure thy ſelf, his wrath and his jealouſie will ſmoke againſt thee; yea, kindle upon thee, till it hath burnt thee down to the loweſt Hell; and that day is coming wherein he will expoſe thy nakedneſs and thy ſhame before Men and Angels, and upbraid thee with the folly as well as wickedneſs of thy Choice; and then condemn thee to be an eternal Conſort with thoſe Devils whom thou haſt preferred before himſelf: Believe it, it is a ſad and fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God, for he is a Jealous God, and a Conſuming Fire, as *Moſes* ſpeaks, *Deut.* 4. 24.

And thus much for the firſt Obſervable in this Commination, *viz.* Who it is that denounceth it, *I the Lord thy God am a jealous God*; or, *I the Lord thy God am ſtrong and jealous.*

2. *Secondly*, The next thing conſiderable is, what Judgment this ſtrong and jealous God threatens to inflict; and that is, To *viſit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children.*

Now Viſiting is a figurative Expreſſion: And in the general, God is ſaid to viſit when after a long ſpace of time, in which he ſeemed to have forgotten, or taken no notice of Men, he declares by his Providence that he hath ſtill obſerved their ways and doings. And this word of Viſiting may be taken either in a good, or in an evil part. In a good part, when God beſtows great Mercies and Salvation upon his People, he is ſaid to viſit them; and thus it is frequently uſed in the Scripture. In an evil part, God is ſaid to viſit when he rewards thoſe ſins, at which he ſeemed to connive, with deſerved Puniſhments: So *Pſal.* 89. 32. *I will viſit their tranſgreſſion with the rod, and their iniquity with ſtripes.* And, *Jer.* 5. 9. *Shall I not viſit for theſe things? ſaith the Lord; and ſhall not my ſoul be avenged on ſuch a nation as this?* And in this ſenſe is the word to be taken here, *Viſiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children*; that is, puniſhing the Fathers iniquity in their Children and Poſterity: And thus we have it interpreted, *Jer.* 32. 18. *Thou recompenſeſt the iniquity of the fathers into the boſom of their children after them.*

Exod. 3. 16 *Luke* 1. 68, 78, *&c.*

Now here ariſe two important Queries to be reſolved:

1. *Firſt*, Whether it be juſt with God, and conſiſtent with the Divine Veracity to puniſh the ſins of the Fathers upon the Children?

2. *Secondly*, Whether God doth always obſerve this Method of revenging the Fathers Crimes upon their Poſterity and Off-ſpring?

1. *Firſt*, For the former Query: There ſeems ſome difficulty in reconciling Scripture to it ſelf in this particular, and in reconciling ſuch a proceeding to Juſtice and Equity; for ſometimes the Scriptures do expreſly mention the puniſhment of Parents Sins to be inflicted upon their Children, *Exod.* 34. 7. *Jer.* 32. 18, *&c.* And when God commands *Saul* utterly to deſtroy *Amalek*, he gave this reaſon of his Injunction, 1 *Sam.* 15. 2. *Remember that which Amalek did unto Iſrael, how he laid wait for him in the way when he came up from Egypt.* And yet almoſt Four hundred Years were paſt between the Journey of the *Iſraelites* from *Egypt*, and the iſſuing forth of this Command; and therefore it is not probable, that any of thoſe *Amalekites* who oppoſed them in their way, were then alive to bear the puniſhment of that Offence. Yea, and our Saviour threatens the Jews of his time, *Matth.* 23. 35. *That upon them ſhould come all the righteous blood ſhed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel, unto the blood of Zechariah, ſon of Barachias, whom they ſlew between the temple and the altar:* That is, the Sins of their Progenitors from the beginning of the World, unto that very Age when they murthered *Zechariah* the * Father of *John* the Baptiſt, in the Court of the Temple, ſhall be puniſhed in this Generation.

* *Vide Baron. Annal. An.* 1 *Sect.* 52, *&c.*

And

And yet again we read as expreſly, *Ezek.* 18. 20. *The ſoul that ſinneth, it ſhall die: the ſon ſhall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither ſhall the father bear the iniquity of the ſon; the righteouſneſs of the righteous ſhall be upon him, and the iniquity of the wicked ſhall be upon him.* And again, *Jer.* 31. 29, 30. *In thoſe days they ſhall ſay no more, The fathers have eaten ſowre grapes, and the childrens teeth are ſet on edge: But every one ſhall die for his own iniquity.*

And indeed this ſeems moſt agreeable to the Rules of Juſtice, that the Innocent ſhould not be puniſhed for the ſins of the Nocent and Guilty.

Now to ſolve this Difficulty, and reconcile this ſeeming Contradiction, I ſhall premiſe ſome Diſtinctions, and then draw from them ſome Concluſions ſatisfactory to the Queſtion propounded.

Puniſhments are either Temporal, ſuch as befal in this preſent life; or elſe Eternal, ſuch as are reſerved to be inflicted upon all impenitent and diſobedient Sinners in the World to come.

Again, Children may be conſidered either as imitating the Crimes and Tranſgreſſions of their Parents, or repenting of them, and reforming from them, and ſo not walking in their Fathers ſteps, but in the ways of God's Commandments.

Now, *Firſt*, Certain it is, that God never viſits the iniquity of the Fathers upon repenting and reformed Children with eternal puniſhments. And in this ſenſe it is everlaſtingly true, That *the ſon ſhall not bear the iniquity of his father; but the ſoul that ſinneth, it ſhall die; and every man ſhall bear his own burthen.* 1.

But ſome may ſay, Are we not made lyable even to eternal Death, only by the ſin of another? Hath not the ſin of our firſt Father brought condemnation upon all his Poſterity? And therefore how is it true, that the Son ſhall not in this reſpect bear the iniquity of his Father?

To this I anſwer, It is not his ſin conſidered perſonally as his, that hath made us obnoxious unto eternal Death; but it was our ſin as well as his: for in him we all ſinned and fell. *Adam* was our federal Head and common Repreſentative, and his ſin was legally ours, even as his Obedience would have been, had he perſevered in it. But now the Caſe of *Adam* is ſingular, and much different from that of intermediate Parents; they indeed are our natural Heads, but not our federal Heads, as *Adam* was; their Actions are only their own, and not ours, and have no influence at all upon the determining of our eternal ſtate and condition; and therefore we ſhall not be accountable to God at the laſt Day for what they have done, but only for what we our ſelves have done in the Body, whether it be good or evil. Yet,

Secondly, If the Children imitate the wickedneſs and crimes of their Fathers, it is but juſt and righteous with God to puniſh them with eternal Death and Damnation for them: It is but fit that they ſhould inherit their Fathers Damnation, who inherit their Fathers Tranſgreſſions. But in this caſe it muſt be obſerved, that God puniſheth them not, becauſe they are their Fathers ſins, but becauſe they are their own. 2.

Thirdly, God may, and often doth viſit the Iniquity of the Fathers upon the Children with Temporal Puniſhments, whether the Children imitate the Offences of the Fathers, or elſe reform from them. And theſe Temporal Puniſhments are many times very ſore and heavy; languiſhing Diſeaſes, racking and tormenting Pains, loſs of Eſtate, ſometimes raviſh'd from them by violence, ſometimes, melting away inſenſibly: The Father poſſibly by his unjuſt Oppreſſion and Extortion, intails a Curſe upon his Eſtate, which like a Canker, eats it out and conſumes it in his Son's days; ſo that nothing is left in his hands but Shame and Poverty, although perhaps he might never know the Sins for which God blaſts him: Yea, we find that God doth inflict Temporal Death on the Child for the Offence of the Parent; thus, 2 *Sam.* 12. 14. in *Nathan*'s Meſſage to *David*, *Becauſe by this deed thou haſt given great occaſion to the enemies of the Lord to blaſpheme, the child alſo that is born unto thee ſhall ſurely die.* 3.

Thus

Thus God doth very frequently inflict Temporal Puniſhments upon the Children for the Father's Tranſgreſſions: Nor is it at all hard to reconcile this with the meaſures of Juſtice and Equity, becauſe of that near relation which they bear unto their Parents; for certainly, it is juſt with God to puniſh a Sinner in all that is related unto him: Now Children are Parts of their Parents, yea, their Parents live and ſurvive in them; and therefore certainly, God in puniſhing them, may juſtly ſtrike what part of them he pleaſeth. And this even *Plutarch*, an Heathen, could obſerve, ſpeaking how God did often inflict grievous Judgments on the Poſterity of lewd and wicked Men; he tells us, ἐδὲν ἄτοπον ἂν ἐκείνων ὄντες ἔχωσι τὰ ἐκείνων, it is nothing ſtrange and abſurd for thoſe who are theirs to ſuffer what belongs to them.

Plutar. de ſerò puni-tis.

And thus we have briefly vindicated the Juſtice of God, in viſiting the Iniquity of the Fathers upon their Children.

2. But then, *Secondly*, another Queſtion is, Whether God doth always obſerve this Method of revenging the Offences of Fathers upon their Children in Temporal Puniſhments?

To which I anſwer: No, he doth not: Neither doth this Threatning in the Commandment oblige him to do it, but only ſhews what their ſins do deſerve, and what he might juſtly do, if he pleaſed to uſe his Power and Prerogative. And therefore we read of the Children of wicked Parents, who yet were both pious and proſperous; ſuch were *Hezekiah*, and *Joſiah*, the one the Son of *Ahaz*, the other of *Amon*. But moſt commonly we may obſerve it in the courſe of Divine Providence, that the Poſterity of wicked Parents pay off their Fathers ſcores to Divine Juſtice, in the Temporal Evils and Calamities that are brought upon them: But yet if they themſelves be pious and holy, this may be for their comfort, that whatſoever Afflictions they lye under, ſhall be for their benefit and advantage; and they are not Puniſhments to them, but only fatherly Corrections and Chaſtiſements: for the very things which they ſuffer, may be intended by God as a puniſhment to their Anceſtors, but a fatherly correction to themſelves; and what to the one is threatned as a Curſe, to the other may prove a Bleſſing and an Advantage, as it gives them occaſion of exerciſing more Grace, and ſo of receiving the greater Glory.

Suffer me to cloſe up this with one or two Practical Meditations.

1. *Firſt*, If it be the uſual Method of Divine Providence to viſit the iniquity of the Father upon the Children, ſee then what great reaſon Parents have to beware they do not lay up a ſtock of Plagues and Curſes for their Poſterity, nor clog the Eſtate they leave them, with ſo many Debts to be paid to the Juſtice of God, as will certainly undo them: Thou who by Fraud and Couzenage heapeſt together ill-gotten Wealth, thinkeſt perhaps of leaving ſo many hundreds, or thouſands to thy Children, but conſidereſt not withal, how many Curſes thou putteſt into the Bag, Curſes that in time will rot and eat out the very bottom of it: Thou who by this, or by any other way of Wickedneſs, either Swearing or Drunkenneſs, or Uncleanneſs, provokeſt the Holy and Jealous God, doth it nothing grieve thee to think, that thy ſins ſhall be puniſh'd upon thy poor Children's backs? Poſſibly thou art ſo fondly tender of them, that thou art loth to chaſtiſe them when they really deſerve it for their own faults; yet art thou ſo cruel to them, as to abandon them over to the Juſtice of God, to be ſeverely ſcourged for faults which are not their own, but thine? Whoſe Heart would not yearn, and whoſe Bowels would not be turned within him, to go into an Hoſpital, and there view over all thoſe Scenes of Humane Miſery and Wretchedneſs which are preſented to us; the Blind, the Lame, the Deaf, the Dumb, the Maimed, the Diſtracted, the ulcerated and loathſom Leper, and thoſe ſeveral Maps of Man's Woes and Torments that are there exhibited? Think then with thy ſelf, this is the Inheritance, this is the Portion bequeathed them by their accurſed Parents. And as thou wouldſt have

thine

thine own Children to be made the ſame ſad Spectacles of Divine Wrath and Vengeance, ſo go and ſin them into the ſame condition. Certainly, Wolves and Tigers are more merciful to their Off-ſpring, than wretched Man! It is thou thy ſelf, O cruel Man! who haſt cripled, and maimed, and tormented, and beggered, and undone thine own Children; and perhaps every ſin thou committeſt, either murthers or tortures a poor helpleſs Infant, one whoſe greateſt miſery it is, that ever he was born of thee. I beſeech you, Chriſtians, think ſeriouſly of this thing; and as ever you would wiſh well to thoſe dear Pledges which are as your own Bowels, ſo beware how ever you provoke the holy and jealous God, by any known and wilful ſin, who will be ſure to repay it home, either in your own Perſons by his immediate Judgments upon your ſelves, or that which will go as near the heart of every tender and compaſſionate Parent, by his ſore Judgments on the poor Children and Poſterity.

Secondly, See here what great reaſon thou haſt to render Thanks and Praiſe unto God, that thou art born of holy and pious Parents; ſuch as treaſure not up Wrath for thee, but Prayers: Poſſibly they were but poor and low in the World; but yet they have bequeathed thee a rich Patrimony, and made God Executor, who will faithfully diſcharge his Truſt, if thou diſcharge thy Duty, and give thee a Bleſſing poſſibly in this life, but certainly in the life to come. Let others boaſt their Blood, and their Parentage, and reckon up a long row of Monuments and Anceſtors, if they have been wicked, lewd and ungodly, but thine vertuous and the ſincere Servants of God; they poſſibly may be the laſt of their Family, and thou the firſt of thine: Howſoever, know that it is far more noble to be born of thoſe that have been born of God, than to be Grand-children of the Devil: Thou haſt better Blood running in thy Veins, even the Blood of them whom Chriſt hath judged worthy to be redeemed, and waſhed with his own Blood, whoſe Names are written in Heaven in the Lamb's Book of Life; a greater Honour and Dignity, than if they were written in the Worm-eaten Pages of idle Heraldry: And if thou followeſt their good Examples, thy Relations, and Portion too are greater and richer, for thou haſt God for thy Father, Chriſt for thy Brother, and the whole Heaven of Stars for thine Inheritance. 2.

And thus much for the ſecond General, what is here threatned in the Commandment, *viz.* The *viſiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children*; I ſhall be more brief in the two remaining. Therefore,

Thirdly, Let us conſider the Perſons againſt whom this Threatning is denounced, *Viſiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children of thoſe that hate me:* And who thoſe are, is explained in the Antitheſis ſubjoined, *Keeping mercy for thouſands of thoſe that love me, and keep my commandments.* If then thoſe that keep God's Commandments are Lovers of God, (which our Saviour expreſly affirms, *John* 14. 21. *He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me*;) by direct conſequence it follows, that thoſe who tranſgreſs the Commandments of God, are haters of God. And what worſe can be ſaid of the very Devil himſelf? Let them pretend never ſo fair, and ſpeak words full of reſpect and reverence, yet bring them to this Tryal, do they obſerve and keep the Commandments of God or no? If not, they are haters of God and Goodneſs. And indeed it is impoſſible, that thoſe who are diſobedient and rebellious, ſhould love God; for can they love him who hath required from them what they do ſo extreamly loath? Can they love him whom they muſt needs apprehend armed with Wrath and Vengeance, to puniſh and torment them everlaſtingly for their ſins? Can they love him, who if they have any Conſciences in them, they muſt needs know hates them with a perfect hatred, and will be avenged on them in their eternal ruin and deſtruction? Certainly if we love God, becauſe he firſt loved us, theſe cannot but hate him, to whom their own Conſciences muſt needs atteſt, that God hates both them and their ways. 3.

4. *Fourthly*, Conſider the Duration and Continuance of that Vengeance which God will take upon thoſe who thus hate him. On their own perſons he will revenge himſelf eternally, and be ever ſatisfying his wronged Juſtice in their inſufferable Torments: But on their Poſterity he will be avenged unto the third and fourth Generation. And yet even in this very Threatning there is Mercy contained; Mercy it is that ſuch a wicked and accurſed Race are not cut off, and caſt out of his ſight and grace for ever; and that where once the wrath of God hath ſeized on any Family, it doth not burn down and conſume the whole before it: But he graciouſly ſtops its courſe, and gives not way to all his fury; and in this, Mercy glorifies it ſelf againſt Judgment, in that he ſheweth Mercy unto Thouſands, but viſiteth Iniquity only unto the third and fourth Generation.

The Third Commandment.

Thou ſhalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltleſs that taketh his name in vain.

IT is a known Rule, that all the Precepts of the Law reſpect either thoſe Duties which we owe immediately unto God, or thoſe which we owe immediately unto Man; the former conſtitute the firſt, the latter the ſecond Table. The Commands of the firſt Table are preſcribed us, for the regulating our Divine Worſhip; which is either internal and more ſpiritual, or external and more viſible. The internal Worſhip of God, with the humbleſt veneration of our Souls, and moſt ſincere Affections of our Hearts, is required of us in the firſt Commandment, as I have already declared. The external Worſhip of God conſiſts of Three Parts, Proſtration of the Body; Profeſſion of the Mouth; and the Obſervation of prefixed Time. And each of theſe hath a particular Command to injoin them.

The firſt of theſe, *viz.* Proſtration of the Body, is required in the ſecond Commandment; of which I have ſpoken.

The ſecond, *viz.* Profeſſion of the Mouth, comes next to be conſidered. And to guide and regulate this, we have our Rule preſcribed in the third Precept of this Table:

Thou ſhalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, &c. In which words we have:

I. *Firſt*, A Prohibition, *Thou ſhalt not take*, &c.

II. *Secondly*, A Commination or Threatning, *For the Lord will not hold him guiltleſs that*, &c.

In the Prohibition Three Things are to be inquired into:

1. *Firſt*, What is meant by the Name of God?
2. *Secondly*, What it is to take the Name of God?
3. *Thirdly*, What it is to take God's Name in vain?

1. *Firſt*, What is meant by the Name of God?
I anſwer, The Name of God hath ſundry Acceptations in the Scripture.

Firſt,

First, Sometimes it is taken for the Nature and Being of the Deity it ſelf. Nor is it an unuſual Figure to put Name for that Thing or Perſon that is expreſſed by it; as *Rev.* 3. 4. *Thou haſt a few names in Sardis, that have not defiled their garments; and they ſhall walk with me in white:* that is, thou haſt a few Perſons in *Sardis*. So likewiſe we may obſerve it to be frequently uſed when the Scripture ſpeaks of God, and Chriſt, *Pſal.* 20. 1. *The name of the God of Jacob defend thee*; that is, let the God of *Jacob* himſelf, who is the only true and Almighty Potentate, be thy Shield and thy Defence, *Pſal.* 135. 3. *Sing praiſes unto his name*; that is, offer your Returns of Thanks and Praiſes unto that God from whom you have received your Mercies and Salvation. So *Pſal.* 115. 1. *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy name give glory*; that is, let the Glory which is due unto thee be intirely aſcribed unto thy ſelf. And ſo concerning Chriſt, *Luke* 24. 47. *Repentance and remiſſion of ſins are to be preached to all nations in his name*; that is, through him. And, *John* 1. 12. *He gave power to become the ſons of God, to as many as believed in his name*; that is, to as many as believed in him. And thus it is uſed in innumerable places.

Secondly, Sometimes the Name of God is taken for the whole Syſtem of Divine and Heavenly Doctrine revealed to us in the Scriptures: Thus the Pſalmiſt, *I will declare thy name unto my brethren:* Which the Apoſtle cites as ſpoken in the Perſon of Chriſt, *Heb.* 2. 12. and the meaning is, That Chriſt ſhould declare and make known to the World, a true ſpiritual Doctrine, and way of Worſhip; and teach them a Religion which ſhould both perfect their Reaſon, and ſave their Souls. And as a Teſtimony of the accompliſhment of this Propheſie, our Saviour himſelf tells us, *John* 17. 6. *I have manifeſted thy name unto the men whom thou gaveſt me.* And, *ver.* 26. *I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it*; that is, I have inſtructed them in the true Religion, and right Worſhip of the great God. And ſo it is taken likewiſe, *Micah* 4. 5. *All people will walk every one in the name of his God, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever:* That is, we will walk in that way of Worſhip and Religion which is appointed and approved by the Lord our God. 2. *Pſal.* 22. 22.

Thirdly, The Name of God is taken for that whereby God is called, and by which his Nature and Perfections are made known unto the Children of Men: For Names are impoſed to this very intent, that they might declare what the thing is to which the Name doth belong. Thus when God had created *Adam*, and made him the Lord of this viſible World, he cauſed the Beaſts of the Field, and the Fowls of the Air to paſs before him, both to do Homage to their new Sovereign, and likewiſe to receive Names from him, which according to the Perfection of his Knowledge, did then aptly ſerve to expreſs their ſeveral Natures, and were not only Names, but Definitions too: And ſo when we read of the Names of God in Scripture, they all ſignifie ſome Expreſſions of his Infinite Eſſence, in which he is pleaſed to ſpell out himſelf unto us, ſometimes by one Perfection and ſometimes by another. 3.

Now theſe Names of God, are either his Titles or his Attributes. Concerning which, I have formerly treated at large in expounding to you the firſt Petition of the Lord's Prayer, *Hallowed be thy Name*; and therefore ſhall here only mention them, and ſo proceed.

First, His Titles are his Name: And they are ſome of them Abſolute; and ſuch are thoſe glorious Titles of *Jah*, *Jehovah*, *God*, *I Am*; *I am hath ſent thee*, ſaith God to *Moſes*. And theſe are Names altogether incomprehenſible and ſtupendious. Others are Relative, reſpecting us. So his Name of Creator, denotes his infinite Power in giving Being to all things: Lord and King, ſignifie his Dominion and Authority in diſpoſing and governing all that he hath made: Father ſignifies his Care and Goodneſs in providing for us his Off-ſpring: Redeemer, his Mercy in delivering us from Temporal Evils and Calamities, but eſpecially from Eternal Death and Deſtruction. Theſe, and other ſuch-like Titles God doth aſſume unto himſelf, to expreſs in ſome meaſure, as we are able to bear, what he is in himſelf. 1.

Secondly,

2. *Secondly*, His Attributes alſo are his Name: Some of which are incommunicable, as his Eternity, Immenſity, Immutability, Simplicity, *&c.* which are ſo proper to the Divine Nature, that they belong to no created Being; others are communicable, and ſo Mercy, and Goodneſs, and Holineſs, and Truth, *&c.* are the Attributes of God: Communicable they are, becauſe ſome Rays of them may be found in the Creatures; but yet in that infinite degree and excellency which they have in God, ſo they are incommunicable, and proper only to the Deity. And therefore, though Angels or Men may be ſaid to be holy, or juſt, or good, yet none of them are ſo originally; none are ſo infinitely and unchangeably, none are ſo ſimply, and in the abſtract, but only God himſelf.

Theſe then are the Names of God.

And here in the Text, *Thou ſhalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain*; we muſt underſtand it concerning the Name of God in this laſt Exception, that is, for any Name of his whereby he is pleaſed to reveal himſelf unto us; whether it appertain to his Titles, or to his Attributes; neither of theſe muſt be taken in vain.

2. *Secondly*, Let us conſider what it is to take the Name of God. I anſwer briefly: To take the Name of God, is no other than to make uſe of it, either as the Object of our Thoughts, or the Subject of our Diſcourſes: And ſo we find this Phraſe uſed, *Pſal.* 16. 4. *I will not take up their names into my lips.* And *Pſal.* 50. 16. *What haſt thou to do, that thou ſhouldſt take my covenant in thy mouth?* That is, that thou ſhouldſt ſpeak, or make mention of it. So that, to take God's Name, is to ſpeak, or mention it.

3. *Thirdly*, Let us conſider, what it is to take God's Name in vain. To this I anſwer: God's Name is then taken in vain:

1. *Firſt*, When it is uſed without propounding to our ſelves a due end.
2. *Secondly*, When it is uſed without due conſideration and reverence.
3. *Thirdly*, When it is uſed in an undue and unlawful action.

1. *Firſt*, When it is uſed without propounding to our ſelves a due end: The end ſpecifies the action; if the end be vain, the action muſt be ſo too. Now there are but two ends that can juſtifie and warrant the uſe of any of God's Names, either his Titles or his Attributes; and they are,

1. *Firſt*, The Glory of God. And,

2. *Secondly*, The Edification of our ſelves and others. Whatſoever is beſides theſe, is light and frivolous, and can be no good ground to us to make any mention of his great and terrible Name, which is ſo full of Glory and Majeſty, that it ſhould never be uttered, but where the ſubject of our Diſcourſe is ſerious and weighty. I will not now ſpeak of thoſe who rend the holy and reverend Name of God with Oaths and Blaſphemies; a ſin by ſo much the more heinous and abominable, by how much leſs temptation there is to it, either of pleaſure or profit; this is an Iniquity to be puniſh'd by the Judge: And would to God Laws were put in ſevere execution, to cramp the black Tongues of all ſuch prophane Wretches, whoſe number ſo abounds and ſwarms, that we can no where walk the Streets, without being aſſaulted with whole vollies of Oaths and Curſes. But, for others who are of more blameleſs Converſation, may it not be obſerved how their Diſcourſes and familiar Tattle are filled up with the Name of God and Lord: I beſeech you conſider, what end do you propound to your ſelves in thus uſing the great and terrible Name? Are all your Diſcourſes ſo ſerious, as to bear the burthen of that great Name? Are they all immediately directed to the advancement of his Glory? Or, do they all promote the benefit and welfare of thoſe who hear them? If ſo, then indeed the Name of God can never be more ſeaſonably uſed: But if you make the higheſt Lord ſerve only to expreſs ſome ſmall Wonderment, or the great God only an expletive to fill up a gap in your Speeches; certainly, theſe are ſuch low and mean ends, that God will not hold thee guiltleſs. He accounts himſelf contemned when you mention his

his Name to ſuch idle purpoſes, and will revenge the diſhonour that you do him by it.

Secondly, The Name of God is taken in vain, when it is uſed without due conſide- 2.
ration and reverence: Whenſoever we make mention of him, we ought ſeriouſly to ponder his infinite Greatneſs and Glory, and to bow our hearts in the deepeſt proſtration before that Name, to which all the Powers in Heaven and Earth bow down with moſt humble Veneration. But is it poſſible for thoſe who ſpeak of God promiſcuouſly and at random, is it poſſible that they ſhould utter his Name with Reverence, when all the reſt of the Diſcourſe is nothing but Froth and Levity? Nay, if they be reproved for it, will they not alledge for their Excuſe that which is their very Sin, That they did not conſider it? And what! will you dare to bolt out the great Name of the great God without conſidering it? Is that a Name to be ſported with, and to be toſs'd to and fro upon every light and vain Tongue? The Tongue of Man is called his Glory, *Pſal.* 57. 8. *Awake up my glory.* And ſhall the glory of Man be the diſhonour of God? Shall that which was created to be a principal Inſtrument of magnifying and exalting God's Name, run it over without affection or reverence? Thoſe things which we moſt of all contemn and deſpiſe, we uſe as By-words, and lay no great ſtreſs nor ſenſe upon them. And truly when we ſpeak of God, without conſidering how great, how glorious and excellent a Being he is, how holy, juſt, and powerful, we do but make him a By-word, which is the higheſt contempt and indignity that can be caſt upon him. And therefore, the beſt means that can be uſed to ſecure us from that Habit and wicked Cuſtom, that many of us have inured our ſelves unto, of taking God's Name in vain, is ſeriouſly to conſider whoſe Name it is, even the Name of the great God who is preſent with thee, and hears thee pronounce it: That God to whom the greateſt and moſt glorious Things compared, are baſe and vile Nothings: That God who is jealous of his Honour, and will dreadfully revenge himſelf upon the Contemners of it. And if thou haſt but wrought theſe Conſiderations into thine heart, and habituated them to thy thoughts, thou wilt for ever be afraid to ſpeak of his Majeſty vainly and irreverently.

Thirdly, The Name of God is taken in vain when it is uſed to an undue and 3.
unlawful action, eſpecially when it is brought to confirm a Falſhood either in Perjury or Hereſie, which is a moſt horrid Impiety: And therefore it is obſerved, that the ſame word which is here rendred vain, ſignifies alſo Falſe or Deceitful: רשוא
So that this Precept, *Thou ſhalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain*, may be rendred alſo, *Thou ſhalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in falſhood.* Not that this is the only unlawful uſing of it, but that this is the chief and moſt notorious abuſing of it: And indeed, what greater ſin can there be, than to bring God to be a Witneſs to our Lie; to make him who is Truth it ſelf, atteſt that which is Falſhood and Deceit? And therefore, *Proverbs* 30. 9. *Agur* prays againſt pinching Poverty, as well as ſuperfluous Riches, *Leſt*, ſaith he, *I be poor and ſteal, and take the name of my God in vain.* That is, leſt Poverty compel me to ſteal, and fear of Shame or Puniſhment tempt me to ſwear by the Name of the great God, that I have not done it. This indeed, is to take God's Name in vain in the worſt and higheſt ſenſe.

Suffer me now to cloſe up this with ſome Practical Application of it to your Conſciences:

Firſt, Let this convince you of the greatneſs and heinouſneſs of this Sin, and 1.
deeply humble you that have been guilty of it. I well know, that the commonneſs, whether of God's Mercies towards us, or of our Sins againſt him, takes off much from our Obſervation, and abates them both in our Eſtimate: And becauſe this is ſo common a Sin almoſt in the mouths of all Perſons, our Ears are ſo beaten to it, that we now little regard it. Poſſibly ſhould we hear a Devil incarnate belch out ſome direful Oath, we ſhould ſtart and tremble at it: But when we hear the Name of the great God, and our only Lord, ſlip along in ſome trifling and impertinent Diſcourſe, this we take no notice of; and the commonneſs of the Sin hath almoſt ſtifled all Reproofs: I beſeech you, Chriſtians, conſider,

Firſt, That we are not to weigh Sins by the Opinion of Men, but by the Cenſure and Sentence of God: He hath no more allowed you to take his Name in vain, than he hath to blaſpheme it: The irreverent uſing of it is as expreſly forbidden, as the abjuring and curſing of it: And when the Law of God hath not diſpenſed with us, it is moſt intolerable preſumption that we ſhould dare to diſpenſe with our ſelves.

2. Again conſider, thou that ſporteſt away the Name of God in thy ordinary Prattle, what wilt thou have to rely upon in thy greateſt diſtreſſes? The wiſe Man tells us, *Prov.* 18. 10. *The name of the Lord is a ſtrong tower; the righteous runneth unto it and is ſaved.* But alas, what comfort canſt thou find in the Name of God in thy greateſt neceſſities, ſince it is the ſame Name thou haſt uſed and worn out before in the meaneſt and moſt trivial concerns: Thou haſt already talkt away the ſtrength and virtue of it, and wilt hardly find more ſupport from it in thy Tribulation, than thou gaveſt reverence unto it in thy Converſation. Let us then be more cautious than to ſpend ſo excellent a Remedy againſt all Fears, and Sorrows, and Afflictions, *Cant.* 1. 2. vainly and unprofitably: *Thy name*, ſaith the Spouſe, *is an ointment powred forth.* But certainly if upon every ſlight occaſion we break the Box, and expoſe the Name of God to common Air, it will in time loſe its ſcent and virtue, and when we have moſt need of it, ſhall find no refreſhment, no comfort in it. Beſides,

3. *Thirdly*, This common and irreverent uſing of the Name of God, will inſenſibly overſpread us with a Spirit of Prophaneneſs; we ſhall by degrees arrive to a plain contempt of God, whom we thus hourly and unneceſſarily take into our Mouths: For what elſe is this but to make our ſelves rude and familiar with that infinite Majeſty, towards whom the profoundeſt teſtimonies of reſpect and reverence muſt fall infinitely ſhort of expreſſing our due diſtance? But by uſing his Name vulgarly and promiſcuouſly, what do we elſe, but make it our ſport, and blow it up and down with every idle breath, as Children do bubbles in the Air?

4. Again, Canſt thou in Duty eaſily compoſe thy ſelf to reverence the holy and dreadful Name of God, when thou haſt thus accuſtomed thy ſelf to name him without any veneration or reſpect in thy common Diſcourſes? Certainly it is the hardeſt thing imaginable to make the heart fall down proſtrate before that God whom thou invokeſt in Prayer, when once thou art uſed to invoke him ſlightly in thy ordinary Converſe.

Let me therefore beſeech you, O Chriſtians, as you tender his Glory, of which he is jealous, whenſoever you ſpeak of God, or but mention his Name, you would do it with an holy Awe and Dread of his Divine Majeſty; that you would ſeriouſly conſider, that that Name to which every Knee bows, both of things in Heaven, and things on Earth, and things under the Earth, whether they be Angels or Devils, requires from you more reſpect and honour than to be idly blurted out with every raſh and fooliſh expreſſion.

And you who are Maſters of Families, and have Children and Servants committed to your Care, beware that you ſtop this growing Sin in them betimes. It is the ſin and ſhame of Parents, that they ſuffer little Ones to liſp the Name of God, and to learn the firſt ſyllables and rudiments of Oaths and Curſes before they can well ſpeak, whereby they lay a deep foundation for their future Impiety, and thereby bring the guilt of the next Generation upon us, who by indulging them in theſe young ſins, do but introduce thoſe habits of Wickedneſs into them, which perhaps can never afterwards be rooted out.

2. There is alſo another kind of taking the Name of God in vain; and that is in our Duties and holy Performances. And this is done two ways.

1. *Firſt*, When in our Prayers we ask thoſe things of God which are unlawful, or unwarrantable; as when we pray on the behalf of our Luſts, to obtain proviſion to fulfil them, *Jam.* 4. 3. *Ye ask amiſs, that ye may conſume it upon your Luſts.* When we pray out of Envy, Malice, and Revenge, that God would make himſelf a Party in our unreaſonable and angry Quarrels. Such Prayers as theſe are vain; for what we thus deſire either ſhall not be granted unto us, or if it be, ſhall be granted unto us in Wrath.

Secondly,

Secondly, When we perform holy Duties ſlightly, and without affection, we then likewiſe take the Name of God in vain: and therefore all Hypocritical Services, all Battologies, and heartleſs Ingeminations, are vain, and God's Name is not ſanctified, but abuſed in them. For whatſoever we do in ſuch a manner as we may be certain God will not accept, is done in vain: Now God will accept of no Performance which is not accompanied with the Heart, and filled with moſt devout Affections; and therefore they are performed in vain, and to no other effect, but to increaſe our guilt and our condemnation. Such Invocations are but Scoffings of God; and all the motions of our Lips, without the correſpondent motion of our Hearts, is no better than making Mouths at God.

Thirdly, There is alſo another kind of prophaning the Name of God, and taking it in vain, which is of a far higher and more heinous nature, and that is by unlawful Oaths and Execrations. 3.

Now an Oath in the general is a Confirmation of our Speeches, by calling in God to witneſs and atteſt the Truth of them; called therefore by *Tully* a Religious Affirmation. And it is of two kinds, *De Offic.* l. 3.

Aſſertory, and
Promiſſory.

The former, when we aſſert that ſuch a thing either hath been, or is: The latter, when we ingage that for the future it ſhall be, and be performed by us: which Oath we do ſufficiently, and with a good Conſcience keep, if we uſe our utmoſt indeavours to accompliſh what we have thus ſworn, although the effect may be impeded by many invincible Obſtacles intervening.

Now becauſe a Spirit of Errour and Giddineſs hath ſeized on ſome Perſons, who think that every Oath is unlawful, and the taking of the holy and reverend Name of God in vain, and ſo a violation of this Commandment; I ſhall therefore briefly ſtate that much-controverted Queſtion, Whether at any time, or in any circumſtances it be lawful for a Chriſtian to aſſume the Name of God in an Oath? And then I ſhall proceed to ſhew you what Oaths are unlawful, and execrable Sins.

For the firſt, I aſſert, That an Oath is ſo far from being always ſinful; that it is ſometimes a Duty, yea, an Act of Religion, and part of the Service and Worſhip of God; and therefore not only lawful but neceſſary. This we find *Deut.* 6. 13. *Thou ſhalt fear the Lord thy God, and ſerve him, and ſhalt ſwear by his name.* Yea, the Pſalmiſt mentions it as a matter of Exultation, as if ſome notable Service were done by it unto God, *Every one that ſweareth by him ſhall glory.* And if we conſult the approved Examples of holy Men in Scripture, we ſhall frequently find them either exacting Oaths from others, or elſe themſelves invoking the Teſtimony of the moſt high God, to confirm the Truth of what they ſpeak; the places are too numerous to be cited, and too well known to need it: But becauſe the great Cavil againſt theſe, is that they are only Authorities produced out of the Old Teſtament, and we are now obliged by the Precepts of a Superiour Law-giver, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; therefore, I ſay, in anſwer, That the Objection argues too great a vilifying and contempt of thoſe Sacted Oracles, which were given to the Church, by the hand of *Moſes*; and that things of a Moral nature, as an Oath is, cannot in one Age of the World be a Duty, and in another a Sin, when it is attended with the ſame Circumſtances. And yet farther, for their ſatisfaction, let us ſee what is ſpoken concerning Oaths in the New Teſtament, or in the Old relating to it: In the Old we have a Propheſy of what ſhould be hereafter in the times of the Goſpel; *Iſa.* 45. 23. *I have ſworn by my ſelf, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteouſneſs, and ſhall not return, that unto me every knee ſhall bow, and every tongue ſhall ſwear.* And again, *Jer.* 12. 16. *And it ſhall come to paſs, if they will diligently learn the ways of my people, to ſwear by my name, then ſhall they be built in the midſt of my people.* But yet if neither of theſe will ſuffice, let us ſee ſome more immediate confirmation of this out of the New Teſtament it ſelf: We find St. *Paul* himſelf more than once atteſting the truth of thoſe grave and weighty Matters which he delivers in his Epiſtles, by calling God to witneſs, which is the very form and nature of an Oath: So 2 *Cor.* 1. 23. *I call God for a record upon my ſoul, that to ſpare you I came not as yet to Corinth.* And ſo again *Phil.* 1. 8. *God is my record, how greatly I long after you all.* And what other than a kind of Oath is that vehement Aſſeveration of the ſame Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 15. 31. *I proteſt by* Pſal. 63. 11.

your

your rejoycing which I have in Chriſt Jeſus, I die daily. And again *Rom.* 9. 1. *I ſay the truth in Chriſt, I lie not.* And if you would yet have an Example ſomewhat more perfect, we may ſee it in the practice of an holy Angel, *Revel.* 10. 6. *The angel ſtood upon the ſea, and upon the earth, and lifted up his hand to heaven, and ſwear by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven and earth, and the things in them, that there ſhould be time no longer.* So that you do abundantly ſee by all theſe Inſtances, that it is not ſimply and univerſally unlawful to aſſume the holy Name of God in an Oath, and to call him in to be a Witneſs to the Truth of what we affirm.

The grand Objection that lies againſt this, is taken from two places of Scripture; the one is that of our Saviour, *Matth.* 5. 34, 35. *But I ſay unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven, for it is God's throne: nor by the earth, for it is his footſtool: neither by Jeruſalem, for it is the city of the great King. Neither ſhalt thou ſwear by thy head, becauſe thou canſt not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be Yea, yea, Nay, nay: for whatſoever is more than this, cometh of evil.* Can any thing be more expreſs againſt all manner of Oaths than this, where we have a cautious Enumeration of many of them which were moſt vulgar and common? The other place is that of St. *James*, Chap. 5. 12. *But above all things, my brethren, ſwear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath; but let your yea, be yea, and your nay, nay; leſt you fall into condemnation.* Can any thing be more expreſs, or more commanding than this, *above all things, my brethren*; and, *Leſt you fall into condemnation?*

But for Anſwer to this, we muſt know, that our Saviour and his Apoſtle, do not here ſimply and abſolutely condemn all Oaths, but only that common and profuſe ſwearing which the Scribes and Phariſees taught corruptly to be no ſin: For in this point of Oaths they had divulged among the People three falſe Traditions. The one was, That it was lawful for them to ſwear commonly, and without reſtraint, by any Creature. The other was, That that was no binding Oath, wherein the Name of God was not expreſly uſed; and therefore though they ſhould ſwear by Creatures, yet were they not perjured, although they ſhould not perform what they thus uttered; except ſome few Caſes wherein Intereſt made them conſciencious. This we have *Matth.* 23. 16, 17, 18. *Wo unto you ye blind guides, which ſay, Whoſoever ſhall ſwear by the temple, it is nothing: and whoſoever ſhall ſwear by the altar, it is nothing.* That is, they taught that ſuch an Oath was not obligatory, becauſe it was only by Creatures. And yet even here they excepted ſuch Oaths as were conceived and uttered by the Gold of the Temple, or the Gifts on the Altar, out of a politick Covetouſneſs; that by ſo great a reverence ſhewn to the Gifts that were offer'd, the People might be induced to offer more freely, and by that means their ſhare of them might be the larger.

A third falſe Doctrine that they taught, was, That common ſwearing was no ſin, although it were by the great God, if what they ſwear were true. And by this they gave ſcope and liberty to confirm all that they ſaid with an Oath, if they only took care to utter nothing that was falſe.

Now only againſt theſe three corrupt Traditions, are our Saviour's and the Apoſtle's words directed:

1. 1. For it is Perjury to violate an Oath conceived by Creatures, and that becauſe of the near relation that all Creatures have unto God the great Creatour. This reaſon our Saviour mentions in the fore-named place, *Swear not by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footſtool; nor by Jeruſalem, for it is the city of the great King.* And more expreſly *Matth.* 23. 22. *He that ſhall ſwear by heaven, ſweareth by the throne of God, and him that ſitteth thereon: even as he who ſhall ſwear by the temple, ſweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein.* And ſo by the ſame proportion of reaſon, whoſoever ſhall ſwear by any Creature, doth alſo virtually ſwear by the Almighty Creatour of it: And therefore it is as much Perjury to falſify an Oath made by any of the Creatures, as though it were made by the great God himſelf; becauſe the Creatures are all of, and from God. And,

2. Although

2. Although it be Perjury to falſify an Oath taken by any Creature, yet it is a ſin likewiſe, and utterly unlawful to make any ſuch Oath, inſomuch as it is an Idolatrous aſcribing a Religious Worſhip unto the Creature which is due to God only. And in this ſenſe eſpecially, I underſtand theſe Words of our Saviour, *Swear not at all*; *i. e.* by any Creature. And this the following Enumeration of Heaven, and Earth, and *Jeruſalem*, and their Head, which were the uſual forms of their Oaths, and by which our Saviour forbids them to ſwear, doth clearly prove to be his true meaning. 2.

3. Theſe places teach that it is a Sin to ſwear at any time, or by any thing, although by the great God himſelf, unneceſſarily and arbitrarily: And therefore ſwear not at all, unleſs ſome juſt reaſon and cogent neceſſity conſtrain you to call in ſo great a Teſtimony to confirm the truth of what you ſpeak: For common and quotidian ſwearing is an high contempt and irreverence ſhewn to the Majeſty of that God whom we bring in to atteſt to every trifle and frivolous thing we utter. And this I take to be the true ſenſe and meaning of theſe places of Scripture; and that they do not ſimply and abſolutely condemn all manner of Oaths, but the corrupt Doctrine of the Scribes and Phariſees, and the corrupt Practice of their Diſciples, who thought it no Sin to ſwear familiarly, if ſo be that they did not ſwear falſly. So that the meaning of *Swear not at all*, is, Swear not unneceſſarily and voluntarily. 3.

Now to make an Oath lawful, it muſt have theſe Three Qualifications mentioned by the Prophet, *Jer.* 4. 2. *Thou ſhalt ſwear, the Lord liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteouſneſs.*

Firſt, A warrantable Oath muſt be accompanied with Truth, for it is taken in the Name of the God of Truth: *Iſai.* 69. 15. *He that ſweareth in the earth, ſhall ſwear by the God of truth.* And therefore it behoves him to conſider, whether what he depoſeth be Truth, or not; yea, moreover, we muſt be fully certain, that the thing is as we atteſt it: For a Man may be guilty of Perjury in ſwearing that which is true, if he either believe it otherwiſe, or be doubtful of it. And therefore he that is called to give his Oath, muſt look to theſe Two things: 1.

1. That his Words agree with his Mind. 1.
2. That the Thing agree with his Words. 2.

He who fails in the ſecond, is ψευδορκος, a falſe Swearer: He who fails in the firſt, is ἐπίορκος, a Forſwearer; and in both is a perjured Perſon.

Secondly, A lawful Oath muſt be taken in Judgment, diſcreetly and deliberately, adviſing and pondering with our ſelves before we ſwear. And here we muſt conſider both the Matter, whether that be right and good; and the Ends, whether they are duly propounded by us. And there are but two Ends that can warrant an Oath; one is the Benefit of our ſelves or others; the other is the Glory of God. And whoſoever ſhall ſwear without a due conſideration of theſe Ends, and an holy and ſincere deſire to accompliſh them by his Oath, he ſwears raſhly and unwarrantably. 2.

Thirdly, A lawful Oath muſt be taken in Righteouſneſs and Juſtice: And therefore it is very wicked to bind our ſelves by an Oath, or Vow, to do things that are either impoſſible or ſinful. 3.

Firſt, The Matter of a juſt Oath ought to be poſſible; and therefore we ſee how cautious *Abraham*'s Servant was, when his Maſter made him ſwear to take a Wife for his Son *Iſaac*, of his Kindred, *Gen.* 24. 5. *Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me into this land.* And ſo ſhould we in all our Promiſſory Oaths, caution and limit them with thoſe reaſonable Exceptions, of as far as we know, and can lawfully endeavour. 1.

Secondly, The Matter of a juſt Oath muſt be not only poſſible, but lawful and honeſt too; for if it be unlawful, we are neceſſarily inſnared in ſin; for either we muſt violate God's Command, or our own Oath. And therefore it was a moſt wicked Oath in the *Jews*, who combined together againſt *Paul*, and bound themſelves under a Curſe, that they would neither eat nor drink, till they had killed 2.

him. And ſo every Oath which engageth Men to Sedition, diſturbance of Government, and Rebellion, is in it ſelf an unlawful Oath, and obligeth them to nothing but to repent of it, and renounce it.

According to theſe Three Qualifications muſt every Oath be Regulated, elſe it is not a Lawful Oath, but an Horrid Contempt of God, and taking of his Name in Vain.

But to ſpeak no more concerning lawful Oaths, let us now conſider thoſe which are too common among us; ſuch I mean which are apparently unlawful and ſinful.

Two things make an Oath unlawful;
Falſhood, and
Raſhneſs.

1. *Firſt*, When it is Falſe: And this indeed is a moſt deſperate Sin, to vouch a Lye upon God's credit, and to father a Falſhood upon him who is the God of Truth, yea, Truth it ſelf. This manifeſts the higheſt Contempt of God, when we call him to witneſs that which the Devil prompted us to ſpeak. Should not we our ſelves take it for an high Affront and Indignity, to be made Vouchers of other Mens Lyes and Tales, and Properties to put off their Falſhoods? How much more then, is it a moſt Helliſh Wickedneſs, committed againſt the Great God, to aſſert a known Lye, and then call in God to atteſt it for a Truth? Which is no other but to father a Brat of the Devil, who is a Lyer, and the Father of Lyes, upon God who hates Lyers, and hath appointed ſevere Torments for them: See how dreadfully God is incenſed by this Sin, *Jer.* 7. 9, 15, 16. where he ſpeaks of it as almoſt an unpardonable Offence, *Will ye ſteal, and murther, and ſwear falſly? Therefore will I caſt you out of my ſight, as I caſt out your brethren. Pray not thou for this people, neither lift up a cry nor prayer for them, neither make interceſſion to me: for I will not hear thee.* And ſo *Zech.* 5. 4. ſpeaking of the Curſe that ſhould go forth over the face of the whole Earth, *I will bring it forth, ſaith the Lord of hoſts, and it ſhall enter into the houſe of the thief, and into the houſe of him that ſweareth falſly by my name: and it ſhall remain in the midſt of his houſe, and it ſhall conſume it, with the timber thereof, and with the ſtones thereof.*

Secondly, As falſe Swearing is a notorious prophaning of the Name of God, ſo likewiſe raſh Swearing in our common and ordinary Diſcourſes: A ſin that generally abounds and prevails amongſt us; almoſt every mouth is black with Oaths; and we may ſee the very Soot of Hell hang about Mens lips: Nay, I have obſerved it, eſpecially in theſe parts, to be not only the ſin of more lewd and profligate Wretches, who mouth their Oaths with ſound and cadence, but of thoſe too who would be thought very ſevere and ſtrict Chriſtians, who ſcarce ſpeak a word without a Drawle, or a ſentence without an Oath, and who will pule and whine even in Swearing it ſelf. If theſe Men ſeparate to be better inſtructed, I wiſh with all my heart their Teachers would be pleaſed ſo far to condeſcend from their higher Speculations, as to inſtruct them, that to atteſt any thing by their Faith, or by their Truth, is a wicked Oath. For all Oaths which are conceived by any other thing beſides the great God, how modeſt ſoever they may be in their ſound, yet are more impious in effect, than thoſe louder ones, which immediately call God himſelf to witneſs; and therefore the Prophet ſpeaks of it as a moſt heinous, and almoſt unpardonable ſin, *Jer.* 5. 7. *How ſhall I pardon thee for this? thy children have forſaken me, and ſworn by them that are no gods.* For ſince an Oath is a ſacred thing, and part of Divine Worſhip, thoſe that ſwear by any created Being (as certainly their Faith, and Truth, and Conſcience is, if they have any) are guilty not only of vain Swearing, but of Idolatry too.

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him. And ſo every Oath which engageth Men to Sedition, diſturbance of Government, and Rebellion, is in it ſelf an unlawful Oath, and obligeth them to nothing but to repent of it, and renounce it.

According to theſe Three Qualifications muſt every Oath be Regulated, elſe it is not a Lawful Oath, but an Horrid Contempt of God, and taking of his Name in Vain.

But to ſpeak no more concerning lawful Oaths, let us now conſider thoſe which are too common among us; ſuch I mean which are apparently unlawful and ſinful.

Two things make an Oath unlawful;
Falſhood, and
Raſhneſs.

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but to flie in God's face, and to revenge thy ſelf on him, when Men have injured thee? Certainly thy paſſion can be no more a temptation to do this, than it would be to ſtab thy Father, becauſe thine Enemy hath ſtruck thee.

2. *Secondly*, It is a moſt fooliſh Sin, becauſe it contradicts the very end for which they commit it: The common Swearer perhaps, thinks that he ſhall be much the ſooner believed for his Oaths; whereas, with all ſerious and judicious Perſons there is nothing that doth more lighten the credit of his Speeches, than his raſh binding and confirming the truth of them by ſwearing. For what reaſon have I to think that Man ſpeaks truth, who doth ſo far ſuſpect himſelf, as to think what he relates is not credible, unleſs he ſwear to it: And certainly, he that owes God no more reſpect, than to violate the ſanctity and reverence of his Name upon every trifling occaſion, cannot eaſily be thought to owe the Truth ſo much reſpect as not to violate it, eſpecially conſidering that there are far ſtronger temptations unto Lying than unto Swearing.

3. *Thirdly*, Conſider that the Devil is the Author and Father, not of Lying only, but of Swearing alſo: *Let your yea, be yea; and your nay, nay*; ſaith our Saviour, *for whatſoever is more than theſe, cometh of evil*, Matth. 5. 37. ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ ἐστιν; *i. e.* it cometh of the Evil One, who is ſtill prompting the Swearer, and putteth Oaths upon the tip of his Tongue.

I ſhall now give you ſome Rules and Directions, by the Obſervance of which you may avoid this too common Sin, and ſo conclude this Subject.

I. *Firſt*, Beware of the firſt Rudiments and Beginnings of Oaths, if thou wouldſt not learn them. And ſuch are a company of idle words frequently uſed in the mouths of many, which formerly were bloody Oaths, but are now worn to rags, and diſguiſed into imperfect Sounds and Nonſenſe: few that ſpeak them, know what they mean; but if they did, certainly they would tremble at ſuch execrable words that hide and diſſemble the moſt horrid Oaths that can be uttered: Some of them being blaſphemous, as thoſe that are conceived by the Limbs of God; and others being idolatrous, as thoſe which are conceiv'd by Creatures; as in that ordinary By-word of *Marry*, which is no leſs than ſwearing by the Virgin *Mary*. And it is a notable Artifice of the Devil to bring ſuch fooliſh and maſqued words into common uſe, that both they may ſwear that uſe them, although they know it not; and that by uſing themſelves to unknown Oaths, they may be brought in time to take up thoſe that are known.

Again, all vehement Aſſeverations have in them ſomewhat of the nature, and are dangerous beginnings of Oaths: And thoſe who do accuſtom themſelves to them, will in time think them not forcible enough to confirm their Speeches, and ſo be brought to atteſt them by Oaths: Make nothing therefore the pawn and pledge of a Truth, but ſpeak it out ſimply and nakedly as it is in it ſelf; and this will be ſooner conciliate Belief, than the moſt ſtrong and binding Aſſeverations that thou canſt invent. This Sin of ſwearing is ſtrangely growing and thriving; for by a cuſtomary uſing of Aſſeverations, we ſhall inſenſibly upon every occaſion be tripping upon an Oath; and a cuſtom of Swearing will at length bring in Perjury; and a cuſtom of Perjury, Blaſphemy, and make them deny that God by whom they have ſo often forſworn themſelves, and yet go unpuniſh'd. Beware therefore, that you allow not your ſelves any form of Aſſeveration; but *let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay*; proceed no farther, for Chriſt hath allowed you no more.

II. *Secondly*, Subdue as much as you can, all inordinate Paſſion and Anger: For Anger is uſually the cauſe and provocation of Oaths and Blaſphemies. Anger is a fire in the heart, and ſwearing is the ſmoke of this fire that breaks forth at the mouth: And thoſe who are violently hurried with this Paſſion, do uſually find nothing ſo ready at hand as an Oath; which, if they cannot be revenged on him whom they conceit to have done them the Injury, they fling againſt Heaven it ſelf, and thereby ſeem to take an impious Revenge upon the Almighty God.

Thirdly,

III. *Thirdly*, Labour to poſſeſs thy Heart, and over-awe it with the moſt ſerious conſiderations and apprehenſions of the Greatneſs and Majeſty of God. This will be a good Preſervative to keep thee from abuſing and prophaning his Name in common and raſh Swearing: Is he the great and terrible God of Heaven and Earth, and ſhall I put that Indignity upon him, to call him from his Throne to witneſs every Vanity and Trifle that I utter? Would I ſerve any Mortal Man ſo, whom I reſpect? or would not he account it an Affront and Injury done him? How much more then will the great God be provoked, who is ſo great and glorious, that it tires the conceptions of Angels to apprehend his Majeſty; how much more will he be provoked to have his Name, which he hath commanded to be ſacred and reverend, daily rubb'd and worn out between thoſe lips that talk ſo many light, fooliſh, and impertinent Vanities?

There are ſeveral other Violations of this Third Commandment; as Blaſphemy, raſh Vows, unneceſſary Lots, *&c.* which being chiefly to be condemned upon the ſame account as Swearing, and a vain irreverent Invoking the Name of God, I ſhall not treat of them particularly, but leave the ſins and guilt of them to be eſtimated, together with a due conſideration of the ſeveral circumſtances that attend them.

The great poſitive Duty required in this Command, is the reverencing and ſanctifying the Name of God, whenſoever we make mention of him, or of any thing that relates unto him. But becauſe I have in a former Treatiſe ſpoken concerning that Subject, I ſhall therefore wave it at preſent, and here put an end to the Expoſition of this Third Commandment. *On the ſecond Petition of the* LORD's *Prayer.*

The Fourth Commandment.

Remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it Holy. Six Days ſhalt thou labour, and do all thy Work. But the Seventh Day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou ſhalt not do any Work, Thou, nor thy Son, nor thy Daughter, nor thy Man-ſervant, nor thy Maid-ſervant, nor the ſtranger that is within thy Gates. For in ſix Days the Lord made Heaven and Earth, the ſea, and all that in them is, and reſted the ſeventh Day: Wherefore the Lord bleſſed the ſabbath Day, and hallowed it.

WE are now arrived, in purſuance of our deſigned Method, to the Fourth and Laſt Commandment of the Firſt Table; and with the Expoſition of this, I ſhall ſhut up the Conſideration of thoſe Duties which do immediately concern the Worſhip and Service of God.

We have already obſerved, as a great deal of Wiſdom and Excellency in the Matter of each Command, ſo a great deal of Heavenly Art in the Method and Digeſtion of them. And upon ſerious Reflexions on both, we may very well conclude, that they are as well the contrivance of the Divine Underſtanding, as the ingraving of his Finger.

The Firſt requires that which is firſt and principally to be regarded, *viz.* The inward Veneration of the true God, in the deareſt Love, and higheſt Eſteem, and choiceſt Affections of a pious Soul.

The Second injoyns the external Expreſſions of this Reverence, in the proſtration of the Body, and other Acts of viſible Worſhip. For although God chiefly regards the Heart, and the Frame and Diſpoſition of the inward Man; yet he neglects not to obſerve the due Compoſure of the Body, as a Teſtimony of the Soul's ſincerity.

And as this requires us to honour the Majeſty of God in our Geſtures; ſo the Third requires us to glorifie the Holy and Reverend Name of God in all our Speeches and Diſcourſes, never to make mention of it but with that Prepoſſeſſion of Holy Awe and Dread that might compoſe us into all poſſible Gravity and Seriouſneſs.

And becauſe every thing is beautiful in its Seaſon, therefore we have ſubjoined to all theſe a particular Command, concerning the time wherein God preſcribes all theſe to be more eſpecially tendred unto him. And this is that Precept which we have now under Conſideration; *Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it Holy*, &c.

In the Words we have a Command, and the Inforcement of it.

The Command is to ſanctifie the Sabbath.

And this is juſtly obſervable, in that whereas all the reſt are ſimply either Poſitive, or Negative, this is both. *Remember to keep it Holy:* and, *in it thou ſhalt not do any Work.* As if God took an eſpecial care to fence us in on all ſides to the Obſervation of this Precept.

The Inforcement alſo is more particular, and with greater Care and Inſtance, than we find in any other Command. For God hath here condeſcended to uſe Three cogent Arguments to preſs the Obſervation of this Law upon us.

The Firſt is taken from his own Example, whom, certainly, it is our Glory, as well as our Duty, to imitate in all Things, in which he hath propounded himſelf to be our Pattern. *The Lord reſted the Seventh Day*, and therefore reſt ye alſo.

The Second, From that bountiful and liberal Portion of Time that he hath allowed us for the Affairs and Buſineſs of this preſent Life, *Six days ſhalt thou labour, and do all thy Work*; and therefore it is but fit and equitable, that the Seventh ſhould be given to God, who hath ſo freely given the reſt to thee.

The Third, From the Dedication of this Day to his own immediate Worſhip and Service; *The Lord bleſſed the Sabbath Day, and hallowed it.* So that it is no leſs a Sin than a Sacrilege, and ſtealing of that which is Holy, to purloin any part of that time which God hath thus conſecrated to himſelf, and to imploy it about either ſinful or ſecular Actions.

I ſhall begin with the Command, *Remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it Holy.*

The word *Sabbath*, ſignifies Reſt, and Ceſſation from Labour; and it is applied unto ſeveral Things.

1. *Firſt*, It ſignifies the Temporal Sabbath, or the recurring Seventh Day or Year, which we are now Treating of. And becauſe this was the moſt principal Day of the Week, therefore we find that the whole Week is denominated from it, a Sabbath, *Luke* 10. 12. *Matth.* 28. 1.

2. *Secondly*, It ſignifies a Spiritual Reſt, a reſt from the Slavery and Drudgery of Sin, and thoſe ſordid Labours which the Devil, our grievous Task-maſter, exacts of us. And of this Spiritual Sabbath, the Temporal one is a Sign and Type. So *Exod.* 31. 13. *My Sabbaths ye ſhall keep: for it is a ſign between me and you, — that ye may know that I am the Lord, that doth ſanctifie you.*

Thirdly, It is uſed likewiſe, to ſignifie the eternal Reſt of the Bleſſed in Heaven, where they reſt from all their Labours, and from all their Sorrows, in the full Fruition of the ever-bleſſed God, and of all Bleſſedneſs in him. So the Apoſtle, *Hebr.* 4. 9. *There remaineth a reſt unto the People of God*; the word is σαββατισμὸς, there remaineth a Sabbath, or the Celebration of a Sabbath unto the People of God.

It is only of the firſt of theſe, the Temporal Sabbath, that I am now ſpeaking. And here, neither ſhall I ſpeak of the Sabbath of Years, when the Land was every Seventh Year to reſt from the Labour of Tillage and Husbandry, as we find it *Levit.* 25. 4. *The Seventh Year ſhall be a Sabbath of reſt unto the Land:* Nor yet of the greater Sabbath of the Jubilee, obſerved every Fiftieth Year, at the Period of ſeven Sabbatical Years, wherein all Poſſeſſions and Inheritances which had been Sold or Mortgaged, were again to return to the firſt Owners; which Sabbath you have deſcribed, *Levit.* 25. 8. *&c.* But I ſhall only treat of the Sabbath of Days, which

which this Commandment doth principally reſpect. And the General Heads upon which I ſhall proceed, are theſe Four:

I. Its Primitive Inſtitution.
II. Its Morality and perpetual Obligation.
III. Its Change from the laſt to the firſt Day of the Week.
IV. The manner how God hath required it to be ſanctified by us.

Concerning the Firſt. When the Sabbath was inſtituted, there is ſome difference between Learned Men: Some put a like Date upon it, and refer its beginning to the Promulgation of the Law, or at fartheſt, to the ſending of *Manna* to the *Iſraelites*. And they ground their Aſſertion upon this, That before that time we read not in all the Hiſtory of the Patriarchs, and firſt Ages of the World, of any Sabbath that was obſerved and ſanctified by the holy Fathers who then lived; which doubtleſs, they would not have neglected, had any ſuch Command been given them. I.

Others, who I believe concur with the Truth, fetch its Original as high as the Creation of the World, grounding their Opinion upon that unanſwerable Teſtimony, *Gen.* 2. 2, 3. *On the ſeventh day God ended his work which he had made; and God bleſſed the ſeventh day, and ſanctified it.* Now that there cannot in theſe words be underſtood any *Prolepſis*, or Anticipation, declaring that as done then, which was done many Ages after, appears plainly, becauſe God is ſaid to ſanctifie the Sabbath then when he reſted; but he reſted preciſely on the Seventh Day after the Creation; therefore that very Seventh Day did God ſanctifie, and made it the beginning of all enſuing Sabbaths. So that you ſee the Sabbath is but one day younger than Man, ordained for him in the State of his Uprightneſs and Innocence, that his Faculties being then holy and excellent, he might imploy them, eſpecially on that Day, in the ſingular and moſt ſpiritual Worſhip of God his Creator.

And although we find no more mention of the Sabbath, until *Moſes* had conducted the Children of *Iſrael* into the Wilderneſs, which was about Two thouſand four hundred and fifty Years after the Creation; yet it is not to be ſuppoſed that among the People of God, who were very careful as in obſerving the Law of God themſelves, ſo in delivering it likewiſe to their Poſterity, that the Obſervation of this Law, or of this Day utterly failed, but was continued among thoſe that feared God, till it was again invigorated with new Authority by the Promulgation of it from Mount *Sinai*. And thus much for the Inſtitution.

Secondly, Concerning the Morality of the Sabbath, is a greater Controverſie, and of far greater moment. Some looſe Spirits contend that it is wholly Ceremonial, and ſo utterly aboliſh'd at the coming of Chriſt, and will not be under the Reſtriction of their Liberty in obſerving any Days or Times. Others again make it wholly Moral, and affirm, That the Obſervation of the very Seventh Day from the Creation, is a Law of Nature, and of perpetual Obligation; and therefore think themſelves bound to keep the Jewiſh Sabbath. II.

That I may clearly ſtate this obſcure and difficult Queſtion, I ſhall only premiſe, * That thoſe things are ſaid to be Moral and of the Law of Nature, which are in themſelves rational and fit to be done, although there were no expreſs Command to injoin them. So that where there is a great Equity in the thing it ſelf, enough to ſway a rational and honeſt Man to the doing of it, that is to be accounted Moral, and authorized by the Law of Nature.

That is of poſitive Right which is obſerved only becauſe it is commanded, and hath no intrinſical Goodneſs, or Reaſon in it ſelf to commend it to our Practice, but obligeth us only upon the Injunction and Authority of another. As for inſtance, It is naturally good to obey our Parents, to abſtain from Murther, Theft, Adultery, *&c.* to do to others as we would be content to be dealt with. Theſe things we are obliged unto by the very Light of Reaſon, and the Principles of Nature, although there had been no written Law of God to impoſe them. But then there were other things to which God obliged ſome of his People, that had nothing to commend them beſides the Authority of his Command;

* *Ratio profecta à rerum naturâ, & ad rectè faciendum impellens, & à delicto avocans, non hinc denique incipit Lex eſſe cum ſcripta eſt, ſed tum cùm orta. Orta autem ſimul eſt cum mente divinâ.* Cic. de Legib. lib. 2.

Command: And ſuch were the various Ceremonies under the Law, yea, and in Innocence it ſelf, that Prohibition given to *Adam* not to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. The former ſort are moral and natural Commands, the latter poſitive and inſtituted. The former are commanded, becauſe good; the latter are good, becauſe commanded.

1. Now here *firſt*, Certain it is, that a convenient portion of our time is due unto the Service aud Worſhip of God by natural and moral Right. For certainly, 'tis but fit and juſt that he ſhould have a large ſhare of our Life and Time, who hath given us Life and Time here upon Earth, and hath created us to this very end, that we might ſerve and glorifie him. Yea, had it been propounded to our ſelves, how much we would have allowed for God, could we, without ſhame and bluſhing, have ſet apart leſs Time for his Service from whom we have all, than himſelf hath done? This I think, is by all agreed to.

2. *Secondly*, The Law of Nature doth not dictate to us any particular ſtated Days to be ſet apart for the Worſhip of God, one more than another. For indeed, there can be no natural reaſon why this Day more than that; why every ſeventh Day, rather than every ſixth, or fifth, or fourth. For all Days being in their own nature alike, Reaſon can find no advantage to prefer one of them before another. But that which is Obligatory by the Law of Nature, ought to be plain and evident to all Men, or elſe evidently deducible from ſome natural Principles. Now if we lay aſide the poſitive Command of God, there is no one day in it ſelf better than an other: And therefore, there is a *Memento* prefix'd to the Command, (*Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath Day*,) which is not added to any other Precept; intimating to us, that the Obſervation of a ſpecial Day is not a Dictate of Nature, but only an Impoſition of God, which he requires us to remember and bear in mind.

3. *Thirdly*, That the Seventh Day ſhould be eſpecially conſecrated to the Service and Worſhip of God, is from his poſitive Will and Command; and therefore is as binding and forcible, as if it were a Law of Nature ingraven on our Hearts; unleſs the ſame Authority alter it, that did firſt injoyn it. For this being a Poſitive Law, is therefore good and neceſſary, becauſe commanded. And if it had not been revealed to us, we ſhould never have been obliged to this Obſervation, nor made obnoxious to Puniſhment for failing in it. Yet again,

4. *Fourthly*, This Declaration of the Will of God concerning the Sanctification of the Sabbath, is attended with a Moral Reaſon; and therefore is not meerly and barely Poſitive, as Ceremonial Laws are. Which Reaſon is, that God reſted on the Seventh Day, and therefore we ought ſo to do. Now although this Reaſon carries not ſuch a natural Evidence in it as to have obliged us, unleſs it had been revealed, yet being revealed, we may diſcern a certain Aptitude and Fitneſs in it to oblige us to the Obſervation of the Seventh Day rather than any other, ſince Piety and Religion require that we ſhould imitate God in thoſe things wherein he would have us to imitate him. So that I account this Command to be Moral-Poſitive. Moral, in that it requires a due portion of our time to be dedicated to the Service and Worſhip of God: Poſitive, in that it preſcribes the Seventh Day for that eſpecial Service, which the Light and Law of Nature did not prefix; and mix'd of both, in that it gives a reaſon of this Preſcription, which hath ſomewhat of natural Equity in it, but yet ſuch as could not have been diſcovered without Special and Divine Revelation.

Now becauſe the Obſervation of a Sabbath hath thus much of Morality, and of the Law of Nature in it, it is moſt certain that we are bound to keep a Sabbath, as much as the Jews were; although not to the Circumſtance of the Duty. For,

1. *Firſt*, This Command was obligatory even in Paradiſe it ſelf in the ſtate of Innocency, and therefore contains nothing in it unworthy the ſtate of a Chriſtian. It is no Ceremonial Command, nor to be reckoned amongſt thoſe things which were typical, and prefigured Chriſt to come in the Fleſh; and therefore neither was it

it aboliſh'd at his coming, but ſtill there lyes a ſtrict and indiſpenſable Obligation upon us to obſerve a Sabbath Holy unto the Lord.

Secondly, The Reaſons of this Command are all of them Moral and Perpetual, and therefore ſuch is the Obligation of it to us Chriſtians. The Equity is the ſame to us, that it was to them, *viz.* That we ſhould allow one Day in ſeven to the Worſhip of that God, who ſo liberally allows us ſix for our ordinary Affairs. The Eaſe and Refreſhment of our Bodies from the Labours of our Callings, is as neceſſary as then it was. And we are ſtill as much obliged with Thankfulneſs to remember and meditate upon the great Mercy of our Creation, as they were; and therefore, if theſe were ſufficient Reaſons, why the Jews ſhould obſerve a particular Sabbath, they are ſtill as forcible and cogent with us. Again, 2.

Thirdly, Our Saviour foretelling the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, bids his Diſciples *pray that their Flight might not be in the Winter, nor on the Sabbath Day.* And yet the Deſtruction of that City happened about fourty Years after the Death of Chriſt: And therefore, certainly thoſe who were his Diſciples, lay under an Obligation of obſerving a Sabbath-Day; becauſe our Saviour intimates, that it would prove an heavy Addition to their Affliction, if they ſhould be forced to take their Flight on the Sabbath, when they ought and deſired to be imployed in the Spiritual Exerciſe of Devotion and Holy Duties proper to that Day. 3. *Matth.* 24. 20.

But although the ſanctifying of a Sabbath be thus Obligatory to Chriſtians, yet it is not the ſame Sabbath-Day, to the Obſervation of which the Jews and the People of God, before Chriſt's coming into the World, were bound. But it is with good Ground, and upon good Authority, changed from the laſt to the firſt Day of the Week, from *Saturday* to *Sunday*; called now the Lord's-Day, becauſe it was that Day of the Week on which our Lord and Saviour roſe from the Dead; in Memory of which, and in a Thankful Acknowledgment of the great Mercy of our Redemption, fully compleated by his Reſurrection, the Sabbath hath been tranſlated to this Day, and is now rightly celebrated on this Day by all the Churches of Chriſt throughout the World.

And this Change of the Sabbath is the Third Head which I promiſed to ſpeak of.

III. Now as the firſt Inſtitution of the Sabbath was by Divine Authority; ſo likewiſe is the Change of it. For as God reſted from his Labour on the laſt Day of the Week; ſo Chriſt reſted from all his Labour, Sorrows and Afflictions on this Day, in which he fully compleated the Work of our Redemption, and manifeſted it to be perfected by his Reſurrection from the Dead. Therefore, as the Jewiſh Sabbath was ſanctified, becauſe of the finiſhing of the Work of Creation; ſo was the Chriſtian Sabbath, becauſe of the finiſhing of the Work of Redemption; which is of far greater Importance, and therefore deſerves more to be celebrated than the other. Chriſt ſanctified this Day by his Reſurrection; and the Apoſtles confirmed the Obſervation of it, both by their Writings and uniform Practice; and it hath ſuch an inviolable Stamp of Divinity upon it, that now it is no more alterable to the end of the World.

Nor is it needful that an expreſs Command of Chriſt ſhould be brought for this Change out of the New Teſtament; it is ſufficient if by neceſſary Conſequence it may be deduced from Scripture. And yet,

Firſt, We have expreſs places of the Scripture thus far, that the Firſt Day of the Week is mentioned as the ſtated Time for Chriſtians to meet together, to preach, to hear, and to break Bread in the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's-Supper, and to perform other Duties of Religion. So *Acts* 20. 7. *Upon the firſt Day of the Week, when the Diſciples came together to break Bread, Paul preached unto them.* Which plainly declares that the ſolemn Meetings and Aſſemblies of Chriſtians were then on this Day; the Jewiſh Sabbath beginning to wear out, and the Chriſtian Sabbath, of the Lord's-Day, coming into its place and ſtead. 1. 1 *Cor.* 16. 1, 2.

Again, The publick Collections for the poorer Saints, were ordain'd by the Apoſtle to be made on this Day: *Now concerning the Collection for the Saints: upon the firſt Day of the Week let every one of you lay by him in ſtore, as God hath proſpered him.* And this very Rule and Cuſtom the Apoſtle ſaith, he had before eſtabliſh'd in the

Church of the *Galatians*, and why ſhould this Day be choſen for their Collections, but only becauſe the Aſſemblies of Chriſtians were held on this Day, and ſo gave a better Conveniency to gather their Charity than at any other time?

Rev 1. 10. Again; St. *John* ſaith of himſelf, *that he was in the Spirit on the Lord's-Day*; which is no other but this our Chriſtian Sabbath, that hath received this Title and Denomination from our Lord Chriſt. For what ſome ſay, that the Lord's-Day means no more than the Day of the Lord's appearing to him, and revealing thoſe many myſterious Viſions, in vain and dilate, and ſcarce agreeable to the Senſe and Gravity of Scripture-Expreſſion. It ſignifies therefore this Day, wherein the Apoſtle being in all likelihood taken up with Spiritual Meditations, God was pleaſed to gratify him with the Revelation of thoſe great Things, which were afterwards to take their Effect and Accompliſhment.

Now put the force of theſe Scriptures together, and they will certainly amount to the full proof of the Inſtitution of this Firſt-Day Sabbath. It is called the Lord's-Day; it was appointed and uſed for the Aſſemblies of the Saints, for the preaching and hearing of the Word, and Adminiſtration of the Sacrament, for the Collection of Alms for the Relief of the Poor; and this not in one Church only, but in other Churches of the Saints; and that likewiſe not at ſome more ſolemn times only, but weekly. Put theſe together, and what more plain and evident Proof can a thing of this nature admit of?

2. *Secondly*; A Second Argument to prove this Change, ſhall be that which with all Sober Men may be ſufficiently valid, which is the conſtant and uninterrupted Practice of the Church in all Ages; from the time of Man's Redemption by the Death and Reſurrection of Chriſt, to this very preſent Day. Chriſt himſelf began the Sanctification of it by his Reſurrection; on the ſame Day he appeared to his Diſciples, and he himſelf informs them of his Reſurrection, *John* 20. 19. I have already declared unto you the Practice of the Apoſtles; and for the Practice of the Primitive Church immediately after the Apoſtles, all Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtories do with one conſent, teſtify that the ſolemn Aſſemblies of Chriſtians were held on this Day. Which unvaried Cuſtom and Obſervation of the Church of Chriſt ought to be of great weight with all ſolid and ſerious Chriſtians; and if we add to this likewiſe the unanimous Conſent of the moſt holy and ſpiritual Men, who are generally found to be the moſt ſtrict Obſervers of the Lord's-Day; and laſtly, the great Bleſſing, that God hath poured out upon his People in the plentiful Effuſion of his Grace and Spirit on them in his holy Ordinances celebrated on this Day, it will be paſt all queſtion and debate, that this is the Day that the Lord hath made for himſelf, and therefore let us be glad and rejoice therein.

We have thus conſidered the Inſtitution, Morality, and Change of the Sabbath. All which are the more abſtruſe and intricate, partly from the Silence of the Scriptures, which leave us to collect the Truth, by Inferences and Deductions; and partly from the different Opinions of Learned Men, whoſe Queries and Diſputes about theſe Points are ſo various and endleſs; that, as *Maldonate* ſaid of *Luke* 2. 34. *The place had been much eaſier underſtood, if no Man had attempted to expound it*; ſo I may ſay of the Queſtions in hand, It had been much eaſier to determine them, if no Man had debated them. I have endeavoured to make them as plain and perſpicuous as the nature of the Subject would permit, laying aſide all contentious Arguments and needleſs Cavils, both of one ſide and the other.

The fourth General propouuded, remains now to be conſidered; which as it is of greater concernment than the reſt, ſo it is of equal Difficulty; and that is concerning the Sanctification of the Sabbath. In treating of which I ſhall obſerve the ſame Method, and ſatisfy my ſelf in laying down poſitively what Scripture and Reaſon dictate, without ingaging in thoſe tedious Diſputes about it, which might make this Diſcourſe both unpleaſing and uprofitable.

This Commandment therefore ſpeaks of a twofold Sanctification of this Day. The one which it hath already received from God; the other which it ought to receive from Man. And the former is given as a Reaſon of, and Motive unto the latter.

Firſt,

First, God hath ſanctified the Sabbath-Day, ſo we have it, *ver.* 11. *The Lord bleſſed the ſeventh Day, and hallowed it.* Where theſe two words *bleſſed* and *hallowed*, are only exegetical one of the other, and carry in them the ſame ſenſe common to both. 1.

Now God bleſſed and hallowed the Sabbath-Day, not by infuſing any inherent Quality of Holineſs into it (for neither Days, nor Places, nor any inanimate things are Subjects capable of real Holineſs.)

But *firſt*, God bleſſed and hallowed it by ſeparating that Day from others, beſtowing an higher Dignity and Privilege upon it, as the Day whereon both himſelf choſe to reſt from the Works of Creation, and the Day whereon he requires that we alſo ſhould reſt from the Works of our ordinary Vocations. For to hallow and ſanctify, is to ſet any thing apart from prophane and common, unto ſacred and ſpiritual Uſes. God therefore ſanctified the Sabbath, when he ſelected it out of the courſe of other Days, and ſet it apart from the common Imployments and Services of Life, ordaining that the Spiritual Concernments of his Glory, and our Salvation ſhould be therein eſpecially tranſacted. And this is that Bleſſing which God hath conferred upon this Day; for what other Benefit is a Day capable of, but only that when the other ſix Days, like the unregarded Vulgar of the Year, were to be imployed in the low and ſordid Drudgery of Earthly Affairs; this ſeventh Day God hath raiſed from the Dunghil, and ſet upon the Throne, appointing it accord- 1.
to *Ignatius* his Phraſe, τὴν βασιλίδα, τὴν ὕπατον τῶν ἡμερῶν, the Prince and Sovereign of Days, Epiſt ad Magneſios.
exempting it from all ſervile Works, and deſigning it for ſuch Spiritual and Cœleſtial Imployments, that were it obſerved according to God's Command, Eternity it ſelf would not have much advantage above it, but only that it is longer: So that in the Ring and Circle of the Week, the Sabbath is the Jewel, the moſt excellent and precious of Days.

Secondly; God hath bleſſed and Sanctified it, not only in this relative, but alſo in an effective ſenſe, *viz.* as he hath appointed it to be the Day whereon he doth eſpecially bleſs and ſanctify us; yea, and poſſibly he makes the means of our Sanctification to be more effectual on this Day, than when they are diſpenſed on any other common Days. God doth then eſpecially give out plentiful Effuſions of his Spirit, fills his Ordinances with his Grace and Preſence; and we may with a more confident Faith expect a greater portion of Spiritual Bleſſings from him, when both the Ordinances and the Day too are his, than when though the Ordinances be his, yet the Day is ours. In this ſenſe God may be ſaid to bleſs and ſanctifie the Sabbath-day, becauſe he bleſſeth and ſanctifies us on that Day. As the Pſalmiſt moſt elegantly, and in an high ſtrain of Poetry, ſaith, That God crowneth the Year with his Goodneſs, *Pſal.* 65. 11. Not that the Plenty and Fruitfulneſs of the Year is any Bleſſing unto it, but it is a Bleſſing unto Men, whoſe hearts God then filleth with Food and Gladneſs. In both theſe ſenſes may God be ſaid to bleſs and ſanctifie the Sabbath. 2.

Secondly; As God ſanctified the Sabbath, ſo Man is commanded to ſanctify it alſo; ver. 8. *Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy.* Now we ſanctifie and hallow a Day, when we obſerve it holy to the Lord, ſequeſtring our ſelves from common Affairs to thoſe ſpiritual Exerciſes which he hath required us to be converſant about on that Day. God ſanctifies it by Conſecration, we ſanctifie it by Devotion. He hath ſet it apart for his Worſhip, and on it we ought to ſet our ſelves apart for his Worſhip, and to be taken up only with thoſe things which he hath either allowed or preſcribed us: And therefore God doth lay an eſpecial Claim to this Day. For although he be the ſupreme Lord of all, and doth diſpenſe, and as it were draw out the Thred of Time, and Days, and Years for us, out of the infinite Bottom of his Eternity; yet he doth not ſo particularly challenge any part of it to himſelf, as he doth this ſeventh Day: Whence it is ſaid, *ver.* 10. *The ſeventh Day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God.* The ſix foregoing Days of the Week are thine, and thou mayſt diſpoſe of them in the honeſt Works of thy Calling, as Prudence and Convenience ſhall direct; but this Day God challengeth to himſelf, as his peculiar portion of our time, becauſe he hath ordained it for his Worſhip and Service, and therefore it is called his. And when we devote our ſelves 2.
to

to his Service and Worſhip, meditating on his Excellency, magnifying and praiſing his Mercy, and invoking his holy Name, we then hallow this Day, and give unto God that which is God's.

And thus you ſee what it is to ſanctify the Sabbath, both as God hath done it by Dedication, and as Man ought to do it by Obſervation. But the great Difficulty lies in what manner the Sabbath ought to be ſanctified and kept holy, Whether or no we are bound to the ſame ſtrict and vigorous Obſervation of our Chriſtian Sabbath, as the Jews were of theirs under the Oeconomy of *Moſes?*

To this I anſwer in the general; That as our Sabbath is not the very ſame with theirs, but only the ſame analogically, bearing a fit proportion to it; ſo likewiſe our Sanctification of the Lord's-day (for thus I had rather call it than the Sabbath) is not in all particulars the ſame that was required from the Jews, but bears a proportion to it in thoſe things which are not Ceremonial nor Burthenſome to our Chriſtian Liberty.

But more particularly, The ſanctifying of this Day conſiſts partly in abſtaining from thoſe things whereby it would be prophaned; and partly in the performance of thoſe things which are required of us, and tend to promote the Sanctity and Holineſs of it.

Here, firſt, I ſhall lay down this; That in order to our due ſanctifying of the Sabbath, we ought to abſtain from the common and ſervile Works of our ordinary Callings and Vocations. So we have it expreſly, ver. 10. *In it thou ſhalt not do any Work.* And this God prohibits, not that Reſt and Ceſſation is in it ſelf acceptable unto him, or any part of his Worſhip and Service; but only becauſe Earthly Imployments are an Impediment and Diſtraction to that heavenly frame of Spirit which we ought to maintain in all the Parts, and Duties of this Day. The Works of our Callings are not evil in themſelves, but lawful and good; and ſuch wherein on other Days we ſerve God, and whereon we may expect a Bleſſing from him. But yet our Mind is ſo narrow and ſtinted, that we cannot at once attend them, and the Service of God with that Zeal and Fervour that he requires; and therefore that we may be wholly imployed in his Work, he hath taken us off from our own.

Now this prohibition of working on the Sabbath, is ſtrongly inforced by the Conceſſion of ſix Days for our ordinary Labour. A Conceſſion I call it, conſidering the Indulgence granted unto us; but yet it is not meerly a Conceſſion, but a Command too; *ſix Days ſhalt thou labour, and do all thy Work; but the ſeventh Day is the Sabbath of the Lord.* That exceptive Particle *But*, intimates unto us, that none of that Work which is lawful to be done on ordinary Days, ought to be performed by us on the Sabbath.

I know it is a Queſtion, Whether theſe words, *Six Days ſhalt thou labour*, be a Precept, or a Permiſſion only? To me they ſeem preceptive, requiring us diligently to attend that Vocation and State of Life in which the Divine Providence hath ſet us, and to perform the Offices of it with Care and Conſcience: For it is ſaid, *thou ſhalt labour*, not only *thou mayſt labour.* And thoſe who contend that they meerly ſignifie a Permiſſion of the daily Works of our Callings, open too wide a Gap for Sloth and Idleneſs to creep in, without violating any Commandment, or being cenſured and condemned for Sin.

But I ſhall not trouble you with the Diſputes about this: Only let me take notice of the weakneſs and inconſequence of one Inference that is commonly drawn from it; and that is, If it be a Divine Precept, that we ought ſix Days to labour, then can we not, by any Conſtitution whatſoever be taken off from the lawful Works of our Callings, nor obliged to keep any other Days holy and ſolemn beſides the Sabbath; for God's Laws do not contradict themſelves; and wherein ſoever Humane Laws contradict the Divine, they are of no force nor validity.

But this Argument fails in its Deduction: For the Command, *Six Days ſhalt thou labour*, is not to be underſtood abſolutely and unlimitedly, but with a juſt Reſtraint and Exception; that is, Thou ſhalt labour ſix Days ordinarily, unleſs any of them be ſet apart either by thine own private Devotion, or by publick Authority, for the immediate Worſhip and Service of God. And that this is of neceſſity to be ſo underſtood, appears, if we conſider how many Days in the Week God himſelf did dedicate in thoſe Feaſts which he commanded the Jews ſtrictly to obſerve, notwithſtanding

notwithstanding that they were injoined six Days Labour. Besides every New Moon; the Passover, in remembrance of their Deliverance from the Bondage of *Egypt*, and as a clear Type of Christ, who, as a Lamb without spot, was offered up to God for us. Then Pentecost, or the Feast of Weeks, fifty days after the Passover, a Memorial that the Law was given to them from Mount *Sinai* fifty days after their departure out of *Egypt*; typifying likewise the sending of the Holy Ghost to inspire the Apostles with Heavenly Truth, and to enable them to preach the Gospel, which is the Law of Jesus Christ, which was accordingly fulfilled fifty days after Christ, our great Passover, was sacrificed for us. Then, thirdly, The Feast of Atonement or Expiation, which was celebrated on the tenth Day of the seventh Month whereon the High-Priest was solemnly to confess unto God both his own Sins, and the Sins of the People, and to make Atonement for them; typifying thereby the full Expiation and Atonement of our Sins made by our High-Priest Jesus Christ. And lastly, There was ordained likewise the Feast of Tabernacles, on the fifteenth day of the same Month, and this was to last not only one Day, but a whole Week together, and was instituted to be a Memorial to them of their Journey through the Wilderness, wherein for forty Years they lived in Tents and Tabernacles. All these Feasts we find appointed by God himself, and imposed upon the *Israelites*, Levit. 23.

And not only did they account themselves obliged to keep these Days holy, which were injoined by the Divine Command, but those also which were appointed by Humane Authority; and such were the Feast of *Purim*, to be kept two days following, in remembrance of their Deliverance from the malicious and bloody Designs of *Haman*, *Esth.* 9. 21. And the Feast of the Dedication of the Temple, first observed at the rebuilding of their Temple after their return from the Babylonish Captivity; as you may read *Ezra.* 6. 16. and from that time perpetuated unto the Days of our Saviour Christ, who, though it were but of Humane and Ecclesiastical Institution, yet was pleased to honour that Solemnity with his Presence, *John* 10. 22. Besides, we frequently read of Fasts, both personal and national, appointed upon some emergent Occasions, to appease and divert the Wrath of God, as the Fast of the fifth and the seventh Month, for seventy Years together, *Zech.* 7. 5. And the like to these without doubt, either our own private Devotion, or the publick Authority of the Nation, may in the like Circumstances impose on us without violating this Command of six Days Labour.

But now, although this six Days Labour was not so strictly required, as not sometimes to admit the intervention of an holy Rest; yet the seventh Day's Rest was so exactly to be observed, as not to admit any bodily Labour, or secular Imployment. God would not have this holy Rest disturbed by the tumultuous Affairs and Businesses of Life; and we find this Command strictly inforced by the double Sanction both of a Promise and Threatning, *Jer.* 17. from *ver.* 24. to the end, *If ye diligently hearken unto me, saith the Lord, to bring in no burthen through the Gates of the City on the Sabbath-Day, but hallow the Sabbath-Day, to do no Work therein: Then shall there enter into this City, Kings and Princes sitting upon the Throne of David, ----and the City shall remain for ever. But if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the Sabbath-Day; then will I kindle a Fire in the Gates thereof, and it shall devour the Palace of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched.* Yea God was so accurate about this, that he descends to a particular Prohibition of several sorts of Works which he would not have to be done on the Sabbath-day; on that Day the *Israelites* were not to gather Manna, *Exod.* 16. 27. nor to gather in their Harvest, *Exod.* 24. 21. nor to buy or sell, *Nehem.* 10. 31. nor to tread the Wine-press, *Neh.* 13. 15. nor so much as to gather Sticks, *Numb.* 15. 32. nor to go from their places of Abode to provide themselves Food, *Exod.* 16. 29. yea so strictly were they tied to the Observation of this Sabbath, that they might not so much as kindle a Fire, *Exod.* 35. 3. *Ye shall kindle no Fire throughout your Habitations on the Sabbath-Day.* Unto all which Prohibitions from God, the Jews added many superstitious and ridiculous ones of their own, not grave enough to be here mentioned; whereby they made that Burthen which was before heavy, to be altogether insupportable by their foolish and vain Traditions.

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Now the great Queſtion is, How far theſe Prohibitions do concern us, and whether we are obliged to the punctual obſervance of them as the Jews were?

To this I anſwer in the Negative, that we are not: For we are bound to nothing by the Law of *Moſes*, but only what was of Moral and Natural Right in that Law; and as for other Ordinances which were poſitive, we are ſet free from them, by that Liberty which Jeſus Chriſt hath purchaſed for, and conferred upon his Church. We do not celebrate the Lord's-Day it ſelf upon any Obligation laid upon us by the Letter of this fourth Commandment, (for that expreſly injoins the ſeventh Day from the Creation, whereas ours is the eighth) but only from the Analogy and Proportion of Moral Reaſon; which requires that a due and convenient Portion of our Time ſhould be ſeparated to the Service and Worſhip of God. But for the fixing of the very Day, why it ſhould be this rather than any other, we acknowledge it to proceed from the Conſecration of it by our Saviour's Reſurrection, the Inſtitution of the Apoſtles, and the conſequent Practice of the Univerſal Church of Chriſt in all Ages, as I have already declared. And therefore ſhould we as ſcrupulouſly and nicely obſerve it in all Circumſtances, as the Jews did their Sabbath; poſſibly it would not be a Sanctification of the Sabbath, but a fond and groundleſs Superſtition.

The Lord's Day is therefore to be obſerved, as only in things that are in themſelves Moral and Rational: Nor will this give any Scope to the Libertiniſm of thoſe who would willingly indulge themſelves, either in Worldly Affairs, or looſe Recreations on this Day. For it is Moral and Rational that the whole of that Day, which is ſet apart for the Worſhip of God, ſhould be employed in his Worſhip. This likewiſe is Moral, and of Spiritual Obligation, that we do not our own Pleaſure, nor ſpeak our own Words on his Holy Day, as the Prophet expreſſeth it, *Iſa.* 58. 13. This obligeth us Chriſtians, as well as the Jews. For if a Day be dedicated unto God, certainly every part and parcel of it belongs unto him; and we ought to reſt from all our Worldly Employments, that might ſteal away our Thoughts and Affections from God, or indiſpoſe us to his Spiritual Worſhip and Service.

But yet this extends not to theſe ſmall Punctualities of gathering Sticks, kindling a Fire, and preparing Food for our ſelves; for theſe things doubtleſs may be done, without being any Moral Impediments to our Piety and Devotion on this Day: Yea, they may be Moral Helps and Furtherances unto it.

For notwithſtanding this Reſt and Ceſſation from Labour, that is required from us on the Lord's-Day, yet there are three ſorts of Works that may, and ought to be performed on it, how great ſoever our Bodily Labour may be in doing them. And they are,

Works of Piety.
Works of Neceſſity. And,
Works of Charity.

2. *Firſt*; Works of Piety are to be performed on the Lord's Day; yea on this Day eſpecially, as being the proper Works of the Day: And ſuch are not only thoſe which conſiſt in the internal Operations of the Soul, as Heavenly Meditations, and Spiritual Affections; but ſuch alſo as conſiſt in the external Actions of the Body, as Oral Prayer, reading of the Scriptures, and preaching of the Word; yea on this Day are Miniſters chiefly employed in their Bodily Labour, and ſpending of their Spirits, yet it is far from being a Prophanation of the Lord's Day; for Holy Works are moſt proper for Holy Days. And not only are ſuch Works to be performed on the Lord's Day, but they were injoined alſo on the Jewiſh Sabbath. And therefore ſaith our Saviour, *Matth.* 12. 5. *Have ye not read in the Law, how that on the Sabbath Days the Prieſts in the Temple prophane the Sabbath, and yet be blameleſs?* This Word therefore of prophaning the Sabbath, is not to be underſtood of a formal Prophanation, as if they did that which was unlawful to be done on that Day, but only of a Material Prophanation; that is, they laboured hard in killing and ſlaying, and dividing and boyling, and burning the Sacrifices in the Temple: which, had they not been inſtituted parts of God's Worſhip, had been Prophanations of the Sabbath; but being commanded by God, were ſo far from being Prophanations, that they were Sanctifications of that Day. And upon this account likewiſe were Sabbath Days Journies permitted to the Jews, which though they were not Actions of Piety

Piety in themſelves, yet were they Actions tending towards Piety, that thoſe who were remote from the Places of Worſhip, might aſſemble themſelves together to hear the Scriptures read and expounded to them. This appears 2 *Kings* 4. 23. where the Husband of the *Shunamitiſh* Woman expoſtulates with her, *Wherefore wilt thou go to the Prophet to Day? it is neither new Moon nor Sabbath.* Whence it may be clearly collected, that they were permitted to travel a certain Space, to attend upon the Worſhip and Service of God. And this Sabbath-Day's Journey ſome limit to a Mile, others two, the diſtance of the utmoſt part of the Camp of *Iſrael* from the Tabernacle of the Congregation. But with very good reaſon, it may be thought that the Sabbath-Day's Journey, was any diſtance from the place of their abode, to the next Synagogue, which commonly not being above a Mile, or two, that diſtance was vulgarly called a Sabbath-Day's Journey. So that it appears, that Works of Piety, or Works immediately tending to Piety, may lawfully be performed with the ſtricteſt Obſervation of the Lord's Day.

2. *Secondly*, Not only Works of Piety, but Works of Neceſſity, and of great Convenience, may alſo be done on the Lord's Day. And they are ſuch without which we cannot ſubſiſt, or not well ſubſiſt: and therefore we may quench a raging Fire, prevent any great and notable Damage that would happen either to our Perſons or Eſtates; fight for our own Defence, or the Defence of our Countrey, without being guilty of the Violation of this Day. Concerning the laſt of which, Hiſtories inform us, that the Jews were ſo ſcrupulous, as to ſuffer themſelves to be aſſaulted and ſlain by their Enemies, rather than they would on this Day lift up a Weapon to repel them, till *Matthias* perſuaded them out of this Foppiſh Superſtition, 1 *Maccab.* 2. 40.

And not only theſe Works which are of abſolute Neceſſity, but thoſe likewiſe which are of great Conveniency, may lawfully be done on the Lord's Day. Such as are kindling of Fire, preparing of Meat, and many other Particulars too numerous to be mentioned: We find our Saviour defending his Diſciples againſt the Exceptions of the *Phariſees*, for plucking the Ears of Corn, rubbing them in their Hands, and eating them on the Sabbath-Day, *Matth.* 12. 1, *&c.* Only let us take this Caution; that we neglect not the doing of thoſe things till the Lord's Day, which might be well done before, and then plead Neceſſity or Convenience for it. For if the Neceſſity or Convenience were ſuch as might have been foreſeen, our Chriſtian Prudence and Piety ought to have provided for it before this Holy Day; ſo that we might wholly intend the immediate Service of God in it, with as few Avocations and Impediments as are poſſible.

3. *Thirdly*, Another ſort of Works that may and ought to be done on the Lord's Day, are the Works of Charity and Mercy. For indeed, this Day is inſtituted for a Memorial of God's great Mercy towards us; and therefore in it we are obliged to ſhew Charity and Mercy: Charity towards Men, and Mercy to the very Beaſts themſelves. And therefore, although the Obſervation of the Sabbath was ſo ſtrictly injoined the Jews, yet was it to give place to the Works of Mercy, whenſoever a poor Beaſt did but ſtand in need of it. So *Matth.* 12. 11. *What Man ſhall there be among you, that ſhall have one Sheep, and if it fall into a Pit on the Sabbath Day, will not lay hold on it, and lift it out?* And ſo again, *Luke* 13. 15. *Doth not every one of you on the Sabbath looſe his Ox or his Aſs from the Stall, and lead him away to watering?* Yea, and this the very Heathens obſerved on their Feſtivals; when other Works were forbidden, yet works of Mercy were expreſly allowed, and by Name the helping of an Ox out of a Pit. Works of Mercy therefore are to be done even to Beaſts themſelves, whatſoever Labour may be required to the doing of them: And how much more then, Works of Charity to Men like our ſelves? Which Charity is to be ſhewn either to their Souls, or their Bodies; for both many times are extreamly miſerable. To their Souls, in inſtructing, adviſing, exhorting, reproving, comforting and counſelling of them, praying for them; and if in any thing they have offended us, freely forgiving them. This indeed is a Work of Charity proper for the Lord's Day, a Work highly acceptable unto God, and the beſt way that can be to ſanctifie it.

Macrob. Saturn. lib. 1. cap. 16.

Neither

Neither are we to forbear any Work of Charity to their Bodies, and outward Man. And therefore we find how ſeverely our Saviour rebukes the Superſtitious Hypocriſie of the *Phariſees*, who murmured againſt him as a Sabbath-breaker, becauſe he had healed ſome of their Infirmities on the Sabbath-Day, *Luke* 13. 14, 15, 16. *The Ruler of the Synagogue ſaid to the People with Indignation, becauſe Jeſus had healed on the Sabbath Day, There are Six Days in which Men ought to work; in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath-Day.* See how our Lord takes them up, *Thou Hypocrite, doth not every one of you on the Sabbath looſe his Ox?* &c. *And ought not this Woman, who is a Daughter of Abraham, to be looſed from this Bond on the Sabbath Day?* And ſo again, *Matth.* 12. 10. *Chriſt healed a Man that had a withered Hand*, and juſtifieth this Work of Charity to this Man, by their Works of Mercy to their Beaſts; and aſſerts, *ver.* 12. *It is lawful to do well on the Sabbath Days.* Yea, he appeals to their very Conſciences in this, whether a Benefit done to a poor helpleſs Creature, could be counted a Breach and Violation of the Sabbath, *Mark* 3. 4. *Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath Days, or to do evil? to ſave Life, or to kill?* Certainly, it is a right Sabbath Days Work to do good, and to put our ſelves to any Work and Labour that may tend to the ſaving of Life, or eaſing of Pain, or healing the Diſeaſes and Sickneſs of our Brother. And our Saviour hath told us, *Mark* 2. 27. *That the Sabbath was made for Man, not man for the Sabbath.* The ſtrict and punctual Obſervation of the Sabbath, is to give place whenſoever the Exigence or Good of our Neighbour doth require it; for God prefers Mercy before Sacrifice.

Thus you ſee what Reſt is required from us on the Lord's Day, and what Works may be done on it without any Violation of the Law, or Prophanation of the Day: And this is the firſt Thing in order to our ſanctifying the Sabbath, *viz.* That we ought to reſt from the common and ſervile Works of our ordinary Callings and Vocations.

2. *Secondly*, The Sanctification of the Sabbath doth eſpecially conſiſt in a diligent and conſcientious Attendance upon all the Ordinances of God, and the Duties of his Worſhip, appointed to be performed on this Day: And that whether in Publick, or in Private, or in Secret.

1. *Firſt*, Conſider what Duties you are to be ingaged in, in the Publick and Solemn Worſhip of God on this Day; for in them a great and principal Part of the Sanctification of it doth conſiſt. This I mention in the firſt place as moſt preferable. For certainly, as long as through the Mercy of God, we have the Publick and Free Diſpenſation of the Goſpel, we ought not to ſlight, nor turn our Backs upon this viſible Communion of the Church, but to honour and own the Freedom of the Goſpel, by our conſtant Attendance on the Diſpenſations of it; leſt, deſpiſing the Mercy of God in giving them to us ſo publickly, we provoke him, at length, moſt juſtly to neceſſitate us to thoſe Retirements, which now ſo very many, out of Sloth or Faction, do ſo much affect. I pray God, that this prove not the ſad and direful Conſequence of that Contempt, that is caſt upon the Publick by ſome Perſons, whoſe only Study and Buſineſs it is to divide Chriſt, and make Rents and Schiſms in his Body the Church.

Now the Publick Duties, which are neceſſary to the right Sanctifying of the Lord's Day, are theſe:

1. *Firſt*, Affectionate Prayer, in joining with the Miniſter, who is our Mouth unto God, as well as God's Mouth unto us: For as he is intruſted to deliver his Sovereign Will and Commands, ſo likewiſe to preſent our Requeſts unto the Throne of his Grace. We ought heedfully to attend to every Petition, to dart it up to Heaven with our moſt earneſt Deſires; and to cloſe and ſeal it up with our affectionate *Amen*, So be it. For though it be the Miniſter alone that ſpeaks, yet it is not the Miniſter alone that prays, but the whole Congregation by him, and with him; and whatſoever Petition is not accompanied with thy moſt Sincere and Cordial Affections, it is as much mocking of God, as if thine own Mouth had uttered it without the Concurrence of thy Heart, which is moſt groſs Hypocriſie. Conſider what Promiſes are made to particular Chriſtians when they pray ſingly, and by themſelves, *Whatſoever ye ſhall ask the Father in my name, he will grant it you*, John 15. 16. and 16. 23.

What

What great prevalency then muſt the United Prayers of the Saints have, when they joyn Intereſts, and put all the Favour that each of them hath at the Throne of Grace, into one Common Stock? When we come to the Publick Prayers, we are not to come as Auditors, but as Actors; we have our part in them; and every Petition that is ſpread before God, ought to be breathed from our very Hearts and Souls: Which if we affectionately perform, we may have good Aſſurance, that what is ratified by ſo many Votes and Suffrages here on Earth, ſhall likewiſe be confirmed in Heaven. For our Saviour hath told us, *Mat.* 18. 19. *That if two ſhall agree together on Earth, as touching any thing that they ſhall ask, it ſhall be done for them by his Father that is in Heaven.*

Secondly, Our Reverent and Attentive Hearing of the Word of God, either Read, or Preached, is another Publick Duty Neceſſary to the Sanctification of the Sabbath. This was obſerved alſo in the Times of the Law, before Chriſt's coming into the World, *Acts.* 15. 21. *Moſes of old time hath in every City them who Preach him, being Read in the Synagogues every Sabbath-Day.* Their Synagogues were Built for this very purpoſe: And as their Temple was the great Place of Legal and Ceremonial Worſhip; ſo theſe were for their Moral and Natural Worſhip. In the Temple they chiefly Sacrificed; and in their Synagogues they Prayed, Read, and Heard. And every Town, and almoſt ever Village, had one erected in it, as now our Churches are; where the People on the Sabbath-Day aſſembled together, and had ſome Portion of the Law Read and Expounded to them; much more ought we to give our attendance on this Holy Ordinance, now in the Times of the Goſpel, ſince a greater meaſure of Spiritual Knowledge is required from us; and the Myſteries of Salvation are more clearly declared unto us. And may that Tongue wither, and that Mouth be for ever ſilenced, which ſhall dare to utter any thing in contempt and vilifying of the Holy Ordinance. For ſuch excellent Things are ſpoken of the Preaching of the Goſpel; That it is, *the Power of God*, 1 Cor. 1. 18. that it is, *the Salvation of thoſe who believe*, ver. 21. That it is, *the ſweet Savour of the Knowledge of God*, 2 Cor. 2. 14. That certainly whoſoever diſparageth it, rejecteth againſt himſelf the Counſel of God, and neglects the only appointed means for the begetting of Faith, and ſo for the obtaining of Eternal Salvation: *For Faith comes by Hearing, and Hearing by the Word of God*, *Rom.* 10. 27.

Thirdly, Another Publick Duty pertaining to the Sanctifying of the Lord's Day, is Singing of Pſalms. For this Day being a Feſtival unto God, a Day of Spiritual Joy and Gladneſs, How can we better teſtifie our Joy, than by our Melody? *Is any Man merry?* Saith St. *James*, *chap.* 5. 13. *let him ſing Pſalms.* And therefore, let prophane Spirits deride this how they pleaſe, yet certainly it is a moſt Heavenly and Spiritual Duty. The Holy Angels, and the Spirits of Juſt Men in Heaven, are ſaid to ſing Eternal *Hallelujahs* unto the Great King. And if our Sabbath be Typical of Heaven, and the Work of the Sabbath repreſents to us the Everlaſting Work of theſe Bleſſed Spirits, How can it be better done than when we are ſinging the Praiſes of him that ſits upon the Throne, and of the Lamb our Redeemer? This is to joyn with the Heavenly Choire in their Heavenly Work; and to obſerve a Sabbath here, as like that Eternal Sabbath there, as the Imperfection of Earth can reſemble the Glory and Perfection of Heaven.

Fourthly, Another Publick Duty belonging unto the Sanctifying of the Lord's Day, is the Adminiſtration of the Sacraments, eſpecially that of the Lord's Supper. And therefore it is mentioned, *Acts* 20. 7. *Upon the Firſt Day of the Week, when the Diſciples came together to break Bread*, that is, to partake of the Holy Communion of the Body and Blood of Chriſt, *Paul Preached unto them*; which intimates, that the primary intent of their Aſſemblies, was to receive the Lord's Supper; and that upon occaſion of this, the Apoſtle inſtructed them by Preaching. It is moſt evident by all the Records of the Church, that it was the Apoſtolick and Primitive Cuſtom to partake of this moſt Holy Ordinance every * Lord's Day, and that their Meetings were chiefly deſigned for this; to which were annexed Prayer and Preaching. I am afraid, Sirs, that one of the great Sins of our Age, is

* Yea, *Hieron. ad Lucinium. & Aug. Serm. in monte* 12 ſay every Day.

is not only the Neglect and Contempt of this Ordinance by ſome, but the ſeldom celebrating it by all. The Apoſtle, where he ſpeaks of this Holy Inſtitution, intimates, that it ſhould be frequently diſpens'd and participated, 1 *Cor.* 11. 26. *As often as ye Eat this Bread, and Drink this Cup.* Let us conſider then, what diſhonour they reflect upon Chriſt, who although this Ordinance be too ſeldom adminiſtred, yet either totally withdraw themſelves from it, or very rarely partake of it. I ſhall no longer inſiſt upon this, but leave it to God and your own Conſciences: For certainly, if either Perſuaſion, or Demonſtration it ſelf, could prevail againſt Reſolution, enough hath been many times ſaid heretofore, to ſpare me the Labour of making this Complaint any more.

And thus much concerning the Sanctification of the Lord's Day, in the publick Duties of his Worſhip and Service.

But what, haſt thou no Sabbath-Work to do, after thou returneſt from the Congregation and Publick Aſſemblies? Yes, certainly, the Day is not done when the Church diſſolves, for the whole of it is Holy to the Lord. And therefore,

2. *Secondly*, When you return every one to your Families, there are Private and Family-Duties to be performed. Walks and Viſits are not to be Evening-Work of the Sabbath, but Holy and Spiritual Conferences are then proper, either to bring to your remembrance the Truths you before have heard, or to engage your own Hearts, or the Hearts of others, to admire and magnifie God, for all his great Wonders of Providence and Redemption. Indeed, if a Walk be thus improved; it may be a Walk to Heaven. So we find how the two Diſciples, who on this Day were walking to *Emmaus*, entertained themſelves, and ſhortned their Way with Spiritual and Holy Diſcourſes, *Luke* 24. 13. But thoſe who have Families to look after, will be beſt employed, in ſeeing that thoſe who are under their Charge, ſpend the vacant time of the Sabbath in Holy Exerciſes, either reading the Scripture, or giving an account of what Truths they have been taught, or joining with them in Praiſes and Prayer unto God; or indeed in all of theſe in their ſeveral Courſes and Order, till Night calls for Repoſe, and delivers them over with a ſweet Seaſoning and Bleſſing, to the Labours and Employments of the enſuing Day and Week. And,

3. *Thirdly*, If there be any ſpare time from theſe Publick and Private Duties, then ſanctifie it by entring into thy Cloſet; and there un-boſom thy Soul before God in ſecret Prayer, ſpread thy Requeſts before him, lay open thy Wants and Deſires. And though perhaps thou art not gifted toward a Prayer, yet ſigh and groan out a Prayer; for thy God hears thee, and he underſtands the Language of Sighs, and knows the meanings of his Spirit in the inarticulate Groans of his Children. Here, likewiſe in Secret, meditate on what thou haſt heard; admire the Glory of God in his Works, the Goodneſs of God in his Providences, the infinite Mercy of God in his Promiſes. Certainly, Meditation is one great Duty of a Sabbath; without which, to hear the Word of God only, is but to ſwallow our Meat without chewing it. It is Meditation that makes it fit for Nouriſhment. This ſucks the Juice and Sweetneſs out of it, concorporates it into us, and turns it into Life and Subſtance. Thus, if we endeavour to ſanctifie the Lord's Day, the Lord will ſanctifie his Day, and his Ordinances unto us, and by them convey ſo much Joy and Comfort into our Souls, that they ſhall be a temporary Heaven unto us, and fit us for that Eternal Sabbath, where we ſhall continually give Praiſe and Glory unto him, that ſitteth upon the Throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.

So much for the Fourth and Laſt Commandment of the Firſt Table.

The

The Fifth Commandment.

Honour thy Father and thy Mother, that thy Days may be long upon the Land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

THE whole Sum of Practical Religion, conſiſts either in thoſe Duties which immediately concern the Worſhip and Service of God, or thoſe which immediately concern our converſe with, and demeanour towards Men. Both are compendiouſly preſcribed in the Decalogue: The former Sort in the firſt; The latter in the ſecond Table of the Law. I have already according to my deſigned Method, finiſh'd the Expoſition of the four Precepts of the firſt Table, and have diſcourſed to you, both concerning the internal, and alſo the external Worſhip of God. It remains now in purſuance of this Work, to paſs unto the Conſideration of the Duties and Precepts of the ſecond Table, all which do concern Man, as their primary and immediate Object.

But here by the way, let us obſerve the diſtance that God puts between Himſelf and Us. We are, as it were, ſet at another Table from him, as being infinitely inferiour to his great and Glorious Majeſty. Firſt, he preſcribes what concerns Himſelf, and then what concerns Us, which teacheth us:

Firſt, That in all our Actions, whether Civil or Sacred, God ought principally to be regarded, his Glory ought to be our higheſt aim and end. This we are to ſeek in the firſt place; and for the ſake and intereſt of this, to promote the Good and Benefit of Men. This therefore condemns thoſe who diſturb and pervert the Order of the Law, and inſtead of ſerving Men out of reſpect to God, ſerve God meerly out of reſpect to Men. 1.

Secondly, This teacheth us to obſerve our due diſtance from God: He challengeth all poſſible Reverence from us, inſomuch that he will not permit ſo great a Diſparagement to his Honour, as to have his Concerns intermingled and blended with ours, no not in the ſame Table. And this checks the Inſolence of thoſe who dare to ruſh in upon God with that malapert Saucineſs which is too common among ſome brain-ſick People in our days, who think that Communion with God conſiſts in a familiar Rudeneſs; and that they never draw near enough unto him, unleſs they run upon his very Neck. 2.

But this only by the way.

Now in this ſecond Table are contain'd ſix Precepts, all of them injoining our Duty towards Man; and he may be conſidered either as our Superiour, our Equal, or our Inferiour. Our Duty towards our Superiours and Inferiours (which are Correlates) is preſcribed in the firſt of theſe ſix which I have now Read unto you, and our Duty towards our Equals in the other five; all which do reſpect our Neighbour, either,

In his Perſon: Or,
In the exteriour Gifts of Wealth and Credit.

His Perſon is to be conſidered, either
Naturally, or
Myſtically.

Naturally, as he is in himſelf and his own Perſon: And ſo the Sixth Commandment provides for his Security, *Thou ſhalt not kill.*

Myſtically, as he is in the State of Marriage, which of two makes one Fleſh; and ſo Care is taken for him in the Seventh Commandment: *Thou ſhalt not commit Adultery.*

If we conſider him in reſpect of his external Gifts of Wealth and good Name, ſo we ſhall find that the firſt is fenced about and ſecured by the Eighth Conmmandment; *Thou ſhalt not Steal.*

His Credit and good Name is ſecured by the Ninth; *Thou ſhalt not bear falſe Witneſs againſt thy Neighbour.*

And

And becauſe the Violation of theſe Laws by outward and flagitious Acts, proceeds from the latent Wickedneſs and Concupiſcence of the Heart, therefore God, who is a Spirit, and whoſe Law and Authority can reach even to the Soul and Spirit, hath not only prohibited the groſs Perpetration of theſe Crimes, but hath ſtrictly forbidden the inward and ſecret Intention of them, charging us not to harbour ſo much as a Thought or Deſire towards them, in the Tenth Commandment; *Thou ſhalt not covet.*

In the due performance of all theſe, conſiſts the obſervance of that Second great Command, *Matth.* 22. 39. *Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour as thy ſelf.*

I ſhall begin with the firſt of theſe, *Honour thy Father, and thy Mother*, which reſpects the mutual Duties of Superiors and Inferiors.

And here we have a Precept and a Promiſe.

The Precept is to Honour them.

The Promiſe, *That thy Days may be long upon the Land which the Lord thy God hath given thee.*

Now here we may (as formerly we have done) obſerve a Ray of the Infinite Wiſdom of God in the Order and Method of this Commandment. For after he had preſcribed Laws for his own Honour, his next Care is for the Honour of our Parents, becauſe they are next under God, the Authors and Original of our Lives and Beings. God indeed is properly and primarily our Father, and of him is the whole Family in Heaven and Earth named, that is, of him they are and ſubſiſt; *in him we all Live, and Move, and have our Beings.* Earthly Parents do but convey to us that Being, which God had beforehand laid up in ſtore for us. And therefore when our Saviour bids us to *call no Man Father upon Earth; for one is our Father which is in Heaven:* This muſt not be underſtood, as though we ought not to give that Name and Title of Father to thoſe who are our Earthly Parents, *the Fathers of our Fleſh*, as the Apoſtle ſtiles them, *Heb.* 12. 2. But only that their Paternity is not ſo original, nor ſo abſolute as God's, who is the Father of our Spirits; who not only forms the Maſs of our Bodies by his ſecret and wonderful Artifice, but creates our Souls, and by his Breath kindles in us ſuch Sparks of Etherial Fire as ſhall never be quench'd nor extinct to all Eternity. And therefore, though we owe to the Fathers of our Fleſh Honour and Reverence, as they are the Inſtruments of our Beings, yet we owe much more unto God, even unlimited and boundleſs Reſpects and Obedience, who is the prime Cauſe and Author of them. But indeed, this word [Father] hath alſo another ſenſe in our Saviour's Speech. For the *Jews* were wont to call their Doctors and Inſtructors, by the Name of Fathers, and gave up themſelves, without Heſitation or Contradiction, to believe and follow their Dictates.

Matth. 23. 9.

Now when our Saviour bids us to call no Man Father on Earth; his meaning is, that we muſt not ſo mancipate our ſelves either to the Commands or Doctrine of any Man, as to prejudice the Authority which God, the great and univerſal Parent of all things, challengeth over us; but ſtill our Obedience to their Injunctions, and our Belief of their Inſtructions, ought to be cautioned with a Subordination to the Commands and Notices of the Divine Will; Yet we may call and honour others as Fathers, by yielding them a ſecondary Reſpect, ſubſervient to the Honour and Glory of God.

Now this Command of Honouring our Parents, is very large and comprehenſive; and not to be limited only to the Grammatical Signification of the Word, but extends it ſelf to all that are our Superiors. And that appears, becauſe Honour belongs principally not only to God; but ſecondarily, and by way of Derivation, it belongs alſo unto thoſe whom God the great King hath dignified, and made as it were Nobles in his Kingdom. For as the King is the Fountain of Honour within his Dominions; ſo God, who is the Univerſal Monarch of all the World, is the true Fountain of Honour among Mankind, ennobling ſome above others by Titles and Pre-eminences which he beſtows upon them; and all ſuch Superiours, whom he hath been pleaſed thus to raiſe, are to be Honoured by us as our Fathers. And therefore,

1. *Firſt*; Our Governours and Magiſtrates are our Fathers, and ſo to be accounted and reverenced by us. Indeed they are *Patres Patriæ*, the Fathers of their Country: For all Government being at the firſt Domeſtick and Paternal, the Father,

ther, or chief of the Family, having Power of Life and Death over his Children, neceſſity at laſt taught them to devolve both the Care and the Authority of this Charge upon ſome ſelected Perſons, to whom they committed the Government both of themſelves and theirs. So that Magiſtrates ſucceeding in the Place and Office of Parents, are now the Publick Fathers, having the ſame Power devolved upon them which formerly reſided in the Fathers of Families. Hence we read that common and ſucceſſive Name of the Kings of the *Philiſtines*, *Abimelech*, which ſignifies the King my Father.

Secondly; The Maſter of a private Family is likewiſe a Father, and that not only with reſpect unto his Children, but to his very Servants: and therefore, 2 *Kings* 5. 13. we find that *Naaman* is called Father by his Servants, *My Father, if the Prophet had bid thee do ſome great thing*, &c. 2.

Thirdly; A Teacher in any Art, Science, or Invention, is likewiſe called a Father. Thus *Gen.* 4. 20, 21. *Jabal* is ſaid to be *the Father of ſuch as dwell in Tents*, and *Jubal* to be *the Father of ſuch as handle the Harp and Organ.* 3.

Fourthly; A Superior in Wiſdom and Counſel is likewiſe called a Father. So in *Joſeph's* Speech, *Gen.* 45. 8. *God hath made me a Father to* Pharaoh. 4.

Fifthly; The Miniſters of the Goſpel have likewiſe the Honourable Titles of Fathers conferred upon them. And that both becauſe indeed they are Superior to the People in things appertaining unto God, having the Diſpenſation of the Grace of the Goſpel committed unto them; and becauſe likewiſe through the Concurrence of the Spirit's Operation with their Miniſtery, they beget Souls unto Jeſus Chriſt. Thus St. *Paul* tells the Church, 1 *Cor.* 4. 15. that he was their Father, having *begotten them through the Goſpel.* And therefore we have great reaſon to magnify our Office, in the Execution and Performance of which we ought to demean our ſelves as Fathers, with all Gravity and Authority; and to let thoſe know whoſe petulant Affronts and Scorns tend to the vilifying both of our Perſons and Functions, that they deſpiſe not us only, but Jeſus Chriſt who hath ſent us, and the Eternal Father who hath ſent him. So he himſelf hath told us, *Luke* 10. 16. *He that deſpiſeth you, deſpiſeth me; and he that deſpiſeth me, deſpiſeth him that ſent me.* 5.

Sixthly; Superiors in any Gift of Divine Providence, whether of Riches, or of Age, or of Knowledge, and the like, are to be Reverenced and Honoured by us as Fathers; ſo 1 *Tim.* 5. 1, 2. *The Elders intreat as Fathers, and the Elder Women as Mothers.* 6.

So that you ſee how large and copious this word *Father* is, taking in many other Relations and States of Men beſides thoſe to whom it is now commonly applied.

Here then, in opening to you the ſum of this Commandment, I ſhall endeavour to ſhew you what are the mutual and reciprocal Duties of theſe following Relations;

Firſt, Of Natural Parents, and their Children. 1.

Secondly, Of Magiſtrates ſupream and ſubordinate, and their Subjects. 2.

Thirdly, Of Husband and Wife; for there likewiſe is a Superiority reſident in the one, and Obedience due from the other. 3.

Fourthly, Of Maſters and Servants. 4.

Fifthly, Of Miniſters, and the People committed to their Charge. 5.

Sixthly, The Duties of thoſe who have a Superiority either in the Gifts of God's Grace, or of his Bounty towards thoſe that are Inferiour to them; and of theirs reciprocally towards thoſe that excel. 6.

For all theſe are Fathers, and Honour is required to be given them by virtue of this Command.

I know I am now entering upon a Work, which to many will be very harſh and unpleaſing. For, as there is nothing wherein the Truth and Power of Godlineſs, and the very Life of Religion is more concern'd, than a conſcientious Performance of relative Duties; ſo there is nothing that grates and jars more upon the Spirits of Men, than to be put in mind of, and reproved about theſe Duties, which are of ſuch common and daily occurrence in the whole Courſe of our Lives. Yet I beſeech you lay your Prejudices and Affections under the Authority of God's Word, and be perſuaded to believe theſe Things to be exceeding weighty and momentous, (how plain ſoever they may be) which not only the Light and Law of Nature dictates unto us, but the Spirit of God hath been pleaſed frequently to recommend

in the Holy Scriptures, yea, more frequently, and more expreſly, than any other Duties whatſoever.

I ſhall therefore begin firſt, with the mutual Duties of Parents, and Children. And here I ſhall ſpeak,

1. 1*ſt*. Of the Honour that is due to Parents from their Children.
2. 2*ly*. And then what Parents are obliged to do for their Children.

1. 1. For the former of theſe, the Command ſaith, *Honour thy Father and thy Mother*. Now this Honour which they are to defer unto them, conſiſts in theſe four things, Reverence, Obedience, Retribution and Imitation.

1. *Firſt*, Children are to Reverence their Parents. Now Reverence is nothing but an awful Love, a Fearfulneſs to offend, out of the Reſpect we bear them. It is not ſuch a Fear as terrifies, and drives us from the Preſence and Company of thoſe whom we dread, for that is ſlaviſh and tormenting; but a genuine, ſweet, and obliging Fear; a fearful Eſteem and Veneration; a Fear that will ingage us to attend on them, to obſerve and imitate them, and to abſtain from doing any thing that might grieve or trouble them.

Now this Reverence which we owe our Parents, is wont to expreſs it ſelf outwardly by two Things, Speeches and Geſtures.

1. *Firſt*, Our Speeches muſt be full of Reſpect and Honour, giving unto them the higheſt Titles that their Quality and Condition will admit. They muſt likewiſe be very few, and very humble and ſubmiſſive. Talkativeneſs is an Argument of Diſreſpect, and by the Anſwers of the Lips, the Heart is tryed and ſounded; therefore we find how mildly and reverently *Jonathan* ſpeaks to his Father *Saul*, although he were then pleading for his *David*, and managing the Concernment of his Friend's Life, which was far dearer to him than his own; yet ſee with what Modeſty he urgeth it, 1 *Sam.* 19. 4, 5. *Let not the King ſin againſt his Servant, againſt David, for he did put his Life in his hand, and ſlew the Philiſtine*, &c. And God bleſſed a Speech ſo well temper'd, and ſo full of ſoft and melting Oratory, with ſucceſs. Yea, we find an inſtance of a diſobedient Son in the Parable of our Saviour, *Matth.* 21. who though he obeyed not the Commands of his Father, yet thought it too ſhameful a Crime not to give him good Words, and reverent Titles, *verſe* 30. *Igo, Sir*. And certainly it is but fit and meet that we ſhould give them the beſt and moſt obliging Language, who have taught us to ſpeak; and to pleaſe them with our Words, who have inſtructed us how to form them. Yea, that rude and boiſterous Language which many of the Sons of *Belial* uſe towards their Parents, is ſo odious and deteſtable unto God, that he hath in his Law threatned to puniſh it with the ſame Puniſhment as Blaſphemy againſt himſelf, *Exod.* 21. 17. *He that curſeth his Father or his Mother, ſhall ſurely be put to Death*. And *Prov.* 20. 20. *He that curſeth his Father or his Mother, his Lamp ſhall be put out in obſcure Darkneſs*.

2. *Secondly*, We muſt likewiſe ſhew them Reverence in our Geſtures, and comport our ſelves with all Lowlineſs and Modeſty before them, in bowing the Body, and ſhewing all other external Signs of reſpect: So we find, *Gen.* 48. 12. that *Joſeph*, as highly Exalted as he was in the Court of *Pharaoh*, when he brought out his Sons to receive the Bleſſing of *Jacob* his Father, he bowed himſelf with his Face to the Earth. And on the contrary, That an ill-conditioned Look towards a Parent, is ſeverely threatned, *Prov.* 30. 17. *The Eye that mocketh at his Father, and deſpiſeth to obey his Mother, the Ravens of the Valley ſhall pick it out, and the young Eagles ſhall eat it*.

2. But, *Secondly*, As we muſt Honour them with Reverence, ſo eſpecially with Obedience, without which all external Reverence is but meer Formality, if not meer Mockery. See that large Charter which God hath given unto Parents, *Coloſ.* 3. 20. *Children, obey your Parents in all things; for this is well pleaſing unto the Lord*.

Our Obedience to them may be conſidered either as Active, or Paſſive; and we are obliged by God's Command to yield them both; Active Obedience, in whatſoever is not contrary to the Will and Law of God; Paſſive, in whatſoever they impoſe upon us that is ſo: And therefore we are to obey our Parents in whatſoever honeſt Calling and Employment they will ſet us. *David*, though deſtin'd to a Kingdom, is yet by his Father *Jeſſe* appointed to keep the Sheep, 1 *Sam.* 16. 11. We ought not, till at laſt we are emancipated and ſet free by their Conſent, to enter

ter into Wedlock without their Knowledge, or againſt their Conſent. For we find the holy Fathers have ſtill taken the care of the diſpoſal of their Children in this Affair. And the Apoſtle, 1 *Corinth.* 7. 36, 37. Declares, that it is in the Parents Power either to Marry their Children, or to keep them in a ſingle Eſtate. But yet no queſtion ſo, as that Children have ſtill a negative Vote, and ought not to be forced againſt their own Will and Conſent. Yea, ſo far doth the Authority of a Parent extend, that it reacheth alſo to the very Garb and Apparel of their Children, who ought to conform themſelves therein, according to their Allowance and Direction, *Gen.* 37. 3. But if Parents ſhall abuſe their Authority, by commanding what is ſinful, and what God hath contraven'd by his Law and Command; yet Children are not hereby diſobliged from Obedience, but only directed to chuſe the paſſive Part of it, and to bear their Wrath and Choler, yea and their Puniſhments too, with all Patience and Submiſſion. For, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *Heb.* 12. 10. *They often times chaſten us after their own Pleaſure*; and yet we are to give them Reverence; we ought to bear with their Infirmities, whether they be natural, or vicious, and indeavour to hide and cover them from others. And therefore we read what a Curſe was laid upon *Cham*, for diſcloſing the Nakedneſs of his Father, *Gen.* 9. 25. And indeed it is a curſed thing to expoſe the Nakedneſs and Weakneſs of our Parents to the Scorn and Deriſion of others. But this is not all: For,

Thirdly; As we muſt Honour them by Reverence and Obedience, ſo likewiſe by Remuneration and Retribution, requiting the Benefits we have received from them, ſo far as we are able, and they need. This the Apoſtle expreſly enjoins, 1 *Tim.* 5. 4. *If any Widows have Children, or Nephews, let them learn firſt to ſhew Piety at home, and to requite their Parents*; that is, when they are fallen to poverty or decay, or otherwiſe require Aſſiſtance from us, we are obliged liberally according to our Proportion to afford it. And he affirms that this is good and acceptable before God. And therefore we find our Saviour ſharply reprehending that unnatural Doctrine among the Scribes and Phariſees, which diſpenſed with Children from the Relief of their Parents, *Matth.* 15. 5, 6. *Ye ſay, Whoſoever ſhall ſay to his Father or Mother, It is a Gift by whatſoever thou mayſt be profited by me, and Honour not his Father or his Mother, he ſhall be free.* Which Place, becauſe it is obſcure and intricate, admits of divers Expoſitions. Some ſay it was the Doctrine of the Scribes and Phariſees, that although a Man did not Honour nor ſupport his Parents, yet he ſhould be guiltleſs, if he ſhould tell them that he had offered in the Temple a Gift for his and their good, and that therefore they could require no more Relief from him. Others, that it was a ſolemn Oath among the Jews to ſwear by the Gift or Offering, which was brought into the Temple, and preſented there as a Sacrifice before God; which Oath was obligatory in the higheſt Degree, whatſoever the Matter of it might be, *Matth.* 23. 18. And the Scribes did teach, that if a Man had ſworn thus to his Parents, By the Gift thou ſhalt have no profit by me, then he was for ever diſobliged from relieving them, were their Neceſſities never ſo great and urgent. And according to this Expoſition, the Words ſhould be thus tranſlated; But ye ſay, Whoſoever ſaith to his Father or Mother, by the Gift if thou have any Profit by me, (where muſt be underſtood ſome Curſe or Imprecation upon themſelves, which they did uſually expreſs, as, Let me die, or the like) then he ſhall be free from the Obligation of honouring, that is, of relieving and maintaining his Father or Mother. Which-ſo-ever Interpretation be moſt conſonant to the corrupt Doctrine of the Scribes, and the corrupt Practice of the Jews, (as I ſuppoſe the latter is) our Saviour condemns it for a moſt vile Hypocriſy, making the Commandments of God of none effect through their Traditions. Certainly it is one of the moſt unnatural Sins in the World, for Children who have Ability and Opportunity to relieve their neceſſitous Parents, to ſuffer them to want a Livelihood, and comfortable Subſiſtence, who are the Cauſe and Authors of Life and Being unto their Children. 3.

But, *Fourthly*; We muſt honour our Parents, by hearkning unto their good Inſtructions, and imitating their Godly Practices. So *Prov.* 6. 20. *My Son, keep thy Father's Commandment, and forſake not the Law of thy Mother.* For although good Inſtruction be for the matter of it, always to be imbraced from whomſoever it ſhall proceed, yet when it ſhall come from a Parent, it obligeth us not only becauſe it is good, but becauſe it is Authoritative; neither are we only to hearken to their Counſel, but alſo to imitate the holy Examples of our Parents: And therefore it is commended in *Solomon*, that he walked in the Steps of his Father *David*. 4.

Suffer

Suffer me only in a word, to ſet home this upon the Conſciences of ſtubborn and diſobedient Children. Conſider what your Demeanour hath been towards your Parents, to whom you owe your Selves, your Lives, your Education. Benefits that can never be repaid them, although you ſhould undergo all the Hardſhips imaginable to make an acknowledgment of them. Can you imagine the Cares, the parching Thoughts, the perplexing Fears which your tender Parents are continually diſtracted with, for your good? And will you ſo requite their Love, as to deſpiſe their Perſons, of whom you your ſelves are a part, and make their very Bowels rebel againſt them? Certainly were there any Ingenuity of Nature, or the Principles of Reaſon and Equity not quite ſpent and extinguiſhed in you, the Love and Solicitude they have expreſt for you, would again return unto them, if not in equal Meaſures, yet in the moſt ample and acceptable that is poſſible for you to render. And if there be any of you, who by your Stubbornneſs and Diſobedience, have brought down the gray Hairs of your Parents with Sorrow to the Grave; conſider ſeriouſly what an unnatural Sin you have been guilty of: And becauſe you cannot now beg Pardon of them, beg Pardon of God, the great and univerſal Father of all; beg that he would not revenge your Diſobedience to your Parents, by the Diſobedience of your Children towards you.

Thus you have ſeen what Duties Children owe unto their Parents: Let us now ſee what are the reciprocal Duties of Parents towards their Children. For in all unequal Relations, the Superiority reſts only in one part, yet the Duty is divided between both.

The Duty therefore of Parents reſpects either the Temporal or Spiritual Good of their Children, for both are given them in charge.

As for their Temporal Good, two Duties are incumbent upon them, Protection and Proviſion; and both of theſe the Law of Nature teacheth them. Do we not ſee even in brute Creatures themſelves, that a ſtrong Parental Affection makes them dare unequal Dangers, and expoſe their own Lives to the greateſt hazard, only to defend their young? We ſee with what indefatigable Induſtry they either lead them unto, or bring them in their Food and Nouriſhment, till they have taught them the Art and Method of providing for themſelves, and living at their own finding. And if the inſtinct and impulſe of Nature be ſo powerful in Irrational Creatures, how much more ſhould it prevail in us, in whom Reaſon ſhould perfect Nature? and we be the more careful, in as much as the Charge committed to us is more Noble? And that it is not a Sparrow nor a Chicken that we are to look after, but a Man, a King of the Univerſe, deſigned for great Imployments, and to great Ends, an Heir of the World; and if we fail not in educating him, may be an Heir of Eternal Glory?

1. *Firſt*, We owe them Protection, and this their Weakneſs and Helpleſneſs often calls for at our Hands. How many Diſeaſes and Dangers is their feeble Infancy expoſed unto? And in their growing Childhood, want of Care and Experience runs them daily into more. Now Parents are to be their Guards, and by their Skill and Strength fence off thoſe Wrongs and Injuries that threaten them. And in ſo doing, they perform not only a Parental, but an Angelical Work. *Take heed that ye deſpiſe not one of theſe little ones; for I ſay unto you, that in Heaven their Angels do alway behold the Face of my Father which is in Heaven.* And if God, the great Father of the whole Family both in Heaven and Earth, hath out of his infinite Tenderneſs and Compaſſion, appointed his holy Angels to be their Guardians, that they who attend the Throne of his Glorious Majeſty, ſhould likewiſe attend the Cradles and Beds, and wandring Steps of little Ones; it is not only inhumane for Parents to neglect the Care of their Children, but deviliſh to do them hurt, or deſtroy them themſelves; the too common Practice of many Wretches, who, to hide and cover their Shame, either abandon or murther the Fruit of their Bowels.

Matth. 18. 10.

Secondly, As Parents owe their Children Protection from incident Evils, ſo likewiſe Proviſion of Neceſſaries and Conveniences according to the Rank and Degree in which the Divine Providence hath ſet them. And this the Scripture often inculcates, *Matth.* 7. 9, 10. *What Man is there among you, whom if his Son ask Bread, will give him a Stone? Or if he ask a Fiſh, will give him a Scorpion?* Intimating unto us, that we are bound to give our Children what is fit for the Suſtentation of that Life which they have received from us. And indeed, they are our Fleſh and our Bone; they are our ſelves multiplied. Now Nature teacheth us to Cheriſh and Nouriſh

Nourish our own Flesh, as the Apostle speaketh, *Ephes.* 5. 29. Nay, the Apostle hath laid this Charge exceeding high; *If any Man provide not for his own, and especially for those of his House, he hath denied the Faith, and is worse than Infidel*; and that because even the Infidels and Heathens are taught by the Light and Law of Nature, to make Provision for their own; and this Provision is not only for the present, but our Care is to extend farther; and according to our Ability (bating the Expences of Decency and Charity) we are to take care for their future Subsistence; and if we cannot leave them a Patrimony, we are to leave them an Art and Calling, whereby, through the Blessing of God, they may procure their own Livelihood. So the Apostle, 2 *Cor.* 12. 14. *The Children ought not to lay up for the Parents, but the Parents for the Children.* And if we must place them out to a Vocation, we must endeavour with all our Prudence, to fit it to their Genius and Inclination: For otherwise, it will not be a Vocation, but a Vexation unto them all their Days: Still remembring, that if we piously design any unto the Work of the Lord, it should be those who are most pregnant, and whom God hath indowed with the greatest Gifts for so high a Ministration. For it is a Sin very like to that of *Jeroboam*, who made *Israel* to Sin, to consecrate Priests unto the Lord of the refuse and vilest of the People, and to think those fit enough for the Temple, who through the Deformity of their Body, or the Defects of their Minds, are not fit for a Shop, or for any other Employment.

1 *Tim.* 5. 8.

And so much for those Duties of Parents which concern the Temporal Good of their Children.

But then they are obliged to others of an higher and nobler Nature, which concern their Spiritual Good, and have an Influence into their Eternal Happiness.

And here, their first Duty is to incorporate them into the Church of Christ, by the presenting them to holy Baptism, which is the Laver of Regeneration, and which Jesus Christ hath instituted for the Admission and Initiation of new Members into his Body the Church, and new Subjects into his Kingdom. Nay, it is not an empty bare Ceremony, but it is a Seal of the Promise of the Covenant, a Sign of the Grace of the Spirit, and a means appointed to convey it to the Soul. And therefore, those Parents are highly injurious to their Children, who either through Carelesness or Contempt, debar them from so excellent and spiritual an Ordinance and Privilege, yea indeed the only spiritual Privilege which their Age makes them capable of. What do they else hereby, but put their Children into a worse Condition than the Children of the Jews, who in their Infancy were admitted to the Sacrament of Circumcision, which the Apostle calls *a Seal of the Righteousness of Faith?* Rom. 4. 11. And certainly, if this Seal of Circumcision were broken by the Coming of Christ, and no other were instituted, whereof the Children of Believers under the Gospel might be made Partakers; our Infants then must needs be in a worse Condition than theirs; and Christ's coming into the World hath in this respect rather diminished the Privileges of the Church, than inlarged them. It ought therefore to be the first and chiefest Care of every Godly Parent, to offer his Children to this holy Ordinance; especially, considering that they are Partakers of his sinful and corrupt Nature, that he hath been an Instrument of conveying down along to them the Guilt of the first Transgression, and that Defilement which hath infected the whole Soul; and therefore, it is the least that his Charity can do for them, to offer them unto that Remedy which our Saviour hath provided both to remove the Guilt, and cleanse away the Filth of their Natures. For, be the Parents themselves never so holy and sanctified, yet their Children are born in their Filth, and in their Blood. And this *Austin* expresseth by a very apt Similitude; "The Chaff (saith he) is carefully se-"parated from the Wheat that we sow; and yet the Wheat "which it produceth, groweth up with Husks and Chaff about "it. So those whom the Holy Ghost hath sanctified and cleansed, yet they produce Children naturally unclean, though federally holy. And therefore, being born within the Promises of the Covenant, their Parents ought to see that the Seal of the Covenant be applied unto them; that is, as they derive Corruption from them, they may by them be brought to the means of cleansing and washing.

Sicut præputium quod per Circumcisionem aufertur, manet in iis quos gignunt circumcisi; sicut palea quæ opere humano tantâ diligentiâ separatur, manet in fructu qui de purgato tritico nascitur. Aug. Ep. 222.

Secondly, When they are thus initiated and entred into the Church of Christ, another Duty that Parents owe them, is, to instruct and admonish them, to educate

them in the Fear and Knowledge of God, and this the Apoſtle expreſly enjoins *Epheſ.* 6. 4. *Ye Fathers, bring up your Children in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord.* And ſo *Deut.* 4. 9. *Forget not the things which thine Eyes have ſeen, but teach them thy Sons, and thy Sons Sons.* We find that God gives an honourable Teſtimony concerning *Abraham*, and confides in him upon this account, *Gen.* 18. 19. *I know Abraham, that he will Command his Children, and his Houſhold after him, and they ſhall keep the way of the Lord, to do Juſtice and Judgment.* And *Solomon* extols his Father *David* for his Care in inſtructing him, *Prov.* 4. 3, 4. *I was my Father's Son, and he taught me alſo, and ſaid unto me, Let thy Heart retain my words; keep my Commandments, and live.* Now this Inſtruction muſt not be nice and critical, but familiar and obvious, teaching them ſuch Fundamental Truths and Principles of Chriſtian Doctrine as are of abſolute neceſſity to be known, and in ſuch a manner as may be ſuitable to their Capacity and Diſcretion. And if Parents would be but careful and conſcientious in the performance of this Duty, infuſing into their Minds, before they are filled with Vanity, the Knowledge of God and of Chriſt, and of Religion; and forming their Wills, whilſt they are flexible, to the love of Piety and Vertue; the next Generation would not generally ſee ſo much Debauchery in Youth, nor ſo much Obduracy in old Age, as is now every where too viſible and apparent. By this means the Miniſter's Work would be half done to his Hands. It would be needful only to feed his Flock with ſtrong Meat, and to preſs them only to a Vigorous and chearful performance of thoſe Duties of Holineſs, to which their pious Education made them before inclinable.

Now this way of Inſtruction is either,

1. *Firſt*, By reading to them, or cauſing them to read the Holy Scriptures, and pointing out to them thoſe Obſervables which are moſt agreeable to their Age and Apprehenſions. Thus it is ſaid of *Timothy*, that *from a Child he had known the Holy Scriptures.* And doubtleſs, he was trained up in that Knowledge by the Care of his Mother and Grand-Mother, whom the Apoſtle honourably commends, *Chap.* 1. 5. And,

2 *Tim.* 3. 15.

Secondly, By catechiſing and inſtructing them in the Grounds and principal Doctrines of Religion. Indeed, a continued Diſcourſe is not ſo informing, nor doth it faſten and rivet Inſtruction into young Minds, ſo well as where it is diverſified by Queſtions and Anſwers. This makes them Maſters of their own Notions, and able to wield and manage them afterwards to their better advantage. And truly, this I take to be the very Reaſon why ſo many ſit groſly ignorant under many Years Preaching of the Word unto them, ſcarce able to give any tolerable account of the very firſt Principles of the Oracles of God, becauſe they were never educated in this way of Catechiſing, they never tried, nor ſearched, nor had the ſtrength of their Memories and Capacities exerciſed by Queſtions.

For running and continued Diſcourſes, are like the falling of Rain upon a ſmooth Rock, where it trickles off as it deſcends: But Queſtions and Examinations are like digging of it, and making it fit to retain what is poured upon it. But whatſoever Method you may judge moſt profitable, yet certainly Inſtruction in their tender Years, is abſolutely neceſſary to ſeaſon them betimes with the Knowledge of the Grounds of Religion, and a Love and Veneration of Piety, which will afterwards have a mighty Influence to keep them from being led away either with the Errours, or ungodly Practices of lewd and ungodly Men; *Train up a Child in the way he ſhould go: And when he is old, he will not depart from it.* For when the Reluctance of corrupted Nature is thus early maſter'd, and Vertue habituated in them, (as there muſt be ſtrong Convictions, and Almighty Grace, to break off the long accuſtomed Habits of Sin: So) there muſt be very powerful and prevalent Temptations that ſhall induce ſuch an one, whoſe Knowledge of God, and Love of Vertue have grown up with him from his Childhood, to turn a Recreant to his former Profeſſion and Practice and to forget that, before which he can hardly remember any thing; or if through the Violence of Temptation he ſhould be hurried into any Extravagancy and Exceſs, his Conſcience hath a greater advantage to reduce him again, than it hath upon others, who are trained up ignorantly and barbarouſly. It will ſtill purſue him, diſturb him in his Sins, and his early Notions of Piety and Religion will imbitter the Sweets which he fanſied, and others perhaps find in them; and his Conſcience will never leave crying, and clamouring, and threatning, till it bring him back with Tears in his Eyes, and Sorrow in his Heart, and Shame in his Face, to his former regular and unblamable Converſation.

Prov. 22. 6.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Another Duty which Parents are obliged unto, is not only the giving their Children good Inſtructions, but good Examples, to ſet before them the Copies and Pattern of thoſe Virtues which they teach. And this indeed, is the moſt lively and the moſt effectual way to profit them. Thou who before thy Child blaſphemeſt the Name of God by ſwearing or curſing, thou who abuſeſt thy ſelf and others by Riot and Intemperance, doſt thou expect that ever he ſhould reverence that holy and dreadful Name which thou prophaneſt; or love that Sobriety and Temperance, which thou poſſibly mayſt commend to him in Words, but doſt much more forbid it him by thy Deeds? For it is the Glory and Boaſt of Children to be, and to do, like their Parents. And although there be few ſo forlornly wicked and utterly abandoned over unto Vice, but that they would have their Children love and practiſe Vertue, and may perhaps ſometimes exhort them thereunto; yet alas! what Effect can empty Words have, when they are contradicted and overborn by Deeds? When the corrupt Nature thou haſt given them, ſhall be improved by the ill Examples thou daily giveſt them; what avail all thy Exhortations and Admonitions, unleſs it be to upbraid and reproach thy ſelf, and increaſe both thine own Condemnation, and theirs too? Even the Heathen Satyriſt could ſay, *Maxima debetur puero reverentia*; We ought to reverence and ſtand in awe of Children, that they ſee nothing vicious or diſhoneſt by us, not ſo much for the Shame of it as the Example: For there is no Peſt ſo contagious as Vice; the leaſt Converſe will ſerve to rub it upon others, eſpecially your Parents Vice upon their Children, who if they think it not Obedience, and a part of Duty to imitate them, yet cannot but conclude themſelves ſecure both from Reproofs and Corrections. The Practice of Superiours hath certainly a mighty Influence in forming the Manners of thoſe who are ſubject to them; for let them preſcribe what Rules, and enact what Laws they pleaſe, let their Authority be as great as can be, yet their Example will be far greater than their Authority, and Inferiours will be incouraged by it boldly to tranſgreſs, when Shame and Conſciouſneſs ſhall tie up the Hands of thoſe who ſhould puniſh them. But now when a Godly Parent ſhall not only with the moſt tender and affectionate Words that Love can dictate, inſtruct his Children in the Ways of Holineſs, but walk before them in thoſe Ways; not only by Admonitions ſhew it to be moſt rational, but by conſtant Practice ſhew it to be moſt pleaſant and delightful; certainly, that Nature muſt needs be moſt deplorably vicious, which can in this caſe be refractary, and will not go whither both Wind and Tide lead him; whereas others poſſibly who have only the Breath of good Inſtructions, are carried away headlong, and drowned in Perdition by the ſtronger Current of evil Examples. 3.

Fuvenal.

Fourthly, If neither Inſtructions nor good Examples will prevail, then Correction and Diſcipline is neceſſary, and becomes a Duty, though perhaps it may be as grievous to the Parent to inflict it, as it is to the Child to ſuffer it. I know there may be, and often is Exceſs in this kind, when Choler and Paſſion preſcribe the meaſures of Puniſhment. This is fierce and inhumane Tyranny, and argues ſuch Parents to be devoid of natural Affection. And this immoderate ungoverned Correction, is ſo far from profiting Children, that it often times exaſperates them, and makes them the more ſtubborn and untractable; or elſe it only diſpirits and ſtupifies them. And therefore the Apoſtle hath twice cautioned Parents againſt this provoking way of Diſcipline, *Epheſ.* 6. 4. *Ye Fathers, provoke not your Children to Wrath:* And again, *Col.* 3. 21. *Fathers, provoke not your Children to anger, leſt they be diſcouraged.* Yet notwithſtanding, where Age and Decency will allow it, and Prudence doth require it, it is ſometimes neceſſary to uſe the Severity of Diſcipline; and let not a fooliſh Fondneſs here interpoſe; For certainly God loves his Children with a much more parental Affection, than you can love yours; and yet he tells us, *Rev.* 3. 19. *As many as I love, I rebuke and chaſten.* And the Apoſtle tells us, *Heb.* 12. 6. *Whom the Lord loveth he chaſtneth, and ſcourgeth every Son whom he receiveth.* If there be not a due Exerciſe of Diſcipline and Correction, nothing elſe can be expected, but that our Children will wax wanton with us; and next, rebellious againſt us. Now this Severity muſt be uſed betimes, before Age and Spirit have hardned them againſt the Fear or Smart of Correction. The wiſe Man hath told us, *Prov.* 13. 24. *He that ſpareth his Rod, hateth his Son: but he that loveth him, chaſtneth him betimes.* 4.

This is the way;

Firſt,

1. *Firſt*, To deliver him from greater Sufferings and Miſchiefs that elſe will follow: Better the Rod than the Tree. Thou mayſt, for ought thou knoweſt, redeem his Life by it, and deliver him from the hand of Juſtice, and eternal Wrath of God, and ſave his Soul from everlaſting Smart and Torment. So *Prov.* 23. 13, 14. *Withhold not Correction from the Child; for if thou beateſt him with the Rod, he ſhall not die: Thou ſhalt beat him with the Rod, and deliver his Soul from Hell.* And,

2. *Secondly*, By this courſe thou ſhalt bring thy ſelf much Comfort, moſt likely in his Reformation; or if not in that, yet at leaſt in the Conſcience of having performed thy Duty, and done all that lay in thy Power for his good. But what Support and Comfort can that Parent have, who when his Children grow lewd and debauch'd, ſhall ſadly reflect upon it, that it was only his Fondneſs and fooliſh Pity which ruined them? Take this for certain, that as many deſerved Stripes as you ſpare from the Child, you do but lay upon your own Backs; and thoſe whom you have refuſed to Chaſtiſe, God will make them ſevere Scourges to Afflict and Chaſtiſe you.

And theſe are the Duties which you owe to your Children, immediately reſpecting their Spiritual Good: Initiating them by Baptiſm, giving them good Inſtructions, good Examples, and neceſſary Correction.

There is one Duty more, and it is a very principal one, which reſpects both their Temporal and Spiritual Good; and that is, fervent and earneſt Prayer to God for them, without which all the reſt will be ineffectual. Whenever therefore thou comeſt unto the Throne of Grace, bring theſe thy dear Pledges upon thy Heart with thee; earneſtly implore of God, that he would own them, and provide for them as his own Children, that he would adopt them into the Family of Heaven, make them Heirs of Glory, and Co-heirs with Jeſus Chriſt; that he would give them a convenient Portion of good things for this Life, that they may ſerve him with the more Chearfulneſs and Alacrity, and a large Portion of ſpiritual Bleſſings in Heavenly things in Chriſt Jeſus, and at length bring them to the Heavenly Inheritance. And know aſſuredly, that the Prayers of Parents are very effectual, and have a kind of Authority in them to impetrate and obtain what they ſue for. This is the Benediction or Bleſſing which Holy Fathers in Scripture have beſtowed upon their Children; and we find, that their Bleſſing was their Deſtiny. Thus *Jacob* bleſſed his Sons the Patriarchs, and, as it were, divided among them the Treaſures of God's Bleſſings; and God the great Father would not have the Bleſſing of a Father pronounced in vain, but ratified and fulfilled them in the Succeſs.

And as Parents Bleſſings have great Influence upon their Children, ſo likewiſe have their Curſes: And therefore they ſhould beware what they Wiſh or Pray againſt them. A raſh and paſſionate Curſe is oftentimes direfully fulfilled, not only to the Ruin of the Children, but the too late Sorrow and Repentance of the Parents. We know how deep the Curſe of *Noah* ſtuck in *Cham*, and all his Poſterity. For the Words of a Father are weighty and authoritative even with God himſelf, and he will not lightly ſuffer them to fall to the ground, when they are ſpoken either for, or againſt thoſe over whom he himſelf hath given them Power and Authority.

I ſhall cloſe up this with one Word to thoſe who are Parents. Conſider what a great Charge God hath intruſted you with. In your Hands is depoſited the Hope and Bleſſing, or elſe the Curſe and Plague of the next Age; your Families are the Nurſeries both of Church and State; and according to the manuring of them now, ſuch will their Fruits be hereafter. Conſider, I beſeech you, how you have managed this great Truſt: Are your Children like Olive-branches round about your Table, each promiſing to bring forth good Fruit in their due Seaſon? Have you taken care, by your good Inſtructions, and good Examples, to form the Lord Jeſus in them? Have you taken care, by Correction and Diſcipline, to cut off all Excreſcencies and Superfluities of Naughtineſs from them? Or, do they remain ſtill Sons of *Belial*, wild, rude, unnurtur'd, and diſobedient? Certainly, God will require an account of them at your Hands; for they are his, and only left in your keeping, and your Education. But, alas! the lewd Practices, and the too ripe Sins of young ones, do clearly convince Parents rather to have infuſed Wickedneſs into them, than curbed it. And the Wit and Forwardneſs of their Wickedneſs beyond their Years, make it evident, that they have but borrowed it from your Examples. Beware leſt God puniſh you in them; and puniſh them for what they have learn'd of you, and you in Hell for not better inſtructing and admoniſhing of them.

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It is obſervable, that as other inferiour Creatures revere the very Countenance of a Man, and thoſe few Strictures of the defaced Image of God which are ſtill remaining there, and that although they far exceed in Strength, yet dare not (unleſs enraged) make uſe of it againſt their natural, though weaker Lords: So alſo, that God hath ſpread ſuch an awe upon the Face of Authority, that a Look or a Word from a lawful Magiſtrate, ſhall more daunt and terrifie, than the armed Force of an Enemy. There is ſome ſecret Character that God hath imprinted on them, which makes them venerable; and although their Subjects do as far exceed them in Strength, as they do in Number, yet Strength alone was never made to Command, but rather to Obey and Execute, and Power ought to be the Servant of Authority.

Nor hath God ordained Magiſtracy only out of reſpect to ſome few whom he hath ennobled, that they might enjoy a Privilege and Prerogative above the common and vulgar ſort of Men, but he hath ordained it for the general Good of Mankind; yea, and I have often and ſeriouſly thought, that next to the invaluable Gift of Jeſus Chriſt, the beſt and the greateſt Good that God ever gave the World, was this Appointment of Magiſtracy. For were it not for this, the whole World would be turned into a Wilderneſs, and Men into ſalvage Beaſts, preying one upon another: Did not the Fear of Man reſtrain them, when they have caſt off the Fear of God; did they not dread the Infliction of temporal Puniſhments, when they ſlight the Threatnings of Eternal, we might be as ſafe among Lyons and Tygers, as among Men; and find better Refuge, and better Society in Solitudes, than in Cities: Within would be Fears, without Violence, and every where Tumults, Uproars, and Diſtractions; our Dwellings, our Perſons, our Poſſeſſions, all expoſed to the Fury of Bloody and Mercileſs Invaders;

and as the Prophet ſpeaks, *Hoſea* 4. 2. *By Swearing, and Lying, and Killing, and Stealing, and committing Adultery, they would break out, untill Blood touched Blood*; and there would be no more Peace nor Agreement on Earth than there is in Hell: But the All-wiſe God who hath ſubdued the Beaſts of the Earth to Man, hath likewiſe ſubdued Man (who elſe would become more wild and brutiſh than they) unto Man. So that thoſe who ſtand not in any awe of the God of Heaven, yet are awed by the Gods of the Earth; and whom the Thoughts of Hell and Eternal Wrath, cannot ſcare from Wickedneſs, yet many times the Thoughts of a Priſon, or of a Gibbet, doth.

Magiſtracy then being an Inſtitution of ſuch great Eminency, and abſolute Neceſſity, let us ſee what are the Duties,

I. *Firſt*, Of thoſe who are inveſted with it towards their Subjects: And then,

II. *Secondly*, The Duties of their Subjects reciprocally towards them.

Of the Firſt, I ſhall ſpeak but briefly, ſince we are chiefly concern'd in the Knowledge and Practice of the Second.

Magiſtrates therefore may be conſidered either as Supream or Subordinate, according to the Diſtinction the Apoſtle makes of them, 1 *Pet.* 2. 13, 14. The King as Supream, and Governours ſent by him as Subordinate: Each of theſe have their reſpective Duties belonging unto them.

As for ſupream Magiſtrates, their Duty is,

1. *Firſt*, To eſtabliſh and maintain the true Worſhip and Service of God, and to purge out all Corruptions and Abuſes that have any way adulterated it with Superſtitions or idolatrous Mixtures. God hath appointed a Sovereign Prince to be *Cuſtos utriuſq; Tabulæ*, a Guardian of both Tables of his Law; and hath put the Sword into his Hands, not only to be an Avenger in Caſes of Injury done by Man to Man, but to be an Avenger in caſe of the Violation of thoſe Laws which immediately reſpect his own Worſhip, and to be a Reformer of the Corruptions of the Church, as well as the Diſorders of the State. Indeed, this Power and Supremacy which we thus aſcribe unto him, is not formally and intrinſically Spiritual or Eccleſiaſtical, but only objectively ſuch: For they neither have the power of Order, which gives Authority to preach the Goſpel, and adminiſter the Sacraments, which properly belongs unto the Miniſterial Office; and whoſoever he be that ſhall intrude himſelf thereinto without a lawful Call and Ordination, be his Gifts or Place never ſo Eminent, he is guilty of the ſame Preſumption that *Uzziah* was, and may dreadfully expect the ſame, or a greater Puniſhment, 2 *Chron.* 26. 16, 19. *His Heart was lifted up to his Deſtruction; for he tranſgreſſed, and went into the Temple of the Lord to burn Incenſe upon the Altar of Incenſe: And whilſt the Cenſer was in his Hand, the Leproſie roſe up in his Forehead.* Neither have they power of the Keys committed unto them, to bind and looſe, to retain and remit Sins by a due pronouncing of Eccleſiaſtical Cenſures: For thoſe two Powers of Order and the Keys, appertain only unto the Miniſters of the Goſpel, for to them only were they committed.

Yet Princes have a Power of Juriſdiction over Church-Affairs, and ought by their Laws and Authority to provide, that God be Worſhipped in his own preſcribed way, that Hereſies be rooted out, Schiſms and Rents healed, ſtubborn Contemners of God's Laws, as well as theirs, ſeverely puniſh'd, the Mouth of Blaſphemy ſtopp'd, Miniſters commanded to, and encouraged in the conſcientious Performance of their Duty; that nothing be tolerated in practice contrary to the Rules of a good Life; that nothing be broached in Doctrine contrary to the Form of ſound Words which have been delivered unto us. Thus far reacheth the Magiſtrates Duty and Authority in things pertaining unto the Church. And therefore we find in the Scripture, that when the Worſhip of the true God was ſo much corrupted and forgotten among the *Iſraelites*, that *Micah*, out of a blind and idolatrous Devotion, made him a whole Chappel of Gods to worſhip: The Holy Ghoſt gives this as a Cauſe of ſo great an Abomination, that *in thoſe Days there was no King in Iſrael*, Judg. 17. 6. In *Judges* the 9th, we read that tragical Hiſtory of Adultery, and Uncleanneſs unto Death; and the very ſame reaſon is given for the Licentiouſneſs of thoſe Times, *ver.* 1. *In thoſe Days there was no King in Iſrael.* And this plainly intimates unto us, that not only Adultery and Murther, Sins againſt the ſecond Table of the Law, but alſo Idolatry and falſe Worſhip, againſt the firſt, ought, and might have been either prevented or puniſhed, had there been a King and Ruler in *Iſrael*;

and

and that it had been his Duty to have drawn his Sword, and exercised his Authority against the one, as well as against the other. We read likewise of some Kings reproved, because they took not away the high Places, but suffered the People still to burn Incense on them, notwithstanding they proceeded far in other Parts of Reformation. Others are commended, that they did remove them. And among the most renowned Acts of *Hezekiah*'s Piety, it is mentioned to his immortal Honour, that he commanded the Priests and Levites to sanctifie themselves, and cleanse the Temple, and restore the true Worship of God, after many Years Interruption, when it was not only disused, but almost forgotten, 2 *Chron.* 29. The like also did King *Josias* with the like Zeal, and received the like Approbation and Testimony from God.

This therefore is the first and chief Duty of Supream Magistrates, *viz.* To maintain the true Worship and Service of God, and to reform whatsoever Corruptions and Abuses they find to have crept into it.

2. *Secondly*; Another Duty is, to appoint Men of approved Ability and Integrity to be in Authority under them. For, because Kings cannot be omnipresent, nor omniscient, it is therefore necessary that they should hear with other Mens Ears, and see with other Mens Eyes, and act with other Mens Hands; and therefore they ought to make choice of such as are Men of known Fidelity and Wisdom, to commit so great a Charge unto. For be the Fountain never so clear, yet the Streams must needs be polluted, if they run through filthy Channels: Kings therefore should do according to the Counsel of *Jethro*, Exod. 18. 21. *Provide out of all the People able Men, such as fear God, Men of Truth, hating Covetousness; and place such as these over them.*

But where this course is not taken, but such are intrusted with Command and Authority, who either neglect the Government of the People, or oppress them in it, what doth the Prince but give away the half or more of his Kingdom? For what is not ruled, is lost. Neither should these substitute Magistrates be too numerous; for the very Multitude of them may possibly be more burthensom to the People, than helpful to the Prince.

3. *Thirdly*; Magistrates ought to distribute Justice impartially, to maintain the Cause of the poor Oppressed, and to restrain the Insolence of their proud Oppressours; to crush them by his just Authority, who would crush others by their unjust Tyranny. This is a truly Royal and Princely Vertue, which will prove not only an Ornament to the Crown, but a Safety to the Throne: *For the Throne is established by Righteousness*, saith the Wise Man, *Proverbs* 16. 12.

4. *Fourthly*; Princes and Magistrates ought to be most exemplary for Vertue and Piety. The Eyes of all the People are upon them, and their Actions have as great an influence upon their Subjects as their Laws. *Facere recte cives suos Princeps optimus faciendo docet; cumq; sit imperator maximus, exemplo major est*, saith *Paterculus*; A good Prince teacheth his Subjects to live well, by living well himself; and although he be the greatest in Command, is yet still greater in Example. And therefore he is doubly bound to vertuous Actions, both by his Conscience and by his Condition: The one as he respects his own Personal good; the others as he tenders the good of his People, who commonly take their Measures from their Superiours, and think Imitation of their Practices, to be a more acceptable Service, than Obedience to their Laws. Vell. Paterculus, *l.* 2.

But I cannot insist on every particular Duty of Princes and Magistrates, neither perhaps would it be here very proper.

In a word therefore, They ought to fear God above all, to seek his Honour and Glory, who hath raised them to the highest pitch of humane Honour and Glory; to be prudent in their Designs, courageous in their Performances, faithful in their Promises, wise in their Counsels, observant of their own Laws, careful of their Subjects Welfare, merciful to the Oppressed, favourable to the Good, terrible to the Evil, and just towards all. Let them remember these two things, That they are Gods, and therefore should rule and govern as they judge God himself would do, were he visible here upon Earth; and that they are Men, and therefore must give an account unto the great God of all that Trust he hath reposed in them. And certainly if they be careful to perform every part of their Duty, though we may look only at the Splendour and Glory of their State, yet the Cares and Troubles that attend it, will be found so great and weighty, that we shall find it all reason in the World to make the Burthen of their Crowns lighter by our ready and chearful Obedience. It was well observed by the Lord *Verulam*, That Princes are like the *Essay of Empire.*

the Heavenly Bodies, which cauſe good or evil Times, and which have much Veneration, but no Reſt.

But then for ſubordinate Magiſtrates, who receive their Authority from the Supream, and are between the People and the Prince, as the Prince is between the People and God; we have already heard how they ought to by qualified, *Exod.* 18. 21. *They muſt be Men fearing God, Men of Truth, and hating Covetouſneſs.* Their chief Duty is to ſee that the Laws be executed according to their full intent, without reſpect of Perſons, neither fearing to puniſh the Rich, nor ſparing to puniſh the Poor, making no difference between one Perſon and another, where the Cauſe makes none. For whoſoever are thus partial, want that Courage and Firmneſs that ought to be in a Magiſtrate, and ſhould make him as inflexible as the Rule of Juſtice it ſelf is; neither being frighted by the Power or Threats of thoſe who are Great, nor melted or ſoftned with the Cries of the Mean, but moved only by the Cauſe. And therefore the Scripture hath expreſly forbidden them, *Exod.* 23. 3. *To countenance a poor Man in his Cauſe:* For Pity may ſometimes as much bribe and corrupt Judgment, as Rewards. They ought to diveſt themſelves of all Paſſion, private Intereſts and Affections, to be impartial in the Execution of Juſtice upon the mighti-eſt Offender as well as the meaneſt; upon their deareſt Friends and Relations, as well as upon Strangers or Enemies. This will give Strength and Authority to the Laws, which elſe are but Cobwebs made to catch the ſmaller Flies, while the great and ſtrong ones break eaſily through: This is the way to conciliate Reverence and Veneration to the Laws and Government, which in our Days are moſt contumeliouſly deſpiſed and vilified; and by this courſe *Judgment ſhall run down our Streets as Water, and Righteouſneſs as a mighty Stream.* In brief, becauſe I would not too long inſiſt upon this Subject (though it be large and various) let Magiſtrates of what Rank ſoever they be, ſeriouſly conſider that weighty Charge given them by God himſelf, 2 *Sam.* 23. 3. *The God of Iſrael ſaid, the Rock of Iſrael ſpake to me, He that ruleth over Men muſt be juſt, ruling in the Fear of God.*

Let us, in the next place, conſider the Duties of Subjects towards their Magiſtrates and Rulers. And theſe are in the general three; Honour, Obedience, and Prayer to God for them.

1. *Firſt*; We muſt Honour and Reverence them, it is the Apoſtle's Command, 1 *Pet.* 2. 17. *Fear God. Honour the King.* We muſt give unto them a threefold Honour; in our Thoughts, in our Speeches, and with our Subſtance.

1. We muſt Honour and Reverence them in our Thoughts, looking upon them as the lively and viſible Images of God upon Earth. Indeed the Divine Perfections are the higheſt Object of our Reverence; and therefore as you would eſteem and Honour any for their Wiſdom, or for their Holineſs, becauſe theſe are ſome Lineaments and Draughts of the Image of God; ſo you ought to Reverence thoſe to whom the Almighty God hath communicated his Adorable Power and Authority; for this alſo is the Image of God in them; yea, and though it ſhould ſo happen that they bear no other Reſemblance unto God, neither in his Wiſdom, nor Juſtice, nor Holineſs, but are wicked, cruel, tyrannical and unwiſe; yet that Power and Authority alone with which they ſtand inveſted, challengeth our Reſpect and Reverence; for in this at leaſt they are like unto God; and whoſoever ſlights and deſpiſeth them, ſlights and deſpiſeth one of God's glorious Attributes ſhining forth in them. We ought not to harbour any under-valuing or ill Thoughts of them. But where a People are ſo happy to be governed by thoſe Magiſtrates who have a whole Conſtellation of Divine Attributes ſhining in them, Magiſtrates that are juſt and merciful, wiſe and holy, they ought to give unto them the greateſt Reverence that can belong to Creatures and to eſteem and reſpect them next unto God himſelf. But although all theſe ſhould be wanting, yet that Power and Authority which God hath delegated unto them, is truly reverent and awful: And the Wiſe Man hath Commanded us, *Not to curſe the King, no not in our Thoughts.*

Eccl. 10. 20.

2. We ought to Honour and Reverence them in our Speeches; ſpeaking what Good of them we know, and prudently concealing their Vices, or their Infirmities. For to what elſe can it tend when we blaze abroad the Faults of our Governours, but only to looſen the Affections of their Subjects from them? And how much more horrid a Wickedneſs is it then, falſly to calumniate them, and by reviling Whiſpers to fly-blow the Ears of their Subjects, and by little Arts and ſuſpicious Intimations, and half-Sentences, to inſinuate politick Jealouſies into the Minds of the People

People, and to poſſeſs them with nothing but Fears and ſad Apprehenſions of what Miſeries and Sufferings are coming upon them, through the Male-adminiſtration of Affairs, and either the deſign or neglect of their Governours? All which tends to nothing but to make the People either diſdain or hate them. I beſeech you, beware that you do not by Miſinterpretations traduce the Actions of your lawful Rulers, nor hearken to thoſe who do; whoſe Words and whoſe Breath ſerves only to blow up the Coals of Civil Diſſention, which, if Mercy prevent not, will break forth again a into raging and devouring War. Beware that you ſuffer none of thoſe Leeches to faſten upon you, whoſe very Mouths will draw Blood. We have ſeen the ſad Experience of it already, and may juſtly fear, when we ſee them uſe the ſame Methods, that they intend the ſame Effects. The Apoſtle gives ſuch a black brand, 2 *Pet.* 2. 10. *Preſumptuous are they, ſelf-willed; they are not afraid to ſpeak evil of Dignities.*

3. We ought to Honour them with our Subſtance, when the neceſſity of their Affairs and publick Concernments call for ſupply: And indeed this is but a Debt we owe them, for we have ſomewhat of theirs in our Hands, and it is no unjuſt Demand for them to require their own. Tributes and publick Payments are theirs, when made ſo by Law; for the reſt is ours no otherwiſe than by the ſame Law; and therefore to withhold what is thus legally beſtowed on them, is no other than Theft, and an unjuſt detaining of what is none of our own. Hence our Saviour Commands us to *render unto Cæſar the things that are Cæſars*, *Matth.* 22. 21. And the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 13. 7. *Render unto all their due; Tribute to whom Tribute, Cuſtom to whom Cuſtom, Fear to whom Fear, Honour to whom Honour is due.* And although poſſibly ſometimes the Burthen may fall heavy, yet we ought freely and chearfully to contribute; partly conſidering that ſuch is the Privilege of our Kingdoms, that nothing is impoſed upon us by Violence, but given by our ſelves, and is our own Act; and partly, that whatſoever we poſſeſs, we owe the Enjoyment of it to the Bleſſing of Government.

This therefore is the firſt Duty we owe unto Magiſtrates, *viz.* Honour and Reverence.

2. *Secondly*, Another general Duty we owe them, is Obedience; and for this we have expreſs and frequent Commands, as for any Duty that belongs to Chriſtian Converſation; *Let every Soul be ſubject to the higher Powers; for there is no Power but of God; the Powers that be, are ordained of God. Submit your ſelves to every Ordinance of Man for the Lord's ſake; whether it be to the King, as ſupream; or unto Governours, as ſent by him; for ſo is the Will of God.* Neither is there any Cauſe whatſoever can ſuperſede our Obedience: For if their Commands be lawful, we are to obey them by performing what they require: If they be never ſo wicked and unlawful, we are to obey them, by ſuffering what they threaten. * But becauſe I have had other occaſions largely to treat on this Subject. I ſhall not now farther proſecute it.

Rom. 13. 1. 1 Pet. 2. 13.

* *Sermon on* 1 Theſ. 5. 22. *Sermon on* Jan. 30. *at Chriſt's* Church *in* Dublin.

Thirdly, Another great Duty of Subjects, is fervent and earneſt Prayer for them; ſo the Apoſtle, 1 *Tim.* 2. 1. *I exhort therefore, that firſt of all, Supplications, Prayers, Interceſſions, and giving of Thanks be made for all Men; for Kings, and all that are in Authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable Life in all Godlineſs and Honeſty.*

But why for Kings? It might ſeem more neceſſary, that Prayers ſhould be poured out for thoſe that are afflicted and diſtreſſed, who have nothing elſe to relieve them beſides God and Prayer: But Kings are in an high and proſperous Condition; many ſeek their Favour, and all fear their Diſpleaſure.

Yet it is very needful to pray for them; for indeed they ſtand in much more need of our Prayers than private Perſons do. For,

Firſt, The Charge laid upon them is greater, and the Burthens preſſing them, are heavier than what lie upon other Men; and therefore they ſhould be eaſed and helped by our Prayers. What St. *Paul* ſaith, 2 *Cor.* 11. 28. *That he had the care of all the Churches upon him*; we may ſay of a King, that he hath the care of the whole Church, and of the whole State too incumbent upon him. A Crown is an heavy, though a glittering Ornament; and how can it be otherwiſe, when the Welfare of ſo many thouſands depends upon them and their Counſels? it is their Work to provide for the Execution of Laws, the Exerciſe of Religion, the Reſtraining and Puniſhing of all Impiety and Ungodlineſs: They muſt ſee that Right and Equity be adminiſtred, that no Injuſtice nor Violence be committed, but all Affairs guided according to Law and Righteouſneſs; theſe are the conſtant Cares that attend Government: And that which adds to all theſe Burthens, and makes them out of mea-

ſure ſinking and intolerable, is that all theſe Burthens muſt ſometimes be born under the Diſcontents and Murmurs of an unſatisfied People. We had need therefore to pray earneſtly unto God, that ſo great a Truſt and ſo great a Burthen being committed unto Magiſtrates, they may be indowed by him, through whom Kings reign, with Abilities to diſcharge their Truſt to his Glory, and the Comfort of their Subjects.

2. *Secondly*, The Account they muſt render at the laſt Day is greater, and therefore they more need our Prayers than other Men. What they do is uſually of general Concernment, or elſe of general Influence; and therefore they muſt anſwer not only for themſelves, but for almoſt the whole Nation, who either obey their Commands, or follow the Examples of their Governours: We ſhould therefore eſpecially pray for them, that having a greater account to make than other Men, they may at that Day appear before the Kings of Kings with Boldneſs, and paſs from a corruptible Crown, to a Crown of Glory and Immortality.

3. *Thirdly*, Their Temptations are more, and therefore they more need our Prayers than other Men. For having all at Command; the Pleaſures, the Splendour and Gayety of the World, are more likely to be Snares to them than others, who converſe not ſo much with them. And beſides, the Devil is more aſſiduous and ſubtile in his Temptations towards them than others: Becauſe if they can be perverted by him, they will prove great and moſt effectual Inſtruments to promote his Kingdom. And therefore in *Micaiah*'s Parable, 1 *Kings* 22. no ſooner had God asked the Queſtion, who ſhall perſuade *Ahab?* but there ſteps forth an evil Spirit, and undertakes the Employment. *Satan* loves to be buſie about Princes and Rulers, becauſe there he thinks he can make the greateſt Earnings. To tempt private Perſons, is but to tempt by Retail; but to tempt Princes, and to ſeduce the Rulers of a Land, this is to deſtroy by Wholeſale: And therefore as they are expoſed to more Temptations, ſo ſhould they be ſupported and ſtrengthned by more Prayers.

Let us therefore heartily perform this Duty to them, and for them; a Duty not more beneficial to them, than to our ſelves and the whole Nation: For if we can prevail for a Bleſſing upon them, we our ſelves ſhall certainly ſhare in it, if by our fervent Prayers we can obtain of God to beſtow on them Wiſdom and Zeal, Holineſs and Piety, Peace and Proſperity. Certainly our own ſhare in theſe Mercies is worth the Venture we ſend for them; and we ſhall then ſit ſafely under the Shadow of our King, and he himſelf under the Shadow of the Almighty.

I have heretofore told you, that this Fifth Commandment comprehends in it not only the mutual Offices between Parents and Children, but generally all the Duties to which both Superiours and Inferiours ſtand reciprocally bound: And therefore having already ſpoken of the mutual Duties of Parents and Children, of Magiſtrates and Subjects; I ſhall now proceed to conſider the Duties of Husband and Wife. For in this Relation alſo, though it come nearer to an Equality than the former, there is a Superiority on the Man's part, and Subjection due unto him from the Woman.

And here, whilſt I am treating of this Subject, I beſeech you give not way to any Levity of Mind, or Vanity of Thoughts; think it not a light jocular thing, as too often the Marriage-Relation, and the Offices that appertain unto it, are accounted; for it is matter of Duty that I am now propounding unto you; and matter of Duty is no leſs than matter of Life and Death eternal. And therefore I charge you that you attend unto it, not to get Advantages of Sport and Merriment one with another, and to object them each to other in a ludicrous and jeſting way, as it is every where too common a Cuſtom; but attend unto it as a matter of as great Seriouſneſs and Weight, as any that belongs unto the right ordering of your Chriſtian Converſation; a matter that preſſeth the Conſciences to the due Obſervance and practice of it; and, if deſpiſed or neglected, will preſs your Souls under Guilt, and ſink them under Wrath. And certainly they who are ſo vain as to think the Duties of this Relation to be of no great Concernment, muſt needs likewiſe be ſo impious as to impute trifling to the Holy Spirit of God, who hath ſo frequently and with ſo much Earneſtneſs and Inſtance, recommended them unto us. There is ſcarce any one Epiſtle wherein the Apoſtles do not particularly inſiſt on theſe things; and certainly what was worthy their Care to write and teach, is worthy our Care to learn and Practiſe.

The Duties therefore of Married Perſons are either ſpecial or common. Special, are

are thoſe which are the Duties only of one Party to the other; and that either of the Husband to the Wife, or the Wife to the Husband. Common, are thoſe which belong to both, and are by both to be mutually performed.

I ſhall firſt begin with thoſe Duties which belong to an Husband towards his Wife. And they are theſe;

Firſt, Conjugal Love. Indeed Love is a beautiful Ornament to all Relations, but it is the Foundation and firſt Principle of this: It is Love which ought at firſt to tie the Marriage-Knot; and it is Love alone than can afterwards make it eaſy. No other reſpect whatſoever, can keep it from wringing and galling us. And although want of Love cannot diſſolve the Bond, yet it doth the Joy and Comfort of a Married State. Now of all the Objects that are allowed us to Love here on Earth, a Wife is the chiefeſt; yea, to be loved above Parents, Children and Friends, and the deareſt of all other Relations; *Gen.* 2. 24. *Therefore ſhall a Man leave his Father and Mother, and ſhall cleave unto his Wife.* And if you would know the full meaſure of this Love, the Apoſtle hath preſcribed it, *Eph.* 5. 28. *So ought Men to love their Wives as their own Bodies:* and *ver.* 33. *Let every one of you in particular love his Wife as himſelf*; you muſt be as careful and tender of their Good, as of your own; and reſent any Injury done unto them, as much as if it were done unto your ſelves. And indeed, there is great reaſon for it; for Marriage makes of two, one myſtical Perſon; it doth but compenſate our Damage, and reſtore the Rib to our Side again. And therefore, by Marriage two are ſaid to be made one Fleſh; *Mark* 10. 8. *They twain ſhall be one Fleſh: So then they are no more twain, but one Fleſh.* And therefore all Violence and Out-rage againſt a Wife, (into which the rude and boiſterous Fury of ſome brutiſh Men doth too often break) is as unnatural, as if you ſhould ſee a Man beat, and wound, and gaſh himſelf: And certainly they are mad and diſtracted Paſſions which take Revenge upon themſelves, *Epheſ.* 5. 29. *No Man yet ever hated his own Fleſh*; that is, no Man acting rationally and as becomes a Man, *but loveth and cheriſheth it.* So that we are to love our Wives with the ſame Tenderneſs and Naturalneſs of Affection, as our own Beings, and they ſhould be as dear to us as our ſelves: And if you would have this high Affection mounted a degree higher; ſee *ver.* 25. *Husbands love your Wives, even as Chriſt alſo loved the Church, and gave himſelf for it.* If a natural Affection will not ſuffice, behold here a ſupernatural one, and the greateſt Inſtance of Love that ever was expreſſed or conceived, brought to be the Rule and Pattern of ours. Chriſt loved the Church, his Spouſe; although there were many Spots, Blemiſhes, and Imperfections in her; he loved her ſo as to leave his Father, and cleave to his Wife: He loved her better than himſelf and his own Life, and ſhed his moſt precious Blood for her; and rather than the Wrath of God ſhould fall upon his beloved Spouſe, he thruſts himſelf between, and receives theſe heavy Blows on his own Perſon: So ought Men alſo to love their Wives, ſo infinitely if it were poſſible, but becauſe it is not ſo, ſincerely. And therefore: 1.

1*ſt*, They muſt Love them, though they often bewray many Weakneſſes and Imperfections, which they ought meekly to bear with, though they muſt not countenance nor incourage them. Love will cover a multitude of Faults, and as long as they are but Faults and not Crimes, we ought no more to divorce our Affections than our Perſons from them. There is indeed a touchy Love, which will cauſe great Wrath for very ſmall Offences; but uſually ſuch kind of Love turns into Bitterneſs and Exaſperation: Therefore Offences of this Nature ſhould prudently be paſſed by, only with a glancing Reproof, or with a Silence that ſhall be more inſtructive than Noiſe and Clamour: Here the Apoſtle exhorts Husbands, *Col.* 3. 19. *Husbands, love your Wives, and be not bitter againſt them.*

2*dly*, We ſhould ſo Love them, as not to upbraid them with the Neceſſities or Incumbrances of a Married Life, but be content to abridge our ſelves of our former Freedom, and to forego our former Privileges, either of Plenty or Pleaſure, which we enjoyed in a ſingle Condition, without reproaching them with it. Many Fools there are who fanſie nothing but Joys and Delights in a Married Life; but when they enter into it, and find many unexpected Troubles, and that they cannot live either at ſo much eaſe, or with ſo much Splendour as before, think to right themſelves by perpetual Brawls with their Wives, imputing the cauſe to them, and charging on them all the Burthens and Inconveniencies under which they both labour, and of which commonly the Woman hath the greater ſhare. Now this is not to

love

love as Chriſt loved the Church, who for her ſake ſtripp'd himſelf of his Glory, and voluntarily humbled himſelf, firſt to the Duſt, and then to the Death, the cruel and curſed Death of the Croſs.

3*dly*. We ought ſo to love them, as to interpoſe and ſtep in between them and Danger, and rather ſuffer it to fall upon our ſelves than them; for ſo Chriſt loved the Church, and gave himſelf for it, redeeming it from the Wrath of God, by his own undergoing it, and delivering it from Death, by ſuffering Death for it.

4*thly*. We ought ſo to love them, as to indeavour to promote the Spiritual Good of their Souls, and by good Counſels and Inſtructions inſinuate into them, the Love of Piety and Holineſs, that ſo as Chriſt ſanctifieth the Church his Spouſe, we may alſo ſanctify ours, and preſent them unto God without Spot or Wrinkle or any ſuch thing.

In theſe four things we are to love our Wives even as Chriſt loved his Church, by bearing with and pardoning their Weakneſſes, by being willing to ſubmit to many Inconveniencies for their ſakes, by interpoſing our ſelves between them and Danger: And laſtly, by indeavouring to promote their ſpiritual Good and Benefit. And thus much of the firſt Duty, which is Love; on which I have inſiſted the longer, becuſe it comprehends all other Duties in it. For where there is this ſincere and conjugal Affection, although it may have different Methods of expreſſing it ſelf, according to the different tempers of Men; yet it will certainly in this, as in all other caſes, command the whole Train and Retinue of other Affections to wait upon it, and ſee that nothing be wanting to the Good of the Object on which it is fixed. I ſhall therefore be the briefer in the reſt.

2. *Secondly*, Another Duty of the Husband is provident Care for his Wife: He ought (ſaith the Apoſtle) to nouriſh and cheriſh her, as Chriſt doth the Church; he muſt therefore impart unto her, according to his Rank and Ability, whatſoever may be for her Neceſſity or Comfort, and not waſte that in Riot and Exceſs among his lewd and wicked Companions, Companions that the Devil hath given him, which ought to be for the Support of her whom God hath given him for his Companion; and who in the mean while hath nothing to feed on but her Sorrows, nothing to drink but her Tears. See how deeply the Apoſtle hath ſtigmatized ſuch Wretches; 1 *Tim.* 5. 8. *If any Man provide not for his own, and eſpecially for thoſe of his own Houſe, he hath denied the Faith, and is worſe than an Infidel.*

3. *Thirdly*, Another Duty that Husbands owe their Wives, is Protection from Dangers, when they are in Jeopardy; and therefore when the *Amalekites* had burnt *Ziklag*, and with the reſt of the Prey had taken *David*'s Wives; he purſues them with no more than ſix hundred Men, though they were a great Hoſt, and reſcues his Wives from their Captivity, 1 *Sam.* 30. 18. And indeed the Weakneſs and Feebleneſs of that Sex being more helpleſs in Dangers than ours, and leſs able to relieve themſelves, calls for this ready Aid and Succour from us; and he who is ſo churliſh as not to afford it, is ſo unnatual alſo as to ſuffer a part of himſelf to periſh. A Wife is compared in Scripture to a fruitful Vine; now a Vine is a weak tender Plant, and requires Support, and the Husband ſhould be as the Houſe-ſide for her Stay and Support; and therefore Woman was at firſt made of a Rib taken from under the Man's Arm; the Office of the Arm is to repel and keep off Injuries, which ſignifies unto us that the Husband ought to defend his Wife from all Wrongs and Injuries that ſhe may be expoſed unto.

4. *Fourthly*, Another Duty is Inſtruction and Direction. Therefore the Husband is called her Head, the Seat and Fountain of Knowledge and Wiſdom, *Epheſ.* 5. 23. *The Husband is the Head of the Wife, even as Chriſt is the Head of the Church.* And therefore as all Direction and Conſolation is derived from Chriſt; ſo ſhould the Husband likewiſe derive down and communicate Knowledge, and Comfort, and Guidance to the Wife; called therefore her Guide, *Prov.* 2. 17. And St. *Peter* requires of Husbands that they ſhould dwell with their Wives according to Knowledge, to be able to adviſe and inform them in all emergent Caſes, eſpecially concerning God and their Souls: Whence St. *Paul* injoyns Wives, 1 *Corinth.* 14. 35. *That if they will learn any thing, they muſt ask their Husbands at home*; and therefore much more is it required of the Husband, that he ſhould have laid up a good Stock of Knowledge, and be able to teach them, leſt ſuch as creep into Houſes and lead captive ſilly Women, inſnare their Wives. For ſuch is the ſubtilty of Deceivers, following therein the Method of the old Serpent, that they firſt begin with the

Woman

Woman, and then make uſe of her to ſeduce the Man: For Hereſy, as all other Sins, does firſt inviegle the Affections, and then by them corrupts the Reaſon. And therefore the Husband ſhould be well grounded and principled with Knowledge, that he may keep his Wife from being led away by the crafty Subtilty of thoſe who lie in wait to deceive, and who by good Words and fair Speeches, affected Phraſes, and gingling Expreſſions, that have nothing in them, but Sound and Errour, pervert the Hearts of the Simple.

But if (as it ſometimes happens) God hath indowed the Wife with a greater meaſure of Prudence, and ſolid and ſubſtantial Knowledge, than the Husband; it is then his Part to hearken to her Advice, and to yield not indeed to the Authority of the Counſellour, as ſhe is bound to do, but to the Authority of the Counſel: And this ſhe ought to tender him with all Reſpect and Submiſſion, not having Power to injoin what ſhe knows to be beſt and fitteſt, but only with Modeſty propounding it, and with Meekneſs perſuading him to embrace it.

Fifthly, Another Duty of the Husband, is Tenderneſs and Mildneſs towards his Wife, not cauſleſly grieving her, either by Speeches or Actions. That is a wretched Family, where thoſe who are joined in the ſame Yoak, ſpurn and kick at one another. If the Wife be careful in performing her Duty, there belongs to her a kind and loving Acceptation of it, and Praiſe and Commendation for it; or, if ſhe ſometimes ſhould fail, ſhe ought not to be rebuked with Bitterneſs, but with Meekneſs, and in ſuch a way as the Reproof ſhould ſhew more of Sorrow than of Anger. But perpetual Brawlings and Contentions, beſides that they wholly imbitter this State of Life, and eat out all the Comfort of it, inſtead of preventing Offences for the future, do uſually provoke and exaſperate to more, and are perhaps a greater Fault in the Husband, than that which he exclaims at in his Wife; beſides, it will certainly indiſpoſe them, both to the Performances of thoſe Duties which belong unto them in their general and particular Callings. It will hinder their Prayers; for how can they lift up their Hands without Wrath, as the Apoſtle Commands, 1 *Tim.* 2. 8. when they burn in Choler one againſt the other? How can they Pray to God for Bleſſings upon each other, when they have been Curſing and Reviling each other? And as for the Duties of their particular Callings; do we not ſee, that in thoſe Families where this baneful Contention reigns, they are commonly neglected, and all runs to wrack and ruin, out of a kind of Revenge that one Party thinks to take upon the other. The Husband out of Diſcontent will not provide, nor the Wife manage; and ſo nothing is cared for, but only how they may quarrel and rail at each other. A Miſery that many Families fall into, through the indiſcreet Heats and Fierceneſs of the Man upon every trivial Offence of the Wife, though perhaps it was ſometimes unthought of, and ſometimes unavoidable. 5.

Sixthly, Another Duty of the Husband, is to give due Reſpect and Honour unto his Wife, 1 *Pet.* 3. 7. *Give Honour unto the Wife as unto the weaker veſſel*; for being weak, ſhe ought to be uſed with the more Reſpect and Gentleneſs. Think Honourably of her, as the Perſon whom God ſaw beſt and fitteſt for you in all the World; and be not tempted ſo much as in a Thought, to believe that any other could have been either ſo proper, or ſo beneficial unto you: Speak Honourably of her, not divulging any of her Failings and Imperfections, to her Diſcredit; but giving her the due Praiſe of thoſe Vertues and Graces that are in her. For he that diſgraceth his Wife, diſparageth himſelf; and every one will cenſure him as guilty of Folly, either in chuſing or in governing her. Treat her Honourably, neither making thy ſelf a Servant to her Humour, for that will diſhonour thee; nor making her a Slave to thine, for that is to diſhonour her; but uſe her as thy Boſom-Friend, thy indeared Companion, and in every thing but Authority, equal to thy ſelf. 6.

Seventhly, The laſt Duty of an Husband, is prudent maintaining and managing his Authority. His Authority over his Wife is God's, who hath intruſted him with it: And our Saviour illuſtrates his own Authority over the Church, by the Authority of an Husband over his Wife, *Epheſ.* 5. And therefore it is not baſely to be betrayed, nor to be maintained with Rigour and Tyrannical Violence. But the right and moſt effectual way of keeping up this Authority, is by Prudence and Gravity, by Soberneſs and Piety, and a ſtayed, examplary and ſtrict Life. This will cauſe a reverent Eſteem and Veneration in the Wife, and in the whole Family; whereas an humourſom Lightneſs at one time, and as humourſom Severity at another, will but expoſe us to Contempt for the one, and Hatred for the other. 7.

It is an hard matter for him to be Reverenced by others, who doth not firſt Reverence himſelf; for he that will proſtitute himſelf by fooliſh and ridiculous Humours, or by vile and wicked Actions, either Injuſtice or Intemperance, or Lying, *&c.* it is impoſſible but that he muſt fall under the Scorn of his neareſt Relations: And therefore *Nabal*'s Churliſhneſs and Drunkenneſs, made even wiſe *Abigail* to call him Fool, *Nabal is his Name, and Folly is with him.* But where there is an excellent mixture of Prudence and Piety together, the one to be a Guide, and the other to be an Example, theſe will make a Man truly awful and reverend, and induce the Wife and the whole Family to eſteem, and to imitate him. And thus much for the Duties of the Husband towards the Wife.

Let us next conſider the Duties of the Wife towards the Husband, and they are theſe which follow:

1. *Firſt*, Subjection and Obedience: And this is required from them as abſolutely and peremptorily as unto Chriſt himſelf, *Epheſ.* 5. 22. *Wives ſubmit your ſelves unto your own Husbands, as unto the Lord.* And again, *ver.* 24. *Therefore as the Church is ſubject unto Chriſt; ſo let the Wives be unto their own Husbands, in every thing.* And not only doth the Apoſtle give Authority and Command for it, but inforceth it by ſundry Reaſons. As,

1*ſt.* The Woman was made out of the Man, and therefore ought to be ſubject unto him, 1 *Cor.* 11. 3, 8. *The Head of the Woman is the Man; for the Man is not of the Woman, but the Woman of the Man: She is Bone of his Bone, and Fleſh of his Fleſh;* and therefore ought to pay him the Homage of Obedience and Subjection for thoſe Materials of her Being, which ſhe firſt received of him.

2*dly.* Becauſe the Woman was made for the Man, and therefore ought to be ſubject to him: So in the next *Verſe, Neither was the Man created for the Woman, but the Woman for the Man.* She owes her Being to the Man's Neceſſities and Convenience; and the great End of her Creation, next to the Glory of God, was that ſhe might be helpful and profitable to Man, *Gen.* 2. 18. *It is not good that Man ſhould be alone; I will make him a help-meet for him:* And therefore having received their Beings for the ſake of Man, they ought to be ſubject unto him.

3*dly.* Another Reaſon which the Apoſtle gives, is taken from the Priority of the Man's Creation, 1 *Tim.* 2. 12, 13. *I ſuffer not a Woman to uſurp Authority over the Man; for Adam was firſt formed, and then Eve:* And therefore in the ſame Rank of Creatures, it is but fit that he ſhould be firſt in Dignity, who was firſt in Nature. And,

4*thly.* Becauſe by the occaſion of the Woman, Sin entred into the World: So *ver.* 14. *Adam was not deceived, but the Woman being deceived, was in the Tranſgreſſion.* And therefore it is but fit and juſt, that ſhe who had made all Mankind diſobedient againſt God, ſhould her ſelf be made ſubject and obedient unto Man. And this Sentence we find inflicted upon her as a Puniſhment for her Tranſgreſſion, *Gen.* 3. 16. *Thy deſire ſhall be to thy Husband, and he ſhall Rule over thee.* Not as though there would have been no ſubjection due from her to Man, if Sin had not entred into the World by her means, for the Reaſons before alledged do manifeſtly prove the contrary; but that now her Subjection is a Curſe; and whereas before it would have been eaſie and pleaſing unto her, now it is become burthenſom and grievous; Man being by Sin made more humourſom, and harder to be pleaſed, and ſhe being made leſs able and willing to do it, God juſtly and righteouſly puniſhing her, by impoſing on her a Work which ſhe her ſelf hath made irkſom and difficult. And let me add to theſe Reaſons of the Apoſtle,

5*thly.* That the Man's Titles do imply Superiority and Authority over the Wife; Such as Lord, 1 *Pet.* 3. 6. *Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord.* He is likewiſe called the Head and Guide of his Wife, 1 *Cor.* 11. 3. *Prov.* 2. 17.

6*thly.* The Husband repreſents Chriſt, the Wife the Church, and that in this very particular of Superiority and Subjection: And therefore as the Church is ſubject unto Chriſt, ſo let the Wife be to her own Husband.

And thus we ſee their Subjection abundantly proved both by natural and ſpiritual Arguments.

And in token of this Subjection the Apoſtle tells us, 1 *Cor.* 11. 10. that the Woman was *to have Power over her Head, becauſe of the Angels.* Which place, eſpecially the latter Clauſe of it, is diverſly interpreted. But I think all agree in this, That this Power which they were to have on their Heads was a Veil or Covering, which at other times, but moſt eſpecially in the Congregation, Women

ought

ought to wear on their Heads; and which in the Primitive Times covered not only their Heads, but all their Face, as a Guard to their Modesty, and a Screen to keep off loose and wanton Eyes. And this Veil is called Power, to signifie that they were under the Power and Authority of their Husbands. But the Men were uncovered in their Assemblies, as the Apostle tells us, *ver.* 4. to signifie, that they had nothing over them, but were superiour to all visible Creatures, and subject only unto God. This Power, or Veil, Women were to wear because of the Angels. Not as * *Tertullian* did grosly conceive from that mistaken Text, *Gen.* 6. 2. To hide their Beauty from the sight and inspection of Angels (for what Veil could do that, or how can Angels be affected with Corporeal Beauty?) But either by Angels, are meant the Ministers of the Church, before whom they are to shew Modesty and Bashfulness; or else perhaps the Celestial Angels, who are always present and attending in the Assemblies and Congregations of the Faithful; and therefore Women should not do any thing unbecoming and unseemly before them: Or lastly, because the Angels themselves do reverence Christ, who is their Head, and in token of their Subjection unto him, are said to veil and cover their Faces: And therefore Women also in token of their Subjection to their Husbands, who are their Heads, as Christ is of the Church, should likewise cover their Heads and Faces with a Veil. So we find, *Gen.* 24. 65. That when *Rebekah* saw *Isaac* coming towards her, she took a Veil and covered her self, as a sign of her Subjection to him.

* *Propter Angelos, scil. quos legimus a Deo & Cœlo excidisse ob concupiscentiam fœminarum* ——— *Debet ergo adumbrari facies tam periculosa quæ usq; ad Cœlum scandala jaculata est.* Tertul. de Virg. Vel. num. 7.

Isa. 6. 2.

And this Subjection is recommended unto them by the Example of holy Women, to whose Practice they ought to conform their own: So 1 *Pet.* 3. 5. *Holy Women, who trusted in God, being in Subjection to their own Husbands.* And St. *Paul* gives it in charge to *Titus*, to exhort Wives that they *be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own Husbands*, Tit. 2. 5. And himself exhorts them to the same Duty, *Colos.* 3. 18. *Wives, submit your selves unto your own Husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.*

The Commands are so many and so express, that there is scarce any other Duty which the Scripture doth urge with so much Instance and Earnestness, with such pressing Reasons and inforcing Motives, as this of the Wives Obedience. The Duty is frequently express'd, *Submit your selves*; and the manner of performing it, *Be subject as to the Lord*; *submit in the Lord*; which Phrase carries in it three Things:

A Motive.
A Direction. And,
A Limitation.

First, A Motive to Obedience: It is done to the Lord. And though through the froward and peevish Humours of the Husband, they may have no other Encouragement to observe and obey him; yet to the conscientious Wife this will be Encouragement enough, that the Lord will accept and reward their Obedience; their heavenly Husband Jesus Christ will account it as a Service done unto him. For Marriage being a Type of our Mystical Union unto Christ, he especially is concerned that the Duties of that Relation be performed so, as to bear some Proportion to that Spiritual Mystery. 1.

Secondly, A Direction how to perform it; it must be as to the Lord. She must obey her Husband not only with a design of pleasing him, but the Lord Christ. For were it not that God commands it from them as part of their Duty and Obedience to him, it might sometimes seem very fit that humoursom and self-will'd Men should be cross'd, and that those who have no other Reason but their Will, should fail of that Observance and Obsequiousness which they tyrannically expect. But then consider, it is not the Husband only that commands, but the Lord, and the Wife must eye his Sovereign Authority, through the Authority of her Husband; and then it will appear, that though there be no necessity in what is required, yet there is a necessity she should perform what is required. 2.

Thirdly, The words import likewise a Limitation of her Obedience. The Wife must submit and obey, but in the Lord, and as to the Lord: That is, only in lawful things, wherein by her Obedience to her Husband, she may not offend against God. And excepting this, in all other cases the Wife is absolutely bound to obey the Will and Commands of her Husband, to the utmost of her Power. 'Tis true, he 3.

abuseth

abuſeth his Authority, if he command what is unneceſſary and unfit; but yet neither her Unwillingneſs to perform them, nor her judging them inconvenient to be done, can excuſe her, or exempt her from the Obligation that lies upon her of a ready Obedience; nothing can do this but the Unlawfulneſs or Impoſſibility of what is injoined. In all other things, although they be never ſo contrary to her Humour and Inclination, ſhe is bound by the Law of God and Nature to obey, and to ſubmit, if not her Judgment, yet at leaſt her Practice to the Will of her Husband, whether ſhe thinks it fit or unfit to be done, as long as it is lawful; unleſs ſhe can meekly perſuade her Husband to revoke his Command, ſhe is obliged to perform it. Otherwiſe, when the Apoſtle commands Wives to be ſubject to their Husbands in every thing, it would ſignifie no more than in every thing which they think fit; and this certainly is no greater a Subjection than every Husband would readily yield to his Wife, and falls infinitely ſhort of the Apoſtle's Intent, who requires this Subjection of the Wife to the Husband in every thing, as the Church is ſubject unto Chriſt; which certainly is not in every thing ſhe thinks fit; neither ought ſhe to take upon her to judge, or reject his Laws, but to fulfil them.

This therefore is the firſt and moſt comprehenſive Duty of a Wife, Subjection and Obedience.

Secondly, Another Duty of the Wife towards her Husband, is Reſpect and Reverence of his Perſon, *Epheſ.* 5. 33. *Let the Wife ſee that ſhe Reverence her Husband.*

Now Reverence conſiſts in two things, Eſteem and Fear.

1. *Firſt*, She ought to cheriſh an high Eſteem, of him, if not for his Gifts and Graces, yet at leaſt for that Relation in which he ſtands to her, as her Lord, and her Head, ſuperiour to her by God's Appointment and Ordinance: Yea, ſhe muſt look upon him as that Perſon whom God out of all the numerous Millions of Mankind, hath particularly choſen and ſelected for her, and one whom he ſaw fitteſt and beſt to be her Head and Guide.

2. *Secondly*, Another part of Reverence is Fear, not a ſervile ſlaviſh Fear, for that is inconſiſtent with Love, but an awful and a loving Fear, which will ſhew it ſelf in two things.

1*ſt*, In her Care to pleaſe him, indeavouring to conform her Actions to his Inclinations, ſo far forth as they are not repugnant to the Supream Duty which ſhe owes to God; 1 *Cor.* 7. 34. *She that is Married careth for the things of this World, how ſhe may pleaſe her Husband*: And therefore ſhe will indeavour how to comport her ſelf in her Speeches, and in her Geſtures, and in her whole Demeanour, ſo as may render her moſt grateful and moſt amiable to him.

2*dly*. In her Joy in pleaſing him, and Grief in offending him. Indeed a good Wife ſhould be like a Mirrour: A Mirrour you know hath no Image of its own, but receives its Stamp and Image from the Face that looks into it; ſo ſhould a good Wife indeavour to frame her outward Deportment, and her inward Affections, according to her Husband; to rejoyce when he rejoyceth, to be ſad when he mourns, and to grieve when he is offended; this is that Reverence which Wives owe to their Husbands, thinking highly and Honourably of them for their place ſake, and indeavouring to avoid and ſhun whatever may offend them: And therefore thoſe who are croſs and vexatious, and either by Clamours and contentious Speeches, or by thwarting and peeviſh Actions grieve and ſadden the Hearts of their Husbands; let them know that they highly provoke the Lord, who hath Commanded Reverence and Reſpect to be paid to the Husband as his Type, and as part of that Reverence and Reſpect which is due unto himſelf.

3. *Thirdly*, Another Duty of a Wife is Helpfulneſs to her Husband: She ought indeed to be a Help to him in every thing; to his Soul in furthering his Graces, and wiſely and opportunely admoniſhing him to his Duty, at leaſt by an holy and blameleſs Converſation; ſo commending the Goſpel of Chriſt unto her Husband, that at length he may begin to Eſteem and Reverence that Piety which hath ſo adorned and qualified his Wife: And *what knoweſt thou, O Wife, whether* by ſuch an exemplary Life as this *thou mayſt ſave thine Husband*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, 1 *Cor.* 7. 16. To his Body, by, cheriſhing and tendering of it; to his good Name, by indeavouring to augment and preſerve it, reporting well of him, and ſilencing and convincing any ſcandalous Rumours that may be ſpread abroad concerning him; to his Eſtate (wherein indeed lies her chief Helpfulneſs, and which ſhe ought to make her

er conſtant and daily Imployment) if ſhe cannot bring in, and get any thing to ncreaſe the Stock, yet ſhe ought prudently and frugally to manage what her Hus- and intruſts her withal, and not to waſte it vainly and profuſely; for let her know hat whatſoever is ſo ſpent or waſted is but ſtollen; and if ſhe ſhall alienate any hing from her Husband contrary to his conſent, either expreſly declared, or elſe up- n good grounds ſuppoſed to be tacitely granted and allowed, it is no better than heft. And therefore when we Read that *Abigail*, without the conſent of her Husband, took a conſiderable Preſent to beſtow upon *David* to divert his ireful In- entions; it may very well be ſuppoſed that if *Nabal* had known as well as ſhe, he Danger wherein he ſtood, he would have been as forward to encourage her to o it, as ſhe was ready and willing. And therefore here were good grounds to uppoſe a tacite and implicite Conſent unto the Action. The Husband is the true nd only Proprietor of all: And though the Wife hath a Right to all, yet it is on- y a Right of Uſe, and not of Dominion; ſhe ought not to diſpoſe of his Eſtate, r any part of it, contrary to his Mind and Conſent; her proper Office is provi- dently and faithfully to manage the Affairs of the Family that are committed to her Over-ſight and Care: And therefore in the Deſcription of a good Wife given us t large, *Prov.* 31. from *verſe* 10, to the end, we find the whole of it taken up in hewing her Induſtry and Care in ordering the Affairs of the Family.

Fourthly, Another Duty of the Wife is Modeſty, aud that both in Apparel and 4.
Behaviour.

1ſt. In Apparel; that it be according to her Place and Rank, not Affecting Gau- ineſs or ſtrange Faſhions, nor yet affecting on the contrary a Singularity of Obſo- eteneſs and outworn Antiquity; for Pride may be equally ſhewn either way: The eſt Temper is for them not to wear Garments to be taken notice of. The Apoſtle ives them this Rule; 1 *Pet.* 3. 3, 4. *Let not the Woman's adorning be the outward adorn- ng of Plaiting the Hair, and of wearing of Gold, or of putting on of Apparel: But let it e the hidden Man of the Heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit, which in the ſight of God is of great Price.* And ſo St. *Paul*, 1 *Tim.* . 9, 10. *I will that Women adorn themſelves with modeſt Apparel, with Shamefacedneſs nd Sobriety; not with broidered Hair, or Gold, or Pearls, or coſtly Array; but (which becomes Women profeſſing Godlineſs) with good Works.* This indeed is the beſt Orna- ent, that which makes them lovely in the Sight of God, and that too which makes hem eſteemed by all ſober and ſerious Perſons. Indeed I do not think that coſtly rray is in either of theſe places abſolutely forbidden: Doubtleſs, Gold and Jewels ay lawfully be worn, if we keep our ſelves within our Rank and Quality, and faſhi- n our ſelves to thoſe who are moſt ſober in that rank, rather than to thoſe who re moſt light and vain: But the Prohibition is to be interpreted either by the De- ree, *i. e.* be not exceſſive nor vain in your Apparel, which happens when the Habit exceeds either the Quality or the Ability of thoſe that wear it; or elſe it is o be interpreted by a Compariſon, let not the adorning be the outward adorning of wearing of Gold, or putting on of Apparel; that is, ſtudy not ſo much how o ſet off your ſelves in your Garments, as how to adorn your ſelves with a meek nd quiet Spirit, with Sobriety, Modeſty, and good Works, which is the Richeſt nd moſt Beautiful Robe you can wear.

2dly. As ſhe muſt be modeſt in her Apparel, ſo in her Behaviour and Deportment; her Countenance, Geſture, and Speeches, muſt be all fitted to ſhew the inward Calm- neſs and Serenity of her Mind; and therefore imperious, clamorous, and turbulent Women, who at every Word ſpit Paſſion and Poiſon, are a Torment and Vexation to themſelves, and more to their Husbands: *The Contentions of a Wife*, ſaith the wiſe Man, *are a continual dropping*, Prov. 19: 13. And it is ſuch a dropping, as will at laſt eat and fret through his very Heart, though it were made of Stone.

Theſe therefore are the Duties of the Wife.

There are likewiſe common Duties to be performed by both mutually: I ſhall only name them to you. Such are fervent Prayers to God both ſeverally and toge- ther, that he would be pleaſed to pour down his Bleſſings, and his Graces upon them, and give them Wiſdom to demean themſelves, towards each other aright: Conjugal Love, Communion of themſelves, of their Eſtates, of their Habitations, a mutual bearing one anothers Weakneſs, with prudent and pious Indeavours to heal and remove them; the Nurture and Education of Children, the Government of their Family committed to their charge, for whom they are to provide not on-

ly what is requiſite for their corporeal Good, but much more for their ſpiritual; as much as their Souls are much more worth than their Bodies; and therefore th ought to obſerve conſtant Family-Duties, and make choice of honeſt and religi Servants, and as far as in them lies, keep out the Infection of evil Company fr entring within their Doors, as carefully as they would the Plague. And whilſt th thus live, and thus love, they have good reaſon to believe, that as they are joi in a near Relation each to others, ſo they are both joined in a near Relation to Lord Jeſus, who is the Husband of the Church, and all the Faithful in it; and wh Death ſhall diſſolve their Marriage-Union, and ſeparate them one from the oth it is only to bring them to live for ever with that Husband from whom they can ne ver be ſeparated nor divorced.

And thus much for the mutual Duties of Husbands and Wives.

Let us in the next place proceed to conſider the Duties of another Family-Re tion, and that is between Maſters and their Servants; for theſe alſo are comp hended under this Commandment, *Honour thy Father and thy Mother*, ſince there confeſſed Su periority of the one over the other; and upon that account (as I long ſince told you) Servants have honoured their Maſters with the Stile and Comp lation of Father: Thus, 2 *Kings* 5. 13. When thoſe prudent Servants fought mitigate the Rage of proud *Naaman*, who thought his Greatneſs too much ſlighted the Prophet, in that he would only cure, and not complement him; they revere call him Father; his Servants came near and ſpake unto him, and ſaid, *My Father,*

And here, not to diſcourſe of Dominion and Servitude, whether the Orig and Foundation of either be in Nature and Inſtitution, nor of the Difference Servants by War, Purchaſe, or Compact; I ſhall only ſpeak of what is more mediately pertinent to my Subject, and what may be more inſtructive and prof ble to you, *viz.* The mutual and reciprocal Duties that Maſters and Serv ought to perform each to other.

The Duties that equally concern them both, conſiſt in the general, either in right chuſing, or in the right uſing one another.

I ſhall begin with the Servant's Duty, and that firſt as to the choice of t Maſter.

1. He ought where his choice is left him free, to chuſe a faithful Maſter, ſuch an as fears God, and will be willing to promote the ſpiritual Good and Salvation of Soul; with ſuch certainly he ſhall beſt ſerve, who do themſelves ſerve God; wh he ſhall have nothing but reaſonable and lawful Commands to obey, and pious E amples to imitate. Many poor ignorant Souls have had cauſe for ever to bleſs G that his Providence hath caſt them into ſuch Families, where they have received fi firſt Knowledge, and the firſt Savour of Godlineſs. But if the Servant be fore-hand knowing and religious, what comfort can it be to him to live wh there is a conſtant Neglect of Holy Duties, nothing but Exceſs and Riot, Prophaneneſs, and abuſing of the Name of God, and ſcoffing at his Service Servants? Certainly Neceſſity ſhould hardly induce him, much leſs Choice him, to be a Servant in a Family where the Devil is the Maſter of it. T Pſalmiſt ſorely complains, that he was forced to take up his Abode among wic and ungodly Men, *Pſal.* 120. 5. *Wo is me that I ſojourn in Meſech, that I dwell in Tents of Kedar.*

And as it cannot but be exceeding burthenſom and tedious to thee, and cut Soul to the very Quick, to be at the command of thoſe who Rebel againſt thy G to hear his holy Name blaſphemed, his Ways, and Worſhip, and People derid which are dearer to thee than thy very Life; ſo is it very dangerous, and full hazard. It is hard to keep Zeal, and the ſparks of Grace and Divine Love ali when thou haſt the greateſt Helps to it that can be adminiſtred: How wilt th then preſerve them alive, when thou haſt ſo many quench-coals about thee, wh the Floods of Ungodlineſs ſhall compaſs and ſurround thee about? Either thou m diſſemble thy Piety, (and that is the ready way to loſe it, for Grace is like F ſtifle and keep it cloſe, and it will certainly die) or elſe thou muſt put thy ſelf on the ſore Temptation of being mocked and ſcorned for it: Thou knoweſt how far thou mayſt forſake God, and thy firſt Ways, for compliance ſake. I the hardeſt thing in the World to be religious alone, and to keep up Zeal and A fection for God, when all that we converſe with are Wicked and Ungodly. V is the moſt contagious Plague that is; and it will be a very great wonder if th

with whom thou familiarly converſeſt, with whom thou eateſt, and drinkeſt, and ſleepeſt, do not at laſt infect thee. We ſee holy *Joſeph*, by living long in the *Egyptian* Court, had learn'd ſome of the Court Faſhions, and could readily ſwear by the Life of *Pharaoh*.

Venture not thy ſelf therefore into thoſe Families, where the Governours are either corrupt and erroneous in their Principles, or lewd and diſſolute in their Converſation; for it will be hard for thee to ſwim againſt the Stream both of Example and Authority. Or if thou ſhouldſt be able to bear up againſt both, it will coſt thee more Pains and Strugling to do it, than all the temporal Advantages thou canſt there reap, will be worth to thee.

This is the firſt Duty that belongs to a Servant, *viz.* That he chuſe a pious and religious Maſter.

Secondly, After thou haſt made thy choice, and art entertained, conſider how thou oughteſt to demean thy ſelf towards thy Maſter. 2.

And here, if by what thou ſhalt hear thy Duty ſeem very hard unto thee, yet it is no harder than it hath pleaſed God to make it; yea, and poſſibly not ſo hard as thy Maſter's. For he is bound to give an account for thee unto God; but ſo art not thou for him. Thy Miſcarriages ſhall be ſeverely revenged upon him, if they have been through his default of needful Inſtruction, or of Care and Diſcipline; but ſo ſhall not his upon thee. And therefore in this reſpect, all Inferiours have a mighty Advantage to ſweeten the Meanneſs and Lowneſs of their Condition, that they ſhall not be puniſhed for the Sins of their Superiours, but Superiours may for the Sins of their Inferiours; yea, and ſometimes for their due Obedience too, when they command them things, though not unlawful, yet unfit; for that may be a Sin in a Superiour to command, which is a Duty for an Inferiour to obey, when commanded: And certainly in the end, his Task will be found eaſieſt, who is to obey, rather than his who commands.

Now here, *Firſt*, The chief and comprehenſive Duty of a Servant, is Obedience unto the Commands of his Maſter. For this is abſolutely injoyned them, *Col.* 3. 22. *Servants, obey in all things your Maſters according to the Fleſh:* And again, *Epheſ.* 6. 5. *Servants, be obedient to them that are your Maſters according to the Fleſh.* In all things that are not diſhoneſt, and contrary to the Laws of God, there Obedience is required; yea, although in many things their Commands ſhould be impertinent, or too imperious and tyrannical, yet Servants in ſuch Caſes are no more exempted from Obedience, than their Maſters ſhall be from Puniſhment, for the unreaſonableneſs of their Commands they ſhall give an account unto God, their Maſter; and thou for detracting thy Obedience both to them and him. 1.

Secondly, Another Duty is, a patient ſuffering their Reproofs and Corrections; yea, and ſo patient are they to be, as not ſo much as to Anſwer again, *Tit.* 2. 9. *Exhort Servants to pleaſe their Maſters well in all things, not anſwering again.* So ſtrictly ha h Religion tied them up to Obedience, that they ought not to reply againſt a Rebuke, nor to derogate ſo much from the Authority of their Maſters, as to murmur at it: And therefore to uſe Violence againſt them, is ſo high a Degree of Diſobedience, that it approacheth near to Sacrilege; yea, and this quiet and ſilent Submiſſion, is required alſo not only where the Servant hath given juſt cauſe for Reproof and Correction, but although he ſuffer from the groundleſs Rage and Paſſion of his Maſter. See 1 *Pet.* 2. 18, 19, 20. *Servants be ſubject to your own Maſters with all fear, not only to the Good and Gentle, but to the Froward alſo: For this is Thank-worthy, if a Man for Conſcience towards God endure Grief, ſuffering wrongfully. For what Glory is it, if when ye be buffeted for your Faults, ye take it patiently? But if when you do well, ye ſuffer for it, and take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.* See here with what preſſingneſs the Apoſtle injoyns them this Duty. And indeed a Duty ſo hard, ſo contrary unto Fleſh and Blood, had need to be preſt home upon our Conſciences; You ought to be patient not only when you are juſtly reproved and corrected for your Faults; but if the diſtempered Rage of a Maſter ſhould break forth without any Reaſon, or contrary to all Reaſon; if he ſhould reprove and buffet you, not for your Faults, but for your Duty, you ought to take it patiently; and not to ſtrike again, no not ſo much as to Anſwer again; that is, not to Anſwer with Taunts and Invectives, but calmly, and at fit and convenient Seaſons, to preſent unto him the Juſtice of your Actions, and the Reaſons that moved you to them. I muſt confeſs, that of all things which belong unto the Du- 2.

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ty of a Servant, this is the moſt difficult; and there is nothing that can ſweeten and facilitate it, but only Conſcience of their Duty, and the Acceptation and Reward which they will find with God for it; and therefore they had need pray for a great meaſure of Self-denial, and Mortification of thoſe Paſſions which will be apt to ſtruggle in them upon this occaſion, and by an Eye of Faith look up to God to ſupport them, eſteeming it a Chaſtiſement inflicted upon them by their Heavenly Maſter; and that, be their Spirits never ſo high, will enable them to undergo it without any more murmuring than they would uſe againſt God himſelf when he immediately afflicts them.

3. *Thirdly*, Another Duty of Servants is, a reverential Fear of their Maſters, *Malachy* 1. 6. *A Son honoureth his Father, and a Servant his Maſter. If I be a Father, where is mine Honour? If I be a Maſter, where is my Fear?* And the Apoſtle hath commanded Servants to be obedient to their Maſters with Fear and Trembling, *Eph.* 5. 6. And again, 1 *Pet.* 2. 18. *Servants be ſubject to your Maſters with all Fear.*

Which Fear is to be expreſſed by them in their Speeches and Actions. In their Speeches, by forbearing any Clamours or irreverent Muttering in their Preſence. Their Words muſt be few and humble, giving them all thoſe reſpectful Titles that belong juſtly to their Place and Quality. Yea, and they muſt not only ſpeak fair to them whilſt they are preſent, but ſpeak well of them when abſent, begetting in others as good an Opinion of them as they may, concealing their Infirmities, and what they cannot ſpeak truly of them to their Credit, therein to be ſilent. They ought likewiſe to teſtifie their Reverence in their Actions, comporting themſelves with all the Expreſſions of Modeſty and Reſpect before them, and readily doing not only what their Maſters ſhall expreſly command them, but what they judge will be pleaſing and acceptable to them; and therefore we have that Expreſſion, *Pſal.* 123. 2. *The Eyes of Servants look unto the Hands of their Maſters, and the Eyes of a Maiden unto the Hands of her Miſtreſs.* Intimating to us, that good Servants will not only readily obey when they have a verbal and oral Command, but will be ready to take the leaſt ſign, the leaſt beck from their Maſters, and ſtrive not only to fulfil, but even to prevent their Commands by the readineſs and reſpect of their Obedience.

4. *Fourthly*, Another Duty of a Servant is, diligence in his Maſter's Affairs. He ought to ſet his Mind to them, and imploy his time in them. For he is not faithful, who is negligent; and he ſteals from his Maſter, who doth not uſe his Strength, and ſpend his time in his Service. Every ſlothful Servant is a Thief; and ſo much Advantage as he hinders his Maſter of by Negligence and Idleneſs, of ſo much he doth but Rob him. And therefore in the Parable of the Talents, when the Maſter takes an account of every Man's Improvements, he calls that Servant who had not uſed his Talent, nor been induſtrious in his Service, not only ſlothful, but wicked, *Thou wicked and ſlothful Servant*, Matth. 25. 26.

5. *Fifthly*, Another Duty is, Fidelity and Truſt in what is committed to their charge; not defrauding their Maſters, nor purloining from them the leaſt Value, but ſerving them with all Faithfulneſs and Integrity; ſo *Tit.* 2. 9, 10. *Exhort Servants to be obedient to their Maſters, not purloining, but ſhewing all good Fidelity.*

And unto this appertains carefulneſs in preſerving their Maſter's Eſtate, not waſting or conſuming it either by riotous Living, or Negligence. Doubtleſs many Men have ſunk and decayed under the unfaithfulneſs or careleſneſs of their Servants, either ſtealing from them, or prodigally waſting what was theirs. Let ſuch know, that every Farthing ſtands upon account in God's Debt-book; unleſs they make amends to their Maſters, if ever Providence ſhall enable them to do it, they muſt make a punctual Payment to Divine Juſtice, which is infinitely the more dreadful Creditor.

6. *Sixthly*, As Truſt in Affairs, ſo likewiſe Truth in Speech is another Duty of a Servant. They ought to approve themſelves ſuch, that their Maſters may repoſe themſelves upon their Words. And as Servants are the Hands and the Eyes of their Maſters, ſo they ought to make no other report unto them, than what is as certain as though they had touch'd it and ſeen it themſelves. We read of *Gehazi*, that when he was returned from taking a Bribe of *Naaman*, he ſtood very demurely before his Maſter, with a Lye ready prepared in his Mouth. *Whence comeſt thou Gehazi? Thy Servant*, ſaith he, *went no whither.* But this Lye coſt him a Leproſie that ſtuck incurable to him and to all his Poſterity after. I am loth to be uncharitable,

table, but I muſt doubt, that if the ſame Judgment were inflicted upon every Servant that comes to his Maſter with a lying Excuſe, every Family would be infected, and very few in this Relation eſcape that loathſom Contagion. Certainly, it is only a cowardly, baſe, ſlaviſh Fear that induceth one to this vile Sin of Lying. And what? Wilt thou be more afraid to offend thy Maſter by confeſſing a Fault, than to offend thy God by committing another to conceal it? What elſe is this, but to heap up Sin upon Sin, and to make a ſingle Tranſgreſſion to become two thereby? A Sin the moſt odious unto God, who is Truth it ſelf, and uſually moſt deteſtable to Men, and with difficulty pardonable by them; for it imputes a great deal of Folly and Ignorance to them, as ſuch who are ſo weak that they cannot find out the matter. And therefore the Pſalmiſt ſaith, *He that telleth Lyes, ſhall not tarry in my ſight.* *Pſal.* 101. 7.

Seventhly, Another Duty of Servants (and it is the laſt I ſhall mention) is to ſerve their Maſters with good Will, and in ſingleneſs of their Hearts; not grudgingly, as of Conſtraint, for that is ſlaviſh, but readily and chearfully as unto the Lord. Not as Men-pleaſers, only with Eye-ſervice, being no longer diligent than their Maſter's Eye is upon them, but careleſs and negligent as ſoon as his back is turned; but as the Servants of Chriſt, doing the Will of God from the Heart, as the Apoſtle commands and directs them, *Eph.* 6. 5, 6, 7. 7.

Now to perform Service unto their Maſters as unto God and Chriſt, imports theſe two things:

Firſt, A ſerious Conſideration that God is concern'd in every thing they do, as the Object of it; ſo *Col.* 3. 23. *Whatſoever ye do, do it heartily, as unto the Lord.* And therefore Servants are commanded to have Reſpect, not ſo much unto Men as unto God. This is the way to ennoble thy Service, be it never ſo mean; it is God whom thou ſerveſt in them, that God whom the greateſt Princes and Potentates of the Earth ought to Serve. And be the Imployment what it will, yet the Greatneſs and Glory of that Maſter to whom thou doſt it, puts an Honour and Dignity upon it. 1.

Secondly, To do Service as unto the Lord, implies thy doing of it upon this very account, becauſe God hath commanded it. Be the Action what it will be, yet if you can truly ſay that you do it, not only becauſe your Maſter hath commanded it, but becauſe God, his Maſter and yours, hath laid the Authority of his Command and Injunction upon you to obey him, this prefers a Man's Service unto God, and makes it an Action done truly unto him. 2.

And this may be a great Encouragement unto Servants, (for indeed their Condition generally wants Incouragement) that though their Imployments may be the meaner and inferiour Drudgeries of this Life, and thoſe poſſibly not very well accepted by their harſh and froward Maſters; yet be their Work never ſo painful and laborious, whilſt they perform it out of Conſcience to God's Command, it is accounted as done to him, and not to them; they are his Servants more than theirs, and he will kindly accept and bountifully reward them.

We have thus conſidered the Duties which Servants owe unto their Maſters. Let us now proceed to thoſe Duties which Maſters owe reciprocally to their Servants. And thoſe conſiſt (as before I noted) either in the right chuſing, or in the right uſing them.

The Maſter's firſt Duty is a prudent Care and Circumſpection into the Choice of his Servants. And indeed, this is a matter of great moment, and that wherein the Happineſs and Comfort, or elſe the Miſery and Trouble of a Family doth very much depend.

Now there are two Qualifications in a Servant, that ought chiefly to be regarded in the making choice of him.

The one is Ability to diſcharge his place, and manage thoſe Affairs which you commit to his Care and Truſt.

The other is Conſcientiouſneſs and Piety in doing faithful Service, not to thee only, but to God, the common Maſter of you both.

And indeed this latter is of more Importance, and of greater Concernment to thee than the former: For when thou entertaineſt a godly Perſon, though poſſibly not ſo ſufficient for thy Employment as ſome others, it will be a Commendation of thy Charity, that thou maintaineſt one of God's Servants in thy Family. But when thou entertaineſt a lewd prophane Wretch, only becauſe he is able to diſpatch his Work, thou maintaineſt one of the Devil's Slaves, and takeſt into thine Houſe a

ſworn Servant to the mortalleſt Enemy thou haſt in the World, which is juſtly reproachable both with Folly and Impiety.

Yet how little is this uſually regarded! I know it is the Cuſtom of too many, that if they can light on thoſe whom they think proper for their Affairs, never inquire what their Principles or what their Practices be as to Religion, whether Popiſh, or Factious; whether for the Maſs, or the Meeting; but chuſe them as they would do Beaſts of Burthen, the moſt ſtrong and able; and account it the only Property of good Servants to be able to perform their Office, and willing to drudge as much as they would have them. But let them know that they make a very unwiſe and a very ſinful Choice. For ſuch Servants will aſſuredly make much more Work than they diſpatch, and leave more Filth in the Houſe than they cleanſe out. Though they be never ſo able and fit for their Imployments, yet think not ſuch an one fit for thee, who refuſeth to ſerve that God whom thou thy ſelf art bound to ſerve; and believe it to be a Deſign of the Devil to help thee to one who ſhall do thy Work, but undo thy Family. One vile and wicked Servant is enough to corrupt a whole Houſhold; for aſſure your ſelves they come there to do the Devil more Service than you, and their lewd Examples and Preſumptions will ſeduce and draw others into the ſame Exceſs with themſelves. For to this I impute the Riſe and Growth of that general Prophaneneſs that is too reigning in moſt Families, eſpecially in thoſe whoſe Quality or Eſtates require a numerous Attendance; they are commonly too careleſs what Ruffian and debauch'd Servants they entertain; and their Children (which elſe might be the Ornament and Glory of the Nation) converſing with theſe, learn from them thoſe firſt Rudiments of Vice, which afterward their Condition and Wealth enables them to perfect into conſummate Villany and Deviliſm. Here they learnt the firſt Taſte of Exceſs and Intemperance; here they were taught the firſt Syllables of Oaths, and inſtructed how to liſp out Curſes and Obſcenity, and according to their Proficiency, applauded by theſe impious Wretches for their gentile Docility and Aptneſs. Such Servants as theſe ſhould be rooted out, not only as the Peſts of particular Families, but their Influence reaches farther, even to corrupt thoſe who may hereafter have an Influence on the State and Common-wealth; for they ſerve only to give Youth the firſt Reliſhes of Sloth, and Pleaſure, and Vice, which by woful Improvements grow at laſt to be inveterate Habits, and make them only a Shame to their Families, and a Curſe to the Kingdom.

So it is proportionable in all meaner Families; where the Servants be wicked, the Children ordinarily will be more ruled by their Examples and Flatteries, than by their Parents Authority and Commands. And therefore it highly concerns you to make a prudent Choice at firſt; or if therein you have been miſtaken, as ſoon as you can to rid your Houſes of thoſe Vermin and Caterpillars, which elſe will deſtroy the verdant and budding Hopes of your Children; and to bring in thoſe who are ſober, ſtaid, and godly, who will make it their great Care, firſt, to ſerve God, and then you. Take the Reſolution of the Royal Pſalmiſt for your Pattern and Direction, *Pſal.* 101. 6, 7. *Mine Eyes ſhall be upon the Faithful of the Land, that they may dwell with me: He that walketh in a perfect way, he ſhall ſerve me: He that worketh Deceit, ſhall not dwell within my Houſe; he that telleth Lyes, ſhall not tarry in my ſight.* Certainly, thoſe will be the beſt Servants to us, who are faithful Servants to God; or, if they ſhould be leſs fit for thy occaſions, yet they will ſufficiently earn their Wages, though they only pray for thee. It is ſaid of *Joſeph*, *Gen.* 39. 5. when he was brought into *Potiphar*'s Houſe to be his Servant, *that the Lord Bleſſed the Egyptian's Houſe for Joſeph's ſake: And the Bleſſing of the Lord was upon all that he had in the Houſe, and in the Field.* Godly Servants bring a Bleſſing along with them to the Families where they reſide; and having ſuch a Servant, thou haſt a Friend in Court, one that can do thee kind Offices in Heaven through his Intereſt at the Throne of Grace. And therefore as it is thy Duty, ſo it is thy Wiſdom and thy Concern to make choice of ſuch; theſe beſt know their Duty; theſe will make moſt Conſcience of performing it; in their Integrity and Faithfulneſs thy Heart may repoſe, and they will intitle thee and thy Family to thoſe Bleſſings which attend them.

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ons, than his Maſter's; yea although the thing be not ſimply impoſſible in it ſelf, but only to the Servant, conſidering either his Inability or Imployment; or if it be hugely inconvenient, or prejudicial, or unſeaſonable, the Maſter ought not in Conſcience or Prudence to exact it. For, as to command things unlawful, is Impiety, and things impoſſible, Folly; ſo to require things unreaſonable and prejudicial, is mere Tyranny: And as ſuch it is recorded in *Pharaoh* and his Task-maſters, who to weary and wear out the *Iſraelites*, exacted the whole tale of Bricks, but would not allow Straw to make them.

3*dly*. A Maſter's Command ought not to be Vain and Impertinent; but he ſhould have ſome ſwaying Reaſon, though perhaps not always fit to be communicated to the Servant why he commands ſuch things from him, Reaſon ſufficient to ſatisfy his own Judgment, and his own Conſcience.

Theſe three Rules ought to be obſerved by Maſters; they ought to command nothing that is unlawful to be done; nothing but what is poſſible; nothing but what is profitable and uſeful. And this is the firſt Part of a Maſter's Government, *viz*. Prudent commanding his Servants.

2. *Secondly*, It is the Maſter's Duty to correct thoſe Servants that are ſtubborn and diſobedient. The wiſe Man tells us, *Prov*. 29. 19. *There is a Servant who will not be corrected with words; for although he underſtand, he will not anſwer.*

Yet here Prudence muſt be the meaſure of what Diſcipline is fit for them, according to their Age, Diſpoſition, and Nature of their Offence. A Reproof will work more effectually with ſome than Stripes; and thoſe who have ingenuous Spirits, though in a ſervile Condition, will either be diſcouraged, or exaſperated by a too-rigorous Uſage. And God hath expreſly interpoſed his Will in this Particular, *Levit*. 25. 34. *Thou ſhalt not Rule over him with Rigour, but ſhalt fear thy God*. Inded no Correction is to be inflicted on them out of Paſſion and Revenge: But either,

1*ſt*. For Reformation and Amendment, that they may be the more wary for the future; Or,

Plat. ap. Lact. de Irâ Dei. c. 18. 2*dly*. For example's ſake, to terrify others from the ſame, or the like Offences. Even an Heathen could ſay, *Nemo ſapiens punit, quia peccatum eſt, ſed ne pelletur:* No wiſe Man doth puniſh, becauſe the Offence is already committed (for then it comes unſeaſonably and too late) but that it might not be committed again.

But ſtill be ſure that the Correction be not immoderate and too ſevere; neither exceeding the proportion of the Fault, for that is Cruelty; nor unbeſeeming thee to inflict, or the Age and Quality of thy Servant to ſuffer, for that will be reproachful to both. Generally Reproof is the beſt Diſcipline. But if they be ſuch contumacious Fools as not to be amended with that, although it be lawful, and in ſome Caſes neceſſary to uſe a ſharper Method towards them; yet the beſt and moſt prudent Courſe, and that which will tend moſt to thy Quiet and Credit, is to diſcharge them.

Now to move you to Mercy and Lenity towards them; Conſider,

1. *Firſt*, That you your ſelves have a Maſter, the great and glorious God. This the Apoſtle urgeth, *Eph*. 6. 9. *Maſters, forbear threatning, knowing that your Maſter alſo is in Heaven*. Think with your ſelves how often you provoke him, and yet he forbears you, although you are infinitely more inferiour to him, than any Servant can be unto you: And this will calm your Paſſions, and cauſe you, if not altogether to wave, yet at leaſt to allay and mitigate the Rigour and Severity of your Chaſtiſements.

2. *Secondly*, Conſider that they are equal with you in reſpect of God. It is true, they are your Servants, but both you and they are Fellow-Servants to the great Lord and Maſter. And if thou in a Rage ſhouldſt take thy Fellow-Servant by the Throat, and imperiouſly abuſe him; fear, leſt thy Lord may require it, and vindicate his Wrongs in the Puniſhment of thy Tyranny. There is no reſpect of Perſons with him; but he that hath done Wrong, ſhall receive for the Wrong that he hath done. And what art thou, O vile Worm, that thou ſhouldſt domineer over thy Fellow, who is moulded of as good Earth, and hath as precious and immortal a Soul in him, as thy ſelf? For,

3. *Thirdly*, Conſider that thou art equal likewiſe in Nature, only Divine Providence hath made the difference. Whence then ſuch a ſupercilious diſdain of Servants, *Quaſi non iiſdem tibi & conſtent & alantur elementis, eundemq; ſpiritum carpant* (as *Macrobius*) as if they did not conſiſt of the ſame Materials, nor draw the

ſame

ſame Breath with thy ſelf. They are Servants, but yet they are Men; they are Servants, yea rather they are thy Fellow-Servants. And it is in the Power of the ſame Providence who hath ſubjected them to thee, to change the Scene, exalt them and bring thee into Bondage. Why then ſhouldſt thou deſpiſe them? Whereas thou knoweſt not how ſoon thou mayeſt be brought under a more miſerable Servitude. They are Servants out of Neceſſity, when perhaps their Maſters are voluntary Slaves: Some are Slaves to their Luſts, others to Covetouſneſs, others to Ambition, and all to Hope, all to Fear. And there is no Servitude ſo juſtly contemptible, as that which is voluntary and wilful.

Servi ſunt, imo homines: Servi ſunt, imo conſervi. Id.

Conſider again, that he who is a Servant to Men, may be the Lord's Free-man; whereas he that is free among Men, may be a Slave to his Luſts, and by them to the Devil: And therefore we ought neither to think deſpicably of them, nor to uſe them ſeverely, but to treat them with Love, as our Fellow-Creatures, our Fellow-Servants, yea, and Fellow-Heirs of the ſame Inheritance of Life and Glory.

And thus much concerning the Maſter's Duty in Government.

Another General wherein his Duty conſiſts, is Proviſion; and that both for their temporal and ſpiritual Good; for the welfare both of their Bodies and their Souls.

Firſt, As for their temporal Proviſion; he is bound to ſupply them with things neceſſary for them according to the Tenour of the Agreement and Compact made between them, *Coloſſ.* 4. 1. *Maſters, give unto your Servants that which is juſt and equal.* He ought to provide for them Food and Raiment; or elſe in lieu of any of theſe, faithfully to pay them their agreed Wages. *Levit.* 19. 13. *The Wages of him that is hired ſhall not abide all Night with thee, until the Morning.* And again, *Deut.* 24. 14, 15. *Thou ſhalt not oppreſs an hired Servant that is poor and needy; at his Day thou ſhalt give him his Hire; neither ſhall the Sun go down upon it, leſt he cry againſt thee unto the Lord, and it be Sin unto thee.* This Oppreſſion of Servants in withholding from them their covenanted Reward of their Labour, is a crying and provoking Sin. So the Apoſtle, *James* 5. 4. *The Hire of the Labourers which have reaped down the Fields,* (ſo likewiſe of thoſe who have done any other Work and Service for you) *which is of you kept back by fraud, cryeth; and the Cries of them that have reaped are entred into the Ears of the Lord of Sabbath.* 1.

Secondly, As the Maſter is to make temporal Proviſion for their Bodies, ſo much more is he to provide for their ſpiritual Welfare, and the good of their Souls; in as much as their Souls are incomparably to be preferred before their Bodies. Every Maſter is to be both a Prieſt and a Prophet within his own Family, as well as a King; he is to inſtruct them in the Will and Laws of God, to inform their Ignorance, reſolve their Doubts, excite and quicken them to the Service of God, to rectify their Errours and Miſtakes, to pray with them and for them, to direct them in the Way that leads to Heaven and Happineſs, and above all, to walk before them in it by his holy and pious Example. But how few are there that do conſcientiouſly perform this Duty! Do not the moſt think it enough if they provide Neceſſaries and Conveniencies for the Body, the dull, outward, and earthly part of Man? And indeed it were enough if they had only Beaſts to look after. But remember, thy Servants, and thoſe who belong to thy Charge, have precious and immortal Souls, capable of eternal Glory and Happineſs, but liable to eternal Miſery and Torments: And God hath intruſted thee with theſe Souls of theirs, and will require them at thy Hands. What an heavy and tremendous Doom will paſs upon thee, when God ſhall demand at thy hands the Souls of thy Servants, or of thy Children, which have periſh'd through thy default! Will it be enough then to plead, Lord, I fed and clothed them, and was careful of their Health and Welfare? Yea, indeed if their Bodies only were committed to thy care, this were enough; but ſee, there they ſtand Condemned, and ready for Eternal Flames, for the Ignorance which thou oughteſt to have informed, for the Prophaneneſs which thou oughteſt to have chaſtiſed and hindred, for thoſe Neglects of holy Duties in the which thou oughteſt to have gone before them; and therefore though they ſhall die and periſh in their Sins, yet their Blood will God require at thy Hands, whoſe Careleſneſs or evil Example, hath hardned them in Wickedneſs, and led them on ſecurely to Deſtruction. 2.

Let me therefore warn you who are Maſters and Heads of Families, that as you tender the Souls of thoſe who are under your Charge, yea, as you tender your own Souls, which are deeply ingaged and concerned in theirs; ſo that you would uſe

all diligence and induſtry in promoting their ſpiritual Good, that you may at the laſt Day preſent them with Joy before the Tribunal of God: Lo here am I, and the Children and Servants that thou haſt given me. Now that you may with Joy and Triumph preſent them before the Throne of Juſtice then, be frequent in preſenting them before the Throne of Grace now. Let not a Day paſs without its ſtated Hours of Prayer in your Family; inſtruct thoſe that are ignorant, reduce thoſe that are Erroneous, admoniſh and rebuke with all Authority thoſe that are faulty, diſcard thoſe that are contumacious and incorrigible: Let not a ſcoffing *Iſhmael*, a Scorner and Derider of Piety and Holineſs remain within your Doors; and eſpecially be careful that both you and your Family do ſtrictly obſerve and ſanctify the Lord's Day; for therein conſiſts a great part of the Life and Strength of Religion, and this Day uſually gives a ſeaſoning to all the Days of the Week after. Prepare your Families by private Duties, for publick; let none of them ſtay at home from the Ordinances, but upon great and urgent Neceſſity. Suffer them not to wander, ſome to one Paſtor, and ſome to another; but where the Ordinances of God are duly diſpenſed; and whither thou thy ſelf art called, thither do thou lead thine; that as they all together receive their bodily Food in thy Houſe, ſo they may all together receive their ſpiritual Food in the Houſe of God; take an Account of their profiting by what they hear; be as careful to ſee thy Family well imployed in the Service of God upon that Day, as to ſee them imployed in thine own Service and Affairs the other Days of the Week: And therefore be not long nor unneceſſarily from them, for God hath made thee his Overſeer; and if his Work go not forward in private Family-Duties, eſpecially on the Lord's Day, thou canſt never expect a Bleſſing upon what they do for thee.

And thus much concerning the mutual Duties of Maſters and Servants.

The next ſort of Relative Duties that I ſhall treat of is, that of Paſtors and their Flocks, Miniſters and their People. For between them alſo is ſuch a relation of Superiority and Inferiority, as brings them under the Direction of this Commandment. We do not arrogate too much to our ſelves, nor take too much upon us, when we affirm that we are Superiour to the People, and have an Authoriry over them in things Spiritual, and appertaining unto God. And although through the Vices and foul Miſcarriages of thoſe who are dignified with this high Honour, and partly through the Meanneſs of their outward State and Condition; to which may be added likewiſe, the Meanneſs and Abjectedneſs of their Spirits, as a Conſequent upon the former, baſely proſtituting themſelves, and forfeiting the Reſpect that is due to them, by their ſordid crouching for a Morſel of Bread at the lower-end of a Gentleman's Table; though by theſe, I ſay, not only their Perſons, but their Office be ſunk into the loweſt Scorn and Contempt; yet I cannot but with the Apoſtle magnify mine Office, which is truly excellent and venerable; and it is the great Sin of the People to deſpiſe this Calling, although the Follies and Indiſcretion of Miniſters themſelves may not only occaſion but invite them to do it.

Now here I ſhall plainly ſet down the reciprocal Duties which they ought mutually to perform each to other.

The Duties of Miniſters either reſpect their Call to that Office; or their Management and Diſcharge of it.

The great Duty that reſpects their Call is, to look to it that they be rightly called, that they do not temeariouſly thruſt themſelves into ſo ſacred a Function, unleſs they be duly ſet apart thereunto. For as the Prieſts under the Law were *taken from among Men, and ordained for Men in things pertaining unto God, to offer Gifts and Sacrifices*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *Heb.* 5. 1. So likewiſe the Miniſters of the Goſpel are to be duly ſanctified and ſet apart for this high Imployment, to ſtand before the Lord, and to Miniſter in things that appertain unto his Worſhip: And it is an intolerable Preſumption for any to intrude themſelves into this Lot, without being ſelected thereunto by that Order which God himſelf hath appointed and left unto his Church. *For no Man taketh this Honour to himſelf, but he that is called of God*, as the Apoſtle ſubjoins, *ver.* 4. And therefore God complains of thoſe Prophets whom he had not ſent, and yet they ran; and to whom he had not ſpoken, and yet they propheſied, *Jer.* 23. 21. Audacious undertaking Men it ſeems they were; like ſome of late days, who thought their Forwardneſs alone a ſufficient Conſecration, and the Seal of whoſe Commiſſion bears only the Stamp of their own Impudence.

Now to the due Conſtitution of a Miniſter there is requiſite a twofold Call.

Firſt,

First, He must have an inward Call, which consists both in the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, and also in the Inclination of his Will to use them for God's Glory in this holy Ministration. Now these Gifts with which he must be endowed, some of them are absolutely necessary to capacitate him for the Office; others are only conducible to make his Ministration in it the more effectual. 1.

That which is absolutely necessary, is a competent Knowledge in the Truths of the Gospel, without which the great End of the Ministry cannot be attained, which is to teach and instruct the People. It is indeed their Duty to strive after an Eminency in this Knowledge; for they are the Lights of the World, and should be able to diffuse abroad their Beams, that they might inlighten those that are Ignorant, and sit in Darkness. But yet there is no stated Measure nor Standard for their Knowledge. For we find that our Lord Jesus Christ, the great Minister and Teacher of the World, sent forth his Disciple to preach, when yet they were very ignorant of many important Truths of the Gospel. Eminent Knowledge is therefore necessary for their Duty, but competent Knowledge is necessary for their Office.

That which is highly conducible to the Effectualness of their Ministry, is sanctifying Grace, and an holy Life and Conversation. Not that they are not true Ministers without this; for we find a *Judas* sent forth with the same Authority and Commission as the rest of the Disciples. Yea and the Apostles, who had Christ himself for their Master and Instructer, yet are by him sent to attend upon the Ministery of the Scribes and Pharisees; who, though they were very wicked and ungodly Hypocrites, yet because they sat in *Moses*'s Seat, *i. e.* because they had a rightful Authority to teach the People, therefore he commands his own Scholars to hear and obey them; *whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do*, *Matth.* 23. 2, 3. It is not therefore personal Grace that gives Authority to our Ministery; but yet it may and doth contribute much Efficacy unto it. God may feed his People, as he did *Elijah*, by a Raven; and make a cold Breath kindle the Sparks of Grace in the Hearts of others, and blow it up into a Flame. But yet it is far more comfortable and profitable to the People to sit under a Minister who shall go before them in Example, as well as in Doctrine; who not only prescribes them Rules of Holiness, but is himself an Example to those Rules; Such an one who speaks from the Heart, is most likely to speak unto it, and having himself experienced the Way of Holiness, can more savourily recommend them to the Acceptation of his Flock. And certainly he will be more like to speed in his Errand, when he shall persuade them to nothing but what he hath found the Goodness and Sweetness of in himself. All others are but like those mercurial Statues, which in old Times were set up in cross-Ways, with their Hands extended to point out the right Road to Passengers, but themselves never walked in them; These indeed may be serviceable to direct their People. But a Minister should not only be a Director, but a Leader; he should not only point out the Way, but walk before his Flock in it. And it is commonly observed, that they are the Labours of such, that God most usually owns and crowns with Success.

Secondly, As he must have an inward Call in the Gifts of the Spirit of God; so likewise he must have an outward Call by a solemn Separation of him to this Work through the Imposition of Hands. This indeed, gives him the Ministerial Power, and invests him with Authority to dispense the Ordinances of Jesus Christ as an Officer and Minister of the Gospel; And this Authority St. *Paul* calls a Gift, *1 Tim.* 4. 14. *Neglect not the Gift that is in thee, which was given thee by Prophecy, with the laying on of the Hands of the Presbytery.* This Gift here spoken of, I take to be nothing else but the Ministerial Office conferred upon him by Ordination, according to those Predictions and Prophecies which were before given of him by some divinely inspired Men, who foretold, that he was by God designed for the Work of the Ministry, and should glorifie God by a careful Discharge of it; of which we read *Chap.* 1. *ver.* 18. Yea, this Office is by our Saviour himself called the Holy Ghost; and Ordination (how harsh soever the Phrase may seem to be) is a giving of the Holy Ghost, not indeed either in the Gifts or Graces of it, (which were afterwards plentifully bestowed upon them on the Day of Pentecost) but only Authority to exercise the Ministerial Function. Consult *John* 20. 22, 23. *When he had said this, he breathed on them, and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.* Which Holy Ghost I take to be nothing else but their solemn Mission to the Ministery; and this (though perhaps it may seem a strange Interpretation of the 2. *Hooker's* Eccles. Polit. *l.* 5. § 77.

the Place) I cannot but judge it to be the true ſenſe and Import of it, upon theſe two Conſiderations.

1. *Firſt*, That the Holy Ghoſt was in no other reſpect at all at that time given to them. They neither received any extraordinary Degree of Grace, or any extraordinary Gifts of Grace more than they were before indowed with. Yea, it is plainly expreſs'd, that as yet the Holy Ghoſt was not given them in his extraordinary Gifts, but they were commanded to wait for the Promiſe of the Father at *Jeruſalem*; and the firſt Accompliſhment of that Promiſe was on the day of Pentecoſt, when the Spirit deſcended upon them in the form of fiery cloven Tongues. Here then being a receiving of the Holy Ghoſt, and that not in the extraordinary Gifts or Graces of it; what can remain, but that our Saviour by breathing on them, gave them the Holy Ghoſt, that is, Miſſion and Authority to preach the Goſpel, and to diſpenſe his Ordinances to the Church.

2. *Secondly*, The words following interpret theſe in this Senſe. *Receive ye the Holy Ghoſt. Whoſe-ſoever Sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whoſe-ſoever Sins ye retain, they are retained.* Now theſe Words ſeem to me a clear Expoſition of the former, *Receive ye the Holy Ghoſt, i. e.* Receive ye Authority to remit and retain Sins, which is one great part of the Miniſterial Power, to declare Pardon to the Penitent, and Wrath to the Incorrigible and Obſtinate. This though it may ſeem a ſtrange, yet to me it ſeems the only true and conſonant Expoſition of this Place. But I ſhall not now farther vindicate it.

Now as our Saviour uſed this ſign of breathing upon his Diſciples when he ordained them; ſo the Apoſtles afterwards inſtituted and uſed another ſign, *viz.* laying on of Hands, of which there is frequent mention in Scripture, and which was introduced into the Chriſtian Church from the Pattern of the Jewiſh Church. Thus we read, *Acts.* 9. 17. that *Paul* is ordained by the Impoſition of the Hands of *Ananias*; he put his Hands on him, and ſaid, *The Lord Jeſus hath ſent me that thou mighteſt receive thy Sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghoſt, i. e.* that he might be indowed with Miniſterial Gifts, and inveſted with the Miniſterial Authority. And again, (which I wiſh heartily our diſſenting Brethren, who ſo much decry Re-ordination, would but a little more maturely weigh and conſider) he the ſecond time receives Miſſion and Ordination with *Barnabas*, Acts 13. 2. *As they miniſtred to the Lord, and faſted, the Holy Ghoſt ſaid, Separate me Barnabas and Saul, unto the Work whereunto I have called them. And when they had faſted and prayed, and laid their Hands on them, they ſent them away.*

Yea, this Impoſition of Hands was ſo inſeparable an Attendant upon Ordination, that ſometimes it is uſed alone to ſignifie it. So 1 *Tim.* 5. 22. *Lay Hands ſuddenly on no Man, i. e.* ordain no Man raſhly, and without due Advice.

Now ſince this external Call is ſo expreſly and frequently mentioned, and the manner of it ſo particularly deſcribed, how daringly preſumptuous are they, who without regarding thoſe Methods which the Holy Ghoſt hath preſcribed, yea, deſpiſing and contemning them as obſolete and out-worn Formalities, ruſh into the Miniſtery, and pretend an inward Call of Gifts and Graces, which yet in very many of them, are no other than moſt of the People might as well pretend unto, if they had but the like Impudence; and ſo we ſhould have more Miniſters than People, more Shepherds than Sheep? But let their Gifts and their Graces be never ſo eminent and admirable, they ought not to take this Honour to themſelves, until they are ſet a part by the Church, and as well impowred to preach by an outward Miſſion, as enabled to do it by their Gifts and Qualifications.

And thus much for the very firſt thing which a Miniſter ought to regard, which is his Call to that Office.

When we are aſſured that our Call is right, and according to the Will of God, there are then many other Duties incumbent upon us in the due exerciſe of our Calling. As,

Firſt, and chiefly, We ought to be good Examples to the Flock. This St. *Paul* moſt expreſly injoins *Timothy*, 1 Tim. 4. 12. *Be thou an Example to the Believers, in Word, in Converſation, in Charity, in Spirit, in Faith, in Purity.* Indeed, it is very ſad to conſider, how the unſuitable Converſation of Miniſters doth quite enervate all the force and ſtrength of their Doctrine and Exhortations. For let them ſpeak with the Tongues of Angels, and preach as holily and powerfully, as if the Holy Ghoſt did immediately inſpire them; yet if their Lives be looſe, and their Conver-

Converſation contradictory to their Doctrine, the People will be ready to conclude, that ſo much ſtrictneſs is not neceſſary, that they only urge it as a Matter of high and nice Perfection in Religion, and that certainly they know a nearer Way to Heaven than through ſo many Severities which they preſs upon the People; and that therefore they will take the ſame Courſe, and run the ſame Venture that their Miniſters do. And indeed, how is it likely that ſuch a Miniſtery ſhould be effectual to bring others to Holineſs, when the Miniſter himſelf declares to all the World by his Actions, that he looks upon it as unneceſſary? What hold can his Admonitions and Reproofs take upon the Conſciences of Men? Certainly his own Guilt muſt needs riſe up in his Throat, and choak his Reproofs. For Conſciouſneſs of the ſame Miſcarriages will retort whatſoever we can ſay againſt others, more ſtrongly upon our ſelves; and ſuggeſt to us, that it is but baſe Hypocriſie to blame that which our ſelves practiſe. With what Face canſt thou preſs others to repent and reform? What Arguments canſt thou uſe to prevail with them, who by continuing in the ſame Sin, doſt thy ſelf judge thoſe Arguments to be of no force? Indeed, it were a Temper to be wiſh'd and pray'd for, that we could only reſpect how righteous the Reproof is, and not how righteous the Perſon who gives it; and be content to have our Motes pluck'd out, though it be by ſuch who have Beams in their own Eyes: That we could learn that hard Leſſon which our Saviour gives his Diſciples, to do as they ſay, but not to do after their Works; for indeed, there is no more reaſon to reject ſound Admonition, becauſe it comes from an unſound Heart, than there is to ſtop our Ears againſt good Counſel, becauſe it is delivered perhaps by a ſtinking Breath. But yet ſo it uſually fares, that when Miniſters of defiled and looſe lives, ſhall yet preach up Holineſs and Strictneſs to their People, and as they ought, reprove them ſharply for their Sins; they will be apt to think, What, is he in earneſt? And doth he not ſee that he himſelf is as bad or worſe? With what Face can he thunder out Woe, and Wrath, and Hell againſt my Sins, which yet are no more mine than his own? Doth he think to fright me with denouncing Threats and Curſes, when he himſelf, who ſtands as fair a Mark for them as I, ſlights and contemns them? Or, doth he envy me my Sins, and would ingroſs them all unto himſelf? And thus with ſuch carnal Reaſonings drawn from the evil Examples and wicked Lives of Miniſters, they ſit hardned under their Preaching, and account all they ſay, but as a Leſſon they muſt repeat, and a Tale they muſt tell to get their living by. Certainly, ſuch ſhall periſh in their Iniquities, but the Blood of their Souls God will require at your Hands.

But now when a Miniſter walks conſcientiouſly and exemplary before his Flock, his Doctrine gains a mighty Advantage to work upon them, by his Life. This is building up the Church of Chriſt with both Hands, ſhewing them both the Equity and the Eaſineſs of that Holineſs which he perſuades them to, by his own Practice. When he reproves, his Reproofs break in upon the Conſciences of his Hearers with Conviction and Authority; and if they do not reform, yet at leaſt daunt and terrifie them, and make them ſelf-accuſed, and ſelf-condemned. Here is one reproves me for Sin, who believes it to be as evil as he repreſents it, by his own eſchewing it. Here is one that denounces Wrath if I repent not, who doubtleſs believes it to be as terrible as he declares it, by his own carefulneſs to eſcape it. Certainly, Preaching never comes with ſuch Power and Energy into the Conſcience, as when the Miniſter preacheth as well by his Works, as by his Words; and to induce the People to it, is firſt obedient himſelf to the Truths which he teacheth them. Men are eaſier led by Examples than by Precepts; for though Precepts are the more exact, yet Examples are the more eaſie way of teaching. And he is a perfect Workman who joineth both together, neither teaching what he will not do, nor doing what he dares not teach; and therefore it is obſerved of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt the great Teacher of his Church, that he began both to do and teach, *Acts* 1. 1.

Now Miniſters muſt be exemplary both in themſelves, and in their Families. *In themſelves they muſt be blameleſs, as the Stewards of God; not ſelf-will'd, not ſoon angry, not given to Wine, no Strikers, not given to filthy Lucre; Lovers of Hoſpitality, Lovers of good Men, ſober, juſt, holy, temperate*; as the Apoſtle ſums up their Duties, *Tit.* 1. 7, 8. Theſe are the things which will give them a good Report among thoſe which are without, and will recommend the Doctrines and Truths which they teach, to the Acceptation and Love of their very Enemies, and the Enemies of their Holy Profeſſion.

They muſt likewiſe be exemplary in their Families: A Miniſter muſt rule *well his own Houſe, having his Children in ſubjection with all Gravity*, 1 Tim. 3. 4.

And becauſe there are ſo many who are ready maliciouſly to aſperſe us, we muſt by a ſerious and circumſpect Converſation, cut off all Occaſions from ſlanderous Tongues; that they who watch for our halting, may be aſhamed when they can find nothing to reproach us with, ſave in the Matter of our God.

But if any ſuch there be, who ſpeak like Angels, but live like Devils; who when they are in the Pulpit, it is pity they ſhould ever come out; and when they are out, it is great pity they ſhould ever come into it again; who are Heavenly Lights in it, but Helliſh Fire-brands out of it: Would to God they would conſider how they deſtroy the very End of their Calling; and inſtead of converting Souls, do but harden them in their Sins, making Men abhor the Offerings and Ordinances of the Lord, putting Arguments in their Mouths to juſtifie their continuance in their Wickedneſs, or elſe Prejudices in their Hearts, cauſing them to depart and ſeparate from Holy Inſtitutions, becauſe diſpenſed by prophane and ſcandalous Miniſters; let them pretend never ſo highly to Uniformity and Obedience, yet certainly theſe are the Men who have made all our Separatiſts, that now ſadly rend our Church in pieces. For when the Sheep ſee a Wolf ſet over them inſtead of a Shepherd, no wonder if they run from him, and ſcatter into other Paſtures. It is in vain for them to tell People that they ought to be obedient to the Laws of the Church their Mother, when thoſe that tell them ſo, are not obedient to the Laws of God their Father. And O that they would but conſider not only the Damage which they do to the Church, of which too many of them ſeem zealous Propugners, but the heavy Woe and Wrath which they bring upon their own Souls! Every Sermon they ſtudy, they do but draw up a Bill of Indictment againſt themſelves; and every time they preach, they do but pronounce the Sentence of their own Damnation: And woe unto ſuch Paſtors, when they whom Chriſt hath ſet over his Sheep, ſhall themſelves be found at the laſt Day ſtanding among the Goats.

2. *Secondly*, Another great Duty of Miniſters is, a diligent and conſcientious imploying of their Gifts and Talents; they muſt be both able and willing to teach; they themſelves muſt be well-grounded in the Knowledge and Doctrine of Chriſt: *The Prieſt's Lips ſhould preſerve Knowledge, and Men ſhould ſeek the Law at his Mouth; for he is the Meſſenger of the Lord of Hoſts*, Mal. 2. 7. And therefore the Apoſtle rejects a Novice, a raw, ignorant and unexperienced Perſon: *For if the Blind lead the Blind, both will be in danger of falling together into the Ditch.* And God himſelf tells ſuch ignorant and fooliſh Teachers, *Hoſea* 4. 6. *Becauſe thou haſt rejected Knowledge, I alſo will reject thee, that thou ſhalt be no Prieſt to me: Seeing thou haſt forgotten the Law of thy God, I alſo will forget thy Children.*

And as they muſt be able to teach, ſo they muſt be diligent in teaching: *A Neceſſity is laid upon them, and woe unto them if they preach not the Goſpel*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, 1 *Cor.* 9. 16. They ought to be inſtant in ſeaſon, and out of ſeaſon, 2 *Tim.* 4. 2. *Preach the Word, be inſtant in ſeaſon, and out of ſeaſon; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all Long-ſuffering and Doctrine.* Not as if the Miniſter muſt be continually in the exerciſe of Preaching, but he ought to preach in ſeaſon, *i. e.* in the ordinary and ſtated Times for it; and out of ſeaſon, *i. e.* on extraordinary Occaſions, when the Neceſſity or Utility of the Church ſhall require it.

His Doctrine ought to be,

1*ſt*. Sound, ſuch as cannot be condemned, *Tit.* 2. 1. *Speak thou the things which become ſound Doctrine.* It muſt have its Authority either from the expreſs Words of Scripture, or the Analogy of Faith rationally deduced from Scripture; for he that preacheth falſe Doctrine inconſiſtent with theſe, doth but mingle Poiſon with his Peoples Meat.

2*dly*. It muſt be profitable; not ſetting before them alien and unintelligible Notions, or ſuch thin airy Speculations as can ſcarce conſiſt with Senſe, much leſs with Divinity: For this is to give them Wind inſtead of Food, 2 *Tim.* 2. 14. *Charge them before the Lord, that they ſtrive not about Words to no profit, but to the ſubverting of the Hearers.* And *Tit.* 3. 8. *Theſe things I will that thou affirm conſtantly, that they which have believed in God, be careful to maintain good Works: Theſe things are good and profitable unto Men.*

3*dly*. Their Preaching muſt be plain, and ſuited to the Capacity of their Hearers

ers as much as can be without diſguſting any; for he that ſhall only diſgorge and tumble out a heap of bombaſtick theatrical Words, at which the People only ſtare, and gape, and wonder, Preacheth to them in an unknown Tongue, although he ſpeak Engliſh: And this is but to give them Stones inſtead of Bread.

4*thly*. Their Preaching muſt be grave and ſolid, not ſlovenly and too much neglected, for that will but beget a nauſeating in the Hearers; nor yet too nicely and ſprucely dreſt, for that will be apt to divert the attention from the Matter to the Phraſe. Their Sermons ought to have a comely and Matron-like, not a gayiſh and meretricious Attire. The Truths they Preach muſt be delivered in ſuch words as may adorn, but not hide nor bury them; ſuch as may rather recommend the Doctrine to the Conſciences, than the Art and Rhetorick of the Preacher to the Ears and Fancies of the Hearers.

5*thly*. They ought to Preach powerfully and with Authority, 1 *Tim.* 4. 11. *Theſe things command and teach.* We come to the People in the Name of God, and are his Ambaſſadours, and therefore ought to deliver his Meſſage boldly, being ſent to the People by the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords: And thoſe who mince his Errand, as if they mere afraid to ſpeak that which God hath given them in Commiſſion, ſhall at their return unto him receive the Reward of treacherous and unfaithful Meſſengers.

There are very many other Duties, which cannot without too much length be particularly inſiſted on.

As Hoſpitality according to the meaſure of their Eſtates, 1 *Tim.* 3. 2. *They muſt be given to Hoſpitality*. And, *Tit.* 1. 8. *They muſt be lovers of Hoſpitality*. And therefore they ought to be liberally and plentifully endowed, that they may make their Table a Snare in a good ſenſe, and may get ſome to follow and obſerve them, though it be but for the Loaves. And here it will be a good Point of their Wiſdom, if they can handſomly make uſe of ſuch Opportunities (as we find our Saviour did after he had miraculouſly fed the multitude) to break unto them the Bread of Life, and with their bodily Nouriſhment to feed their Souls.

Then Gravity in their Diſcourſe, and in all their Converſe: A Miniſter ſhould neither ſpeak nor do any thing that is unſeemly. Intemperate Mirth, clamorous Talk, ſcurrilous Jeſtings, but eſpecially the leaſt ſyllable of an Oath, although it be never ſo much varied and diſguiſed, in a Miniſter's Mouth, as it is wicked, ſo it is utterly misbecoming the Dignity of his Profeſſion, and renders him mean and contemptible.

Again; A pious and aſſiduous Care in viſiting the Sick, who are certainly moſt capable of good Advice and Counſel then, although perhaps they have all their Life time before deſpiſed and refuſed it. You may poſſibly do more good by the ſick-Bed, than in the Pulpit: For Death is a terrible and thundering Preacher, and he muſt needs be a moſt forlorn and obdurate Wretch who will not liſten to your Admonitions, when the hopes of a long Life, which made him formerly reject them, have forſaken him.

Again; Diligence in catechiſing and inſtructing the Younger in the Principles of Faith and Religion: Root them well at firſt, and they will continue ſtable ever after. This will ſave your ſelves and your Succeſſours much Labour afterwards: For if once you can inſinuate into their Minds Piety and Verity, they will grow up to farther degrees of Perfection in the ordinary courſe of your Miniſtery, and be your Comfort and Rejoicing here, and your Crown and Glory hereafter.

There are many other Duties neceſſary to the right diſcharge of the Miniſterial Function, but theſe already mentioned ſhall ſuffice; and all others may be reduced to ſome of theſe. I ſhall therefore conclude this with my Earneſt Requeſt, that you would ever ſeriouſly meditate upon that Charge which God gives the Prophet, and him all Miniſters, *Ezek.* 3. 17, 18, 19. *Son of Man, I have made thee a Watchman unto the Houſe of Iſrael; thereforè hear the Word of my Mouth, and give them warning from Me. When I ſay unto the Wicked, Thou ſhalt ſurely die; and thou giveſt him not warning, nor ſpeakeſt to warn the Wicked of his Evil way to ſave his Life; the ſame wicked Man ſhall die in his Iniquity; but his Blood will I require at thine Hand. Yet if thou warn the Wicked, and he turn not from his Wickedneſs, he ſhall die in his Iniquity, but thou haſt delivered thy Soul.*

The Peoples Duty toward their Miniſter is eſpecially twofold.

Firſt, Obedience in being perſuaded by his good Advice and Admonitions. We have

have this moſt expreſly Commanded, *Heb.* 13. 17. *Obey them which have the Rule over you*; that is, not only Civil Magiſtrates, and your Rulers in State-Affairs, but Miniſters alſo; for ſo it is added, *for they watch for your Souls, as thoſe that muſt give an account; that they may do it with Joy, and not with Grief.* And they are called the Elders that Rule well, 1 *Tim.* 5. 17. I know that this Obedience to Miniſters is a Duty ſo utterly forgotten in the Practice of moſt Men, that I doubt of ſome Prejudice in them againſt theſe places of Scripture by which it is ſo plainly enjoined. Alas, that ever Chriſt and his Apoſtle ſhould inveſt us with ſuch Authority, which when we aſſume, we are look'd upon by the People almoſt as ridiculous for it, as if we had only a Reed in our Hands, and a Crown of Shame rather than of Dignity put upon our Heads, and are accounted of rather as inſolent Uſurpers upon their Liberty, than as Officers impower'd by God himſelf. Sirs, we take to our ſelves no Power over you, but what God hath by his Patent and Charter given us; and when we propound to you the will of God revealed in his Word; or in Caſes not clearly determined therein, do give our Judgment as thoſe who have found Mercy to be accounted faithful, we do, and may challenge your Obedience to it in the Name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. For we find that in thoſe particular Caſes wherein the Apoſtle had no expreſs Revelation from Chriſt, yet he preſcribes to the *Corinthians* what he judges fit for them to do, and by that Direction obliged their Practice, not indeed ſimply and abſolutely, yet ſo that in ſuch Circumſtances as the Apoſtle ſuppoſed, they had ſinned if they had done otherwiſe than he directed them. We deſire not to Lord it over God's Inheritance by any burthenſom Impoſition of things either unlawful, or in themſelves unfit. But when we require from you thoſe things which God himſelf hath Commanded; or if not expreſly Commanded, yet are in the Judgment of thoſe to whom you owe Obedience, thought convenient and lawful to be done, I know not how you can excuſe your ſelves from Diſobedience againſt God, if in theſe Caſes you be not obedient unto us: And if you call this Uſurpation, and a taking too much upon us, you do but ſpeak the Language of *Corah* and his Complices, and ſhake not ſo much ours, as God's Title and Authority over you, who hath given us this Power and Commiſſion.

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2. *Secondly*, Another Duty of the People is to honour their Miniſters as their Spiritual Fathers: Yea the Apoſtle ſpeaks of a double Honour that is due to them, 1 *Tim.* 5. 17. *Let Elders that Rule well, be accounted worthy of double Honour.* All muſt have that Honour given them which is due to their Function, but thoſe who Rule the Flock well, καλῶς, *i. e.* not barely commendably, but excellently, muſt have this Honour doubled to them: And thoſe who not only thus Rule, but excel others in teaching them likewiſe, muſt have this double Honour doubled upon them; *eſpecially they that labour in the Word and Doctrine.*

Now this double Honour is commonly taken for the Honour of Reverence, and the Honour of Maintenance; and perhaps this place doth moſt eſpecially mean this latter, when it ſpeaks of double Honour. For this word τιμῆ often ſignifies Reward and Maintenance, and is in that ſenſe uſed in this very Chapter, *ver.* 3. χήρας τίμα, τὰς ὄντως χήρας, Honour Widows, *i. e.* relieve Widows, that are Widows indeed. And here by the way we may ſee how groundleſs their Aſſertion is, who from this place eſtabliſh an Order, new and unknown to the Church of God till of late, of Lay-ruling Elders. For if this Text gives them any ſuch Authority, it gives them the double Honour too; and ſo conſequently, by Divine Right they may challenge Maintenance from the People, as well as the Miniſters themſelves; nay, and if they Rule well, a large and plentiful Maintenance, double as much as may ſuffice others of their own Rank and Order; which Honour when they ſhall challenge to themſelves, as doubtleſs they may upon as good Proof and Evidence as the Authority they pretend to, certainly their Paſtours will find greater Reaſon to annihilate theſe Creatures of their Fancy and politick Accommodation, than ever they had to forge them.

But to return. We owe them,

Firſt, The Honour of Reverence, We ought to Honour and eſteem them for their Office and their Work ſake. So expreſly, 1 *Theſ.* 5. 12, 13. *We beſeech you, Brethren, to know them which labour among you: And to eſteem them very highly in Love for their Work ſake.* And again, *Phil.* 2. 29. *Receive him therefore in the Lord with all Gladneſs, and hold ſuch in Reputation.* And certainly they who caſt any Contempt upon Miniſters, either by injurious Actions, or reviling Speeches

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Secondly, They owe unto them the Honour of Maintenance. So *Gal.* 6. 6. *Let him* 2. *that is taught in the Word, communicate unto him that teacheth, in all good Things.* And there is good Reaſon for it; for *if we have ſown unto you Spiritual Things, is it a great Thing if we ſhall reap your Carnal Things?* Saith the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 9. 11. What you give them is not a Matter of Bounty, and meer voluntary Benevolence; and the Miniſter who ſo accounts or receives it undervalues his Authority, and wrongs his Right; but it is your Duty, and his Due. He muſt have a competent and liberal Maintenance, not ſtinted to the bare Size of Neceſſity; but it ſhould be Affluence, ſuch as may inable him to relieve the Neceſſities of others, to provide comfortably for his own Family, and to uſe Hoſpitality in his Houſe: This is his Due; and he owes you no more Thanks for tendering it, than you do him for receiving it. Not here to diſpute the Divine Right of the Tenth Part, (which yet was not all that was due to the Miniſters under the Law, for they had a conſiderable Acceſſion by Offerings and Sacrifices:) I think it certain that the Incouragement of Miniſters under the Goſpel ſhould equal, if not exceed, theirs, inaſmuch as our Labour is far greater, and our Miniſtry more excellent, than theirs. But they who think it fit to keep Miniſters poor and dependant, may well be ſuſpected to do it in favour of their own Vices: For how ſhall he dare to reprove them, who is afraid of loſing part of his Stipend, or the Benefit of his Patron's Trencher? But whilſt the Gentleman in Black muſt ſit below the Salt, and after Dinner converſe with the better Sort of Serving-men, there is no danger that he ſhould be ſo audacious as to find Faults; or if he ſhould, no great heed will be taken to what ſo deſpicable a Thing as he can ſay.

Thus much for the Duties of Miniſters and People.

The Firſt Head of mutual Duties between Superiors and Inferiors that I ſhall inſiſt on, is between thoſe who differ in the Gifts of Divine Bounty. And theſe may be conſidered, either as the Gifts of ſpecial Grace, or of common Providence; of which briefly.

Firſt, God doth indow ſome with an Excellent Meaſure of Sanctifying Grace, and 1. is pleaſed to ſhew the World by a few Rare and Choice Inſtances how wonderfully he can ſublime our corrupted Nature, and how near he can exalt Humane Frailty to an Angelical Perfection. This indeed is the moſt Excellent of all his Gifts, and that which we ought moſt earneſtly to covet and deſire: For although other Gifts, as Knowledge, Wiſdom, Power, *&c.* do in ſome imperfect Manner aſſimulate us unto God, yet Sanctity and Holineſs doth far tranſcend all theſe, both becauſe it ſtamps upon us the Reſemblance of the Divine Nature, in that Attribute which is its greateſt Glory, (whence God aſſumes it to his Stile, that he is Glorious in Holineſs,) and likewiſe, becauſe God hath highly honoured, and given it the Dignity and Prerogative to be the only Means of bringing us to the Compleat and Eternal Fruition of our Felicity.

Now thoſe whom God hath thus bleſſed with an Eminent Degree of this his beſt Gift ought,

Firſt, To beware that they do not ſecretly deſpiſe their weaker Brethren in their 1. Hearts, nor with a cenſorious Auſterity reject thoſe whom God hath received. It is often ſeen that Fellow-Servants are more inexorable each to other than their common Lord and Maſter; and that thoſe Errors and Infirmities, which are rather the Slips of Incogitancy, than the Products of a reſolved Will, can hardly obtain Pardon among Men, tho' God hath forgiven and forgotten them. Now this ariſeth from a Spiritual Pride, which makes us envious towards thoſe who excel us, and ſcornful towards thoſe who fall ſhort. For when Men grow conceited of their own Excellencies and Attainments, they will be ready to condemn other Mens Duties as Formal Hypocriſie, and their Sins as Total Apoſtaſie; they will miſtake the ſmoaking Flax for a reeking Dunghil, and be forward imperiouſly to caſt them out of God's Family, though themſelves were but lately received into it out of meer Charity. Certainly this is a Spirit, (tho' it too much prevails in this broken and ſhattered Age, wherein every one thinks ſo

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Secondly, They owe unto them the Honour of Maintenance. So *Gal.* 6. 6. *Let him that is taught in the Word, communicate unto him that teacheth, in all good Things.* 2. And there is good Reaſon for it; for *if we have ſown unto you Spiritual Things, is it a great Thing if we ſhall reap your Carnal Things?* Saith the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 9. 11. What you give them is not a Matter of Bounty, and meer voluntary Benevolence; and the Miniſter who ſo accounts or receives it undervalues his Authority, and wrongs his Right; but it is your Duty, and his Due. He muſt have a competent and liberal Maintenance, not ſtinted to the bare Size of Neceſſity; but it ſhould be Affluence, ſuch as may inable him to relieve the Neceſſities of others, to provide comfortably for his own Family, and to uſe Hoſpitality in his Houſe: This is his Due; and he owes you no more Thanks for tendering it, than you do him for receiving it. Not here to diſpute the Divine Right of the Tenth Part, (which yet was not all that was due to the Miniſters under the Law, for they had a conſiderable Acceſſion by Offerings and Sacrifices:) I think it certain that the Incouragement of Miniſters under the Goſpel ſhould equal, if not exceed, theirs, inaſmuch as our Labour is far greater, and our Miniſtry more excellent, than theirs. But they who think it fit to keep Miniſters poor and dependant, may well be ſuſpected to do it in favour of their own Vices: For how ſhall he dare to reprove them, who is afraid of loſing part of his Stipend, or the Benefit of his Patron's Trencher? But whilſt the Gentleman in Black muſt ſit below the Salt, and after Dinner converſe with the better Sort of Serving-men, there is no danger that he ſhould be ſo audacious as to find Faults; or if he ſhould, no great heed will be taken to what ſo deſpicable a Thing as he can ſay.

Thus much for the Duties of Miniſters and People.

The Firſt Head of mutual Duties between Superiors and Inferiors that I ſhall inſiſt on, is between thoſe who differ in the Gifts of Divine Bounty. And theſe may be conſidered, either as the Gifts of ſpecial Grace, or of common Providence; of which briefly.

Firſt, God doth indow ſome with an Excellent Meaſure of Sanctifying Grace, and 1. is pleaſed to ſhew the World by a few Rare and Choice Inſtances how wonderfully he can ſublime our corrupted Nature, and how near he can exalt Humane Frailty to an Angelical Perfection. This indeed is the moſt Excellent of all his Gifts, and that which we ought moſt earneſtly to covet and deſire: For although other Gifts, as Knowledge, Wiſdom, Power, *&c.* do in ſome imperfect Manner aſſimulate us unto God, yet Sanctity and Holineſs doth far tranſcend all theſe, both becauſe it ſtamps upon us the Reſemblance of the Divine Nature, in that Attribute which is its greateſt Glory, (whence God aſſumes it to his Stile, that he is Glorious in Holineſs,) and likewiſe, becauſe God hath highly honoured, and given it the Dignity and Prerogative to be the only Means of bringing us to the Compleat and Eternal Fruition of our Felicity.

Now thoſe whom God hath thus bleſſed with an Eminent Degree of this his beſt Gift ought,

Firſt, To beware that they do not ſecretly deſpiſe their weaker Brethren in their 1. Hearts, nor with a cenſorious Auſterity reject thoſe whom God hath received. It is often ſeen that Fellow-Servants are more inexorable each to other than their common Lord and Maſter; and that thoſe Errors and Infirmities, which are rather the Slips of Incogitancy, than the Products of a reſolved Will, can hardly obtain Pardon among Men, tho' God hath forgiven and forgotten them. Now this ariſeth from a Spiritual Pride, which makes us envious towards thoſe who excel us, and ſcornful towards thoſe who fall ſhort. For when Men grow conceited of their own Excellencies and Attainments, they will be ready to condemn other Mens Duties as Formal Hypocriſie, and their Sins as Total Apoſtaſie; they will miſtake the ſmoaking Flax for a reeking Dunghil, and be forward imperiouſly to caſt them out of God's Family, though themſelves were but lately received into it out of meer Charity. Certainly this is a Spirit, (tho' it too much prevails in this broken and ſhattered Age, wherein every one thinks ſo

much the better of himſelf, by how much the worſe he thinks of others; yet this I ſay is a Spirit) utterly misbecoming the Sweetneſs and Mildneſs of the Goſpel, which teacheth us to be meek and gentle, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another. It would better become thee, O Chriſtian, not to obſerve other Mens Falls, but to look to thine own Standing! *Thou ſtandeſt by Faith; be not high-minded, but fear*, *Rom.* 11. 20. It is the worſt Way that ſo Excellent a Thing as Divine Grace can be perverted, when it makes thee Proud and Cenſorious. For my Part I ſhould much more confide in the Security of an Humble Soul that creeps along to Heaven, though with a Slow, yet an Even, Pace, than in the Extatick Zeal and Fervour of ſuch who perhaps far outſtrip others, but alſo contemn them: For the one is ſtill preſſing forward, and regards with Admiration thoſe who excel; but the other is often looking back with Diſdain upon thoſe who are flower than himſelf; and whilſt he minds not ſo much his Way as the Advances he hath made, offers many Advantages to the Devil to trip him up, and give him many a Sore and Shameful Fall. And therefore, O Chriſtian, the more Eminent thy Graces are, the more Need haſt thou to Pray, and ſtrive for Humility. The Talleſt Cedars had need have the Deepeſt Roots, otherwiſe the Storms and Winds will eaſily overturn them: So truly the higher any grow the more they ſpread and flouriſh, being like the Cedars of God, beautiful in their Leaves, and plentiful in their Sap, the more need have they to be deeply rooted in Humility; or elſe believe it, the Wind and Tempeſt of Temptations, to which they ſtand more expos'd than others, will not only ſorely ſhake them, but utterly overturn them, when thoſe whom they ſhall deſpiſe as mean Shrubs ſhall ſtand ſecure, and with a Tender Pity weep over their Fall.

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Thoſe which reſpect the Perſon are either Gifts of the Mind or of the Body.

Firſt,

1. *Firſt*, Thoſe who excel in Gifts of the Mind, in Knowledge, and Wiſdom, and Parts, a Profound Judgment, or a Winning Elocution, *&c.* they ought to improve theſe to the Good and Advantage of others; not as *Achitophel* did his Politick Counſel, or *Tertullus* his Flattering Oratory, to oppreſs Right and Equity, but to guide and adviſe for the Benefit of Mankind, and the Glory of God. For theſe Gifts, though they are not ſanctifying, yet may be very ſerviceable to the Church. *Hiram*, though he were a Stranger to the Commonwealth of *Iſrael*, yet provided many Excellent Materials for the Building of the Temple. So God doth many Times imbelliſh thoſe who are Strangers to him with many Admirable Ornaments of Underſtanding and Learning, and makes uſe of the Materials which they have prepared and laid in for the Edification of his Church. And as *Noah* employ'd many to build his Ark, who were themſelves overwhelm'd in the Deluge; ſo God many Times employs ſuch as theſe to build his Ark, the Church, who yet may at laſt be ſwept away with the Deluge of his Wrath, and drown'd in Perdition: Theſe tho' they ſhould poſſeſs ſuch Gifts without any Sanctifying and Saving Grace, yet are they very Conſiderable Men; and our Duty is to eſteem and reverence them, to love their Excellencies, and to encourage their Labours, to praiſe God for them, and pray for an Encreaſe of their Gifts. How much more then, when their Natural and Acquir'd Endowments are conjoin'd with Sanctifying Grace, and the Love of the Truth doth as much poſſeſs their Hearts as the Knowledge of it doth their Heads? It is a Sordid Baſeneſs to detract from any Man's Worth, or extenuate his Abilities by ſome Slanderous Butsand Exceptions, which is the Diſingenuous Practice of many, who think all that added to their own Praiſe which they thus nibble away from another Man's.

2. *Secondly*, Another Superiority which God hath granted ſome over others is that of Old Age, which is of itſelf reverend and awful; and we ought to give that due Reſpect unto it which both Nature and the Law of God requires, *Levit.* 19. 32. *Thou ſhalt raiſe up before the Hoary Head, and honour the Face of the Old Man, and fear thy God.* God hath put a Signal Honour upon it, by ſtiling himſelf the *Antient of Days*, Dan. 7. 9. and he threatens it as a great Judgment upon a People, Iſa. 3. 5. *That the Children ſhall behave themſelves proudly againſt the Antient.* We read how ſeverely a Scorn caſt upon an Aged Prophet was revenged in those Children which mock'd his Baldneſs. A Reverend Awe before them is not only a Point of Manners, but Part of a Moral and Expreſs Duty; and therefore it is ſaid of *Elihu*, *Job* 32. 4. that he waited till *Job* had ſpoken, becauſe they were elder than he; and *Ver.* 6. he ſaith, *I am Young, and ye are very Old, wherefore I was afraid, and I durſt not ſhew you mine Opinion.*

And if ſuch Reſpect and Reverence be due unto them from others, they ought chiefly to reverence themſelves, and by Grave, and Prudent, and Holy, Actions, to put a Crown of Glory upon their own Grey Heads. They ought not to be vain and light in their Converſe, nor Children of an Hundred Years old, nor by the Folly and Wickedneſs of their Lives expoſe themſelves to that Contempt which will certainly be caſt upon them, where Age is not accompanied with Gravity and Prudence. And therefore we find it, *Prov.* 16. 31. *The Hoary Head is a Crown of Glory, if it be found in the Way of Righteouſneſs*; otherwiſe inſtead of being a Glory, it is but a Double Shame and Reproach.

3. *Thirdly*, There is another Sort of the Gifts of Common Providence, wherein ſome excel others, and that is Riches and Honour: Theſe the Scripture calls Father. *Nabal*, although he were a Fool and a Churl, yet *David* in his Meſſages to him doth implicitly call him Father, 1 *Sam.* 2. 5, 8. *Give, I pray thee, whatſoever cometh unto thine Hand unto thy Servants, and unto thy Son* David.

Their Duty is to be humble towards their Inferiors, knowing that they are only External Goods, and thoſe the leaſt conſiderable of all the Stores of God's Bleſſings that make them to differ from others. And to communicate to the Relief of others Neceſſities, that they may be Rich in Good Works, and make themſelves Friends of the Mammon of Unrighteouſneſs, that when they fail they may be receiv'd into Everlaſting Habitations: For he that is Rich only in hoarding and keeping up his Store is no better to be accounted of than the Baſe Earth, which locks up more Treaſure in its Bowels than they can in their Cheſts.

And their Inferiors Duty is to pay them all due Reſpects according to what God hath beſtowed upon them; to acknowledge the Riches of God in making

them Rich, and to endeavour to promote as far as in them lyes the Spiritual Good of their Souls, that they may not be Rich here, and Undone eternally. For a Rich Man may be more univerſally inſtrumental either of Good or Evil than others can: And therefore to win ſuch an one to the Faith, or to preſerve him ſtable in it, is a moſt Charitable Work, not only to their Souls in particular, but to the Church of Chriſt, the Affairs of which may be much advanced by ſuch a Man's Wealth and Intereſt.

And ſo much for this laſt Relation between Inferiors and Superiors in the Gifts of God's Special Grace, or Common Bounty.

Thus now I have at laſt gone through the Mutual Duties of many Relations, ſome Natural, ſome Civil, ſome Eccleſiaſtical, and ſome Oeconomical; I know not with what Acceptation or Succeſs. Poſſibly ſome may think theſe Things too mean and trivial to be ſo long inſiſted on: But let me tell ſuch, that Relative Duties, as they are the moſt difficult of all others to perform, ſo they are the beſt Trials of True Chriſtianity, and the Power of Godlineſs: He that endeavours not to walk cloſely with God in theſe, let his Notions and Profeſſion be never ſo lofty and ſublime, it will be no Uncharitableneſs at all to judge that all his Pomp is but a meer Form of Godlineſs, and an Hypocritical Oſtentation.

Let me exhort you therefore in the Fear of God that ye would be much in pondering theſe Things. There needs no great Labour to underſtand them, nor to find out Myſteries and Concealed Depths in them. It is true they are plain, but they are of daily uſe; and it is but requiſite that we ſhould not be long underſtanding what we are continually to practice.

Let me ſubjoin but one General Rule to this, and I have done with it; and that is, That in all theſe Mutual Duties it is no Excuſe for the one Party to fail of the moſt Conſcientious and Careful Performance of what belongs to him, becauſe the other doth ſo. For certainly another Man's Sin cannot excuſe mine; and God hath bound us in Duty not only to one another, but all of us unto himſelf. And therefore although they may break their Obligations and Covenants, yet that doth not take off our Obligation. Should the Father be careleſs of, and cruel to, his Child, yet this doth not at all exempt him from paying Duty and Obedience unto his Father: Should a Maſter be tyrannical over his Servant, yet the Servant's Duty remains ſtill ſtated and unaltered, to reverence, fear and obey, him: Should a Miniſter be careleſs of the Flock committed to his Charge, yet his People are ſtill bound to give him Reſpect and Honour in regard of his Office: Should a Magiſtrate tyrannize over his Subjects, yet ſtill they are to own him, and obey his Commands in all Lawful Things. For Male-adminiſtration of any Office, or any Authority, cannot countenance and excuſe want of Duty in Inferiors; ſtill we are as carefully to perform what God hath requir'd as if they were the beſt Parents, or Magiſtrates, or Maſters, in the World: And if there be any Wrong done, or Defect on their Part, we muſt leave it to him to reward our Conſcientious Obedience, and to puniſh their Wilful Offences. And ſo likewiſe it is incumbent upon Superiors to perform their Duties faithfully and conſcientiouſly toward their Inferiors, be they never ſo perverſe, ingrateful, or rebellious; for their Faults cannot excuſe our Neglects.

And thus much for this Large and Comprehenſive Precept, *Honour thy Father and thy Mother.*

To the Precept is added the Promiſe as a Motive and Encouragement to Obedience, *That thy Days may be long in the Land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.* And this Promiſe God's Faithfulneſs ſtands engaged to fulfil to all that are dutiful and obedient.

Now here we may obſerve, that whereas the Free and Genuine Adminiſtration of the Goſpel promiſeth Eternal Life, and the Joys and Glories of Heaven to Believers, the Old Law runs generally upon Earthly and Temporal Bleſſings, and among them inſiſts frequently upon Length of Days, and an Happy and Proſperous Life, as the Chiefeſt Bleſſing and Higheſt Expectation of Humane Nature; which muſt not be ſo underſtood as if the Promiſes of the Law were only for theſe Beggarly and Terrene Concernments; but becauſe this Procedure was more ſuitable to the whole Syſtem of that Pedagogy wherein God thought fit to diſcipline them by Types, and to lead them into the Sun by Shadows; therefore as he allay'd his own Spiritual Worſhip with the Mixture of very many External Rites, and Pompous Obſervances, ſo he propounded likewiſe their Eternal Rewards unto them by Temporal and Earthly Promiſes; and by both attempered their Religion unto their Eſtate of Infancy, bringing it down as much as poſſible to the Verdict of Senſe, reſerving the Manly and Heroick

Duties of believing his Word without a Pawn, to the more grown Ages of the Church.

But howſoever, although theſe Promiſes made to the Jews were thus typical, yet theſe Figures were not altogether ſo figurative as not to be properly underſtood and fulfilled. Though Heaven were typified by *Canaan*, yet God's Veracity would have ſuffered if he had brought them to Heaven, the true Land of Promiſe, and not given them their Inheritance in the earthly *Canaan*; ſo likewiſe that God might be true to his Promiſe, it is not enough that he rewards the Obedient with Eternal Life, but his Faithfulneſs ſtands obliged to prolong their Temporal Life to ſuch a Duration as may be fit at leaſt to make a Type of the Everlaſting Reſt.

Neither doth the more Spiritual Diſpenſation of the Goſpel look upon this Bleſſing of long Life as a Thing below its Cognizance, but propounds it as a Promiſe of Moment, though it be now diveſted of its typical Uſe, and ſtands for no more than itſelf ſignifies. And therefore we find that the Apoſtle puts a Value upon this Fifth Commandment on this very Reaſon, that it is the firſt with Promiſe, *Eph.* 6. 23. And St. *Peter* at large tranſcribes that Paſſage of *Pſal.* 34. *What Man is he that deſireth to live, and loveth many Days? Let him depart from Evil, and do Good*, &c. And St. *Paul* tells us, that Godlineſs is profitable unto all Things, having the Promiſes of this Life, and of that which is to come. And what is there that can concern this Life more than Life itſelf? God's Faithfulneſs is therefore obliged by Promiſe to lengthen out an Holy and Obedient Life.

Nor will it be very hard to vindicate his Faithfulneſs in the Performance of this Promiſe; although God ſuffer many to grow old in their Sins, whoſe Youth began their Courſe of Wickedneſs with Rebellion againſt their Parents, and who continue to their decrepit Days their Impieties and Rebellions againſt God, when as early Towardlineſs and Piety are generally look'd upon as mortal Symptoms; and God ſeems eſpecially to ſhorten their Days, to whom he here promiſeth a long Life. For ſince this preſent Life is nothing elſe but a Tendency and Preparative unto Eternity, neither it, nor any Thing in it, can be called Good, but only as it relates to our Eternal State. And therefore all Promiſes of Earthly Bleſſings muſt neceſſarily imply this Condition, that they ſhall be literally fulfilled unto us, if they may promote our Eternal Happineſs, otherwiſe they would not be Promiſes, but Threatnings; and that which we apprehend a Bleſſing, would indeed prove no other to us than a Snare and Curſe. We may boldly challenge long Life when all the Circumſtances of it will tend to our Everlaſting Welfare. But God, who knows how frail and yielding the beſt of us are, and in the Series of his Divine Providence ſeeth what prevailing Temptations we ſhall be expoſed unto, doth oftentimes in Mercy abridge this Promiſe, and takes us from the World, leſt the World ſhould take us from him; and deals with us as Princes deal with Duelifts, they make them Priſoners that they might preſerve them: So God, that he might preſerve his People from their great Enemy, commits them to ſafe Cuſtody of the Grave. And if this be to be unfaithful, certainly his Faithfulneſs would be nothing elſe but an Art to circumvent and undo us, ſhould he only to keep that inviolate, perform thoſe Promiſes which would be to our Hurt and Detriment. Nor indeed can any Man, whom God hath bleſſed with a right Judgment and due Eſteem of Things, be willing to Compound for the Continuance of this preſent Life, with the Hazard or Diminution of his future Happineſs.

Thus much for the Explication of the Fifth Commandment.

The

The Sixth Commandment.

Thou ſhalt not Kill.

THE Commandments of the Second Table do all of them immediately reſpect that Duty which we owe unto Men; whom we may conſider either as under ſome peculiar Differences, or elſe in their common Nature. We have already ſpoken concerning the Duties that belong unto them under the firſt Acception, as they are differenced into *Superiors* and *Inferiors*; there are other Duties which appertain uuiverſally unto all, under what Difference ſoever they may be conſidered, whether they be *Superiors*, or *Inferiors*, or *Equals*, among themſelves; and theſe are contained in the Five following Precepts; all which concern our Neighbour, either in his Perſon, or in his exteriour Gifts, of Wealth, or good Name.

His Perſon is to be conſidered either Naturally or Myſtically: Naturally, as he is this individual Man; and ſo the Sixth Commandment provides for his Security, *Thou ſhalt not Kill.* Myſtically, as he is in the State of Marriage; which of Two makes up One Myſtical Perſon: And ſo Care is taken for him in the Seventh, *Thou ſhalt not commit Adultery.*

If we conſider him in his External Gifts, ſo his Eſtate and Subſtance is ſafeguarded by the Eighth Commandment, *Thou ſhalt not Steal*; his Reputation and Good Name by the Ninth, *Thou ſhalt not bear falſe Witneſs againſt thy Neighbour.*

And as a ſtrong Fence ſet about him, and alſo about the other Laws, that neither of them be violated, God hath not only prohibited the outward Acts of groſs and flagitious Crimes, but the inward and lurking Motions unto Evil, in our Thoughts and Affections; and this, in the Tenth Commandment, *Thou ſhalt not Covet.*

I ſhall begin with the firſt of theſe, which takes care for the Security and Indemnity of our Perſons, *Thou ſhalt not Kill.* And this forbids that Barbarous and Inhumane Sin of Murther, that Firſt-born of the Devil, who was a *Murtherer from the Beginning*; the firſt branded Crime that we read of, wherein natural Corruption, contracted by the Fall, vented its Rancour and Virulence; the Sin of *Cain*, that great Inſtance of Perdition, who ſlew his Brother *Abel*, becauſe his Brother's Works were *Righteous*, and his own *Evil.*

Neither doth this Precept confine only itſelf to forbid the actual Sin of Murther, but all Degrees, and all Cauſes of it; as Hatred, and raſh Anger, Revenge, and Slanders, and falſe Accuſations, and whatſoever may prejudice the Safety of our Neighbour, or tempt us to ſee him periſh, when it is in our Power to reſcue and relieve him.

Some old Hereticks * extended the Senſe of this Prohibition, *Thou ſhalt not Kill*, even unto Brute Creatures themſelves; holding it unlawful to ſlay any of them for the Uſe and Service of our Life. Poſſibly indeed Unmercifulneſs even towards them, and a cruel tormenting of them, not to ſatisfie our Occaſions and Neceſſities, but our unreaſonable Paſſions, may be reducible as a Sin againſt this Commandment, (for all Acts of Cruelty are ſo;) but ſimply to kill them for our Neceſſity cannot: God, the Univerſal Lord both of them and us, hath granted us this Prerogative in our Charter, to have the Power of Life and Death over them, *Gen.* 9. 3. *Every Moving Thing that liveth ſhall be Meat for you.* And doubtleſs we may put them to any kind of Death that the Neceſſity either of our Food or Phyſick will require. This *Killing* therefore, forbidden in the Text, refers only unto Men, like our ſelves; and therefore it is very properly rendred by others, *Thou ſhalt do no Murther.*

* *Manichæi.* Aug. *de Civit. Dei*, l. 1. c. 20.

Yet neither is every killing of a Man *Murther*; for there are ſeveral Caſes wherein although one kill another yet he is no *Murtherer:* As,

Firſt, In the Execution of Juſtice. Magiſtrates, and ſuch who have lawful Power and Authority, may and ought to put Capital Offenders to Death; and if they do not God will charge it upon them as their Sin. It is an Ancient Law upon Record, *Gen.* 9. 6. *Whoſoever ſheddeth Man's Blood, by Man ſhall his Blood be ſhed*; as if there

 were

were no other Way for Expiation, no other Method to waſh away the Stain and Guilt of Blood, but only by his who unjuſtly ſpilt it. And again, *Deut.* 19. 21. *Thine Eye ſhall not pity; but Life ſhall go for Life.* And indeed, if we rightly conſider it, this is not to butcher up Mankind, but to preſerve them. God hath commanded Magiſtrates to Kill that he might prevent Murther: For our Nature is ſo extreamly corrupt, that there is no other effectual Way to hinder us from killing, but by enjoining the Magiſtrates to do it. And therefore as Phyſicians in Caſes of violent and immoderate Bleeding do often open a Vein in another Part of the Body, as the beſt Method to ſtop it by Revulſion; ſo when the Body Politick bleeds by private Rage and Revenge, guſhing out into Murthers, the Way to ſtop this Blood is to ſhed Blood.

Neither doth our Saviour's Command, not to *reſiſt Evil*, *Matth.* 5. 39. gainſay this legal and punative Way of Blood-ſhedding: For thoſe Words do only forbid private Revenge, not publick. We muſt not be Judges in our own Cauſes; nor when we apprehend our ſelves wronged, carve out to our ſelves what Meaſures of Revenge our Wrath and Fury ſhall dictate; we who have no Authority or Commiſſion ought not to take Life for Life, nor Eye for Eye, nor Tooth for Tooth, much leſs Life for an injurious Word, or an idle Quarrel; we muſt not repay with the leaſt Revenge thoſe who have done us the greateſt Wrongs; in which Senſe we muſt not reſiſt Evil; but if we have in any Thing ſuffered Wrong, we ought to bring all our Cauſes and Complaints to the Magiſtrate; for into his Hands hath God put the *Sword of Juſtice*, Rom. 13. 4. *Revenge* is ſo Sacred a Thing, that none ought to intermeddle with it but thoſe whom God hath appointed; for he hath ſolemnly aſcribed it to himſelf, Heb. 10. 30. *Vengeance belongeth unto me; I will recompence, ſaith the Lord.* And he hath Conſtituted the Magiſtrate as his Deputy in this Work and Office; and therefore he only ought to Revenge, by Puniſhment proportionable to the Nature of the Crimes committed: So that to ſpeak properly, it is only God, and not Man, that ſheds the Blood of wicked Perſons. The Magiſtrate receives his Commiſſion from God, and doth it as his Miniſter and Servant; yea, and in doing it is ſo far from doing a cruel and unjuſt Act, an Act that will either pollute his Hands, or ſtain his Conſcience, that it makes him the more Holy and Pure: And therefore when *Moſes* called the *Levites* to ſlay thoſe *Idolaters* that had worſhipped the *Golden Calf*, he ſpeaks of it as an Holy Function, *Exod.* 32. 29. *Conſecrate your ſelves to Day unto the Lord; every Man upon his Son, and upon his Brother, that he may beſtow upon you a Bleſſing this Day.*

Secondly, There may be Blood ſhed in a Juſt and Lawful War without the Charge or Crime of *Murther*. Indeed we are commanded to *follow Peace with all Men*, and as much as lyes in us, and, if poſſible, to *have Peace with all Men*, Rom. 12. 18. But ſometimes through the Ambition, and turbulent Spirits of others, through their politick Deſigns of picking unjuſt Quarrels, it may be no longer poſſible to maintain Peace; and in this Caſe, where we have Right and Equity on our Side, it is lawful to wage War: I ſpeak not now of private Differences, between Perſon and Perſon, but of publick, between Nation and Nation: In which Caſe the Supreme Magiſtrate hath the Power of Making War, and Proclaiming Peace.

There are ſome who decry this Aſſertion, and think it contrary to the Temper of a Chriſtian, who is a Son of Peace, to be a Man of War. I confeſs there is nothing that can juſtifie War againſt another Nation, but either,

Firſt, Neceſſary Defence againſt an unjuſt Invaſion. Or,

Secondly, Recovery of what is unjuſtly taken away. Thus *David* purſued the *Amalekites*, who had carried his Wives away Captives. Or,

Thirdly, The puniſhing of ſome great Injury and Wrong. Thus *David* likewiſe Wars againſt the *Ammonites* for the contumelious Uſage of his Ambaſſadors.

But where the Cauſe is juſt, the Manner in which we proſecute it is warrantable, the Authority which engageth us in it being rightly Conſtituted over us, I ſee nothing but that it is very fit, when it is very neceſſary to take up Arms, and in a publick War to right our ſelves upon Injurious Enemies: For as there may be many Wrongs done by one Party againſt another, who muſt be judged by the Law common to them both; ſo there may be many Wrongs by one Nation againſt another, which, if they will not conſent to redreſs, there being no common Magiſtrate, nor common Law over them both, (except the Law, and Right of Nations, of which the more Powerful uſually make little Account,) in this Caſe certainly the injured may very juſtly have recourſe

Recourſe to War. For what Law is to Perſons of the ſame Nation, that War is to Perſons of a different Nation.

We read that among thoſe many Penitents that came to *John* the *Baptiſt* for Inſtruction, when Soldiers alſo came, he did not bid them lay down their Arms, or their Commiſſion: He preach'd not to them, *Fight no more*, *Kill no Man*, but gives them Directions how they ſhould demean themſelves in their Calling: Which he would not have done if he thought their Calling itſelf unlawful. He bids them *do no Violence*, *accuſe no Man falſly*; *but be content with your Pay*, or *Wages*, Luke 3. 14. Neither did our Saviour, when he ſo highly commended the Centurion for his Faith, rebuke him for his Profeſſion, but extols him for taking the Ground and Argument of his Faith from his Military Calling, *Luke* 7. 8. *I am a Man under Authority, having Soldiers under me*; *and I ſay unto one go, and he goes*; *and to another come, and he comes*; *and to my Servant do this, and he doth it.* This very Calling of his he urgeth Chriſt with, and makes it an Argument to ſtrengthen his Faith, that certainly Chriſt was able to Cure his *Sick Servant*; becauſe if he who was but a Captain had ſuch Authority over his Soldiers, to command them to come and to go at his Word, how much more abſolute Power had Jeſus, as Lord both of Life and Death, over all Bodily Diſeaſes, to command them to come and to go at his Pleaſure? This I take to be the Force and Reaſon of his Words: Upon which Chriſt gives him this large Teſtimonial and *Encomium*, Verſe 9. *When Jeſus heard theſe Things he marvelled, and turned him about, and ſaid unto the People, I have not found ſo great Faith, no, not in* Iſrael. But not to multiply more Inſtances, that one Place may ſeem fully convincing and ſatisfactory, *John* 18. 36. when Chriſt was examined concerning his Kingdom, he anſwereth, *My Kingdom is not of this World*; *if my Kingdom were of this World then would my Servants fight that I ſhould not be delivered unto the* Jews: Which clearly implies, That although Wars and Fightings were not proper Means to advance the Spiritual Nature of the Kingdom of Chriſt, yet if the Methods of his Humiliation had permitted him to aſſume the Royal Scepter, his Servants and Followers might lawfully have fought to defend his Claim and Title. But enough of this.

Thirdly, A Man may ſhed Blood in the neceſſary Defence of his Perſon without being guilty of Murther; when he is ſuddenly aſſaulted by thoſe who attempt to take away his Life, and hath no other Means left him to ſecure it, in this Caſe there being no Poſſibility of having Recourſe to a Magiſtrate for Protection, every Man is a Magiſtrate to himſelf. But here (becauſe all Caſes of Blood are tender) let me caution you, that it is not enough the Danger be impending, but it muſt be inſtant and preſent, ſuch wherein a Man's Life is in all Probability loſt if he doth not ſtand upon his Defence. For in Dangers that are only threatned and approaching we ought to truſt Providence, and to uſe our beſt Diligence to work our Eſcape from them. But if the Aſſault be ſudden, and no Way of Eſcape viſible, we may lawfully take away the Life of him who unjuſtly ſeeks to take ours; for this is not a Deſign to kill him, but to preſerve our ſelves.

Yea, we find, *Exod.* 22. 2. that God allows the killing of a Thief if he break into a Man's Houſe by Night, but not ſo if he attempted it by Day. And poſſibly the Reaſon of this Law might be, becauſe when any cometh upon another in the Night it might be preſumed that he takes the Advantage of the Darkneſs, not only to ſteal his Goods, but to miſchief his Perſon: And therefore God allows it as lawful to kill ſuch an one as a part of neceſſary Defence. From which I think we may ſafely conclude, that it is lawful alſo to kill thoſe who attempt upon our Goods, when we have reaſon to fear they may likewiſe deſign upon our Perſons.

Fourthly, There is yet one Caſe more, and that is accidental Blood-ſhedding, which is not chargeable with Murther; when Blood is ſhed without any Intention or Purpoſe of doing it. Such a Caſe we find mentioned in Scripture; as when in hewing of Wood from a Tree the Ax ſhould ſlip, and by chance kill a Man's Neighbour, *Deut.* 19. 5. And therefore for ſuch innocent Manſlayers God himſelf appointed Cities of Refuge that they might fly unto them, and be ſafe from the Avenger of Blood. But here we muſt look to it that we be employed about lawful Things; otherwiſe if we be doing that which is unjuſtifiable, which accidentally proves to be the Death of another, this cannot be excuſed from Murther; and I am ſure God exacts the ſame Puniſhment for it: And therefore it is ſaid, *Exod.* 21. 22. That if Men ſtrive among themſelves, and hurt a

Woman that ſhe die, though it was not intended by them; yet Life ſhall go for Life, becauſe their Strife and Contention between themſelves is an unlawful Action. There ought alſo to be a due Care taken to avoid any Miſchief that may happen upon doing of a lawful Action, by giving notice to thoſe who come in the Way of Danger, and forbearing to do it whilſt they are there. But in all Caſes where the Death of another is intended, (let it be upon never ſuch violent and ſudden a Paſſion,) although there were no prepenſed and rancouring Malice borne towards them before, howſoever our Laws may be too favourable to it, and call it Man-ſlaughter, yet doubtleſs it is in Conſcience, and in the Sight of God, wilful Murther. For the Man-ſlayer, whom the Scripture mentions diſtinct from the Murtherer, is only he who ſlays his Neighbour accidentally, not deſigning nor intending him any Harm: This is the only Man-ſlaughter which our Law is pleaſed to call Chance-Medley; and whatſoever is not this is Murther, and ought as ſuch to be puniſh'd.

Now Murther may be either of a Man's ſelf, or of another. Both of them are moſt black and heinous Crimes.

Firſt, As for Self-murther, many of the Ancient Heathens thought it the moſt Heroick and Gallant Way of Dying, and would have Recourſe unto it upon very ſlight Occaſions; accounting it an Univerſal Remedy that Nature had put into their Hands to rid themſelves of any Trouble which they were loth to bear. Yet ſome, even among the *Heathens*, have very ſharply, as well as juſtly, taxed this wicked Cuſtom; among whom that Saying of * *Ariſtotle* in his *Ethicks* is very conſiderable: *For a Man to die only that he may avoid Poverty, or Croſſes, is not Gallantry, but meer Cowardice; and declares that he wants Courage to encounter them.* In which Particular this Heathen had a better Illumination than the Author of the Book of *Maccabees*, who very unworthily commends one *Razis*, a Jew, for chuſing rather to deſtroy himſelf than yield to his Enemy. Which Paſſage, beſides divers others, do evidently prove thoſe Books not to belong to the Canon of Scriptures, but deſerve to be called, as they are, *Apocryphal*. And truly Self-murther, next to the unpardonable Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, is, I think, the moſt dangerous and moſt deſperate that can be committed; and becauſe it leaves ſo little room for Repentance, it leaves but very little for Hope and Charity. Thoſe wretched Creatures whom God hath ſo far abandoned as to permit them to fall into this horrid Crime, had they but any the leaſt Care of their Eternal Salvation they would certainly tremble when they are offering Violence to themſelves; conſidering that they muſt inſtantly appear before God, and lift up thoſe Hands at his great Tribunal which they but a Minute before imbrued in their own Blood: It is a Sin, which when the Devil tempts Men unto he cannot make uſe of his moſt prevailing Wile and Stratagem. For when he tempts to other Sins, he ſtill drills on the Sinner with hopes of living to repent and reform, and promiſeth him Mercy and Forgiveneſs: But this of Self-murther precludes all ſuch Hopes and Expectations; for they die in their Sins; yea, their Death is their Sin; and what a forlorn Eſtate are they in who reſolve that their laſt Act ſhall be a Damnable Sin! Theſe are Self-murtherers to purpoſe, and deſtroy not only their Bodies, but their Souls too.

* Τὸ δ' ἀποιήσειν φεύγοντα πενίαν, ἢ ἔρωτα, ἢ τι λυπηρὸν, οὐκ ἀνδρείου ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον δείλου Arift. Eth. l. 3. c. 7. And this *Lucian* calls ἀφεστεύειν ἐκ τῶν θεῶν. De Morte Peregrini.

Conſider again, that it is a Sin committed againſt the very Standard and Rule of of our Love to others: For God hath commanded us to love others as our ſelves; and therefore as we may not murther another, ſo much leſs may we murther our ſelves. And thoſe who are hurried to this impious Act, as they do actually deſtroy themſelves, ſo they do virtually and interpretatively murther and deſtroy the whole World; and are as guilty before God, as if, together with themſelves, they had murthered their Parents, their Children, their neareſt Relations, and all Mankind beſides; and that becauſe they deſtroy that Fundamental Law which ſhould regulate their Love to their Neighbours; and which is the ſtated Rule, according to which they ſhould endeavour after their Welfare and Preſervation. And therefore if ever the Devil work upon thy Melancholy and Diſcontented Pride, to tempt thee to this damnable and almoſt unpardonable Sin, be ſure to collect all thy Strength unto thee; and, with infinite abhorrence of it, command him to avoid: Let not any Shame, or Poverty, or Horrors of Conſcience, faſten this Helliſh Temptation upon thee; for know aſſuredly, that if thou hearkeneſt unto them, and putteſt them in Execution, there is no probability but that thou muſt paſs from Temporal Sufferings to Eternal Torments; which

which, be thy Condition in this Life never ſo deplorable and wretched, thou haſt no Reaſon to haſten, but wilt in Hell think that they came too ſoon upon thee.

Secondly, The Murthering of another is a moſt heinous and black Sin, a Sin that God doth uſually, by ſome wonderful Method of his Providence, detect, and bring to puniſhment, and which dogs the Conſciences of thoſe who are guilty of it with horrid Affrights and Terrors, and hath ſometimes extorted from them a Confeſſion of it when there hath been no other Proof nor Evidence. The Two greateſt Sinners that the Scripture hath ſet the blackeſt Brand upon were both Murtherers, *Cain* and *Judas*; the one the Murtherer of his Brother, the other firſt of his Lord and Maſter, and then of himſelf. And God ſo infinitely hates and deteſts it, that although the Altar were a Refuge for other Offenders, yet he would not have a Murtherer ſhelter'd there, but he was to be dragg'd from that unviolable Sanctuary unto Execution, according to that Law, *Exod* 21. 24. *If a Man come preſumptuouſly upon his Neighbour, and ſlay him with Guile, thou ſhalt take him from mine Altar, that he may die.* And accordingly we read, 1 *Kings* 2. 30. That when *Joab* had fled, and taken hold on the Horns of the Altar, ſo that the Meſſengers who were ſent to put him to Death durſt not violate that Holy Place by ſhedding his Blood, *Solomon* gives Command to have him ſlain, even there, as if the Blood of a wilful Murtherer were a very acceptable Sacrifice offered up unto God. And indeed in the firſt Prohibition of Murther that we meet withal God ſubjoins a very weighty Reaſon why it ſhould be ſo odious unto him, *Gen. 9. 6. Whoſo ſheddeth Man's Blood, by Man ſhall his Blood be ſhed; for in the Image of God made he Man.* So that *Homicidium eſt Decidium*; to ſlaughter a Man is to ſtab God in Effigie: For though the Image of God's Holineſs and Purity be totally defaced in us ſince the Fall, yet ſtill every Man, even the moſt Wicked and Impious that lives, bears ſome Strictures of the Image of God in his Intellectuals, the Freedom of his Will, and his Dominion over the Creatures: And God will have every Part of his Image ſo revered by us, that he who aſſaults Man is eſteemed by him as one who attempts to aſſaſſinate God himſelf.

This of Murther is a crying Sin; Blood is loud and clamorous: The firſt that ever was ſhed was heard as far as from Earth to Heaven, *Gen.* 4. 10. *The Voice of thy Brother's Blood crieth to me from the Ground:* And God will certainly hear its Cry, and avenge it.

But not only he whoſe Hands are imbrued in the Blood of others, but thoſe alſo who are acceſſary are guilty of Murther. As,

Firſt, Thoſe who Command or Counſel it to be done. Thus *David* became guilty of the Murther of Innocent *Uriah*; and God, in drawing up his Charge, accuſeth him with it, 2 *Sam.* 12. 9. *Thou haſt ſlain him with the Sword of the Children of Ammon.*

Secondly, Thoſe who conſent to Murther are guilty of it. Thus *Pilate*, for yielding to the clamorous Outcries of the Jews, *Crucifie him, Crucifie him*, tho' he waſhed his Hands, and diſavowed the Fact, yet was as much guilty as thoſe who nailed him to the Croſs.

Thirdly, He that concealeth a Murther is guilty of it. And therefore we read, *Deut.* 21. 6, 7. That in caſe a Man were found ſlain, and the Murtherer unknown, the Elders of that City were to aſſemble, and waſh their Hands, and proteſt, *That they had not ſhed this Blood, neither had their Eyes ſeen it.* Intimating, that if they had ſeen and concealed it, they had thereby become guilty of the Murther.

Fourthly, Thoſe who are in Authority, and don't puniſh a Murther, when committed and known, are themſelves guilty of it. Thus when by the wicked Artifice of *Jezebel Naboth* was condemn'd to die, although *Ahab* knew nothing of the Contrivance till after the Execution, yet becauſe he did not vindicate that Innocent Blood when he came to the Knowledge of it, the Prophet chargeth it upon him, 1 *Kings* 21. 19. *Haſt thou Killed, and alſo taken Poſſeſſion?* The Guilt lay upon him, and the Puniſhment due to it overtook him, although we do not read that he was any otherwiſe guilty of it than in not puniſhing thoſe who had committed it. And thoſe Magiſtrates, who upon any Reſpect whatſoever ſuffer a Murtherer to eſcape unpuniſhed, are ſaid to pollute the Land with Blood, *Numb.* 35. 31, 32, 33. *Ye ſhall take no Satisfaction for the Life of a Murtherer, but he ſhall ſurely be put*

to Death. So ſhall ye not pollute the Land wherein ye are; for Blood defileth the Land: And the Land cannot be cleanſed of the Blood that is ſhed therein, but by the Blood of him that ſhed it.

But in this Commandment not only the Preparation of Murther, and the actual Imbruing our Hands in the Blood of our Brother, is prohibited, but likewiſe all Cauſes and Occaſions leading to it: As,

Firſt, *Envy*; which is the Ruſt of a Cankered Soul, a Foul, Meagre, Vice, that turns the Happineſs and Welfare of others into our Miſery and Torment. Thus *Cain* firſt enviouſly repin'd at the Succeſs and Acceptation of his Brother's Sacrifice, and this quickly prompted him to Murther.

Secondly, Unjuſt and Immoderate *Anger*; which if it be ſuffer'd to lye feſtering in the Heart will turn into the Venom of a perfect Hatred. This is not only a Cauſe, but a Degree, of Murther; and as ſuch it is accounted by our Saviour, who is the Beſt Expoſitor of the Law, *Matth.* 5. 22. *You have heard that it was ſaid by them of Old Time, thou ſhalt not kill; but I ſay unto you, that whoſoever is angry with his Brother without a Cauſe is in danger of the Judgment, and whoſoever ſhall ſay unto his Brother*, Racha, *ſhall be in danger of the Council; but whoſoever ſhall ſay*, Thou Fool, *ſhall be in danger of Hell-fire.* Which Paſſage I have formerly at large explain'd to you, and therefore I ſhall at preſent wave it.

Now *Anger* is not as *Envy*, ſimply, and in itſelf, unlawful; for there may be a Vertuous Anger as well as Vicious; an Anger that merits Praiſe and Commendation, and is ſo far from being a Sin, that it is a Noble and Generous Grace. To be mov'd with Indignation for the Cauſe of God, when his Glory is eclipſed, his Name diſhonoured, his Ordinances profaned, his Sanctuary polluted, his People vilified, this is an Holy Anger, and may well loſe that Common and Vulgar Appellation of *Anger*, and paſs under the Name of *Zeal:* Such was our Saviour's againſt thoſe that defiled the Temple, when with a Miraculous Authority he whipp'd them out, and vindicated the Houſe of God unto the Worſhip of God, from the Uſurpation of the God of this World, *Mammon.* And therefore we find that Paſſage, *Pſalm* 59. applied to this Action of Chriſt; *The Zeal of thine Houſe hath eaten me up.* So likewiſe, when by their Hypocritical Silence they ſeemed to diſcountenance and diſallow the *Curing of a Man on the Sabbath Day*, it is ſaid, *He looked round about upon them with Anger, being grieved for the Hardneſs of their Hearts*, Mark 3. 5.

2. Again, there is alſo an Innocent and Allowable *Anger* when we have juſt Provocation unto it; for Religion doth not utterly root out and deſtroy the Natural Paſſions, but only moderate and regulate them. We may be angry, but we muſt not ſin in our Anger; *Epheſ.* 4. 26. *Be angry, but ſin not.* And,

--χόλον,-
Ἀνδρῶν ἐνὶ στήθεσσιν ὀΐξηται ἠὺτε καπνὸς. Hom. Iliad. Σ.

3. There is a Vicious and Sinful *Anger*, which is a Raſh and Fooliſh Paſſion, a ſhort Phrenzy that puts a Man for the preſent quite beſides himſelf, and ſo agitates the Spirits, that the Blood boils about the Heart, and ſends up ſuch Sooty Fumes as darken the Underſtanding, and deprive him of the Uſe and Benefit of his Reaſon.

The Two Ingredients that make up *Anger* are Grief for ſome Injury conceived to be done unto us, and Deſire of Revenge, to diſcharge our Gall and Choler upon thoſe that have wronged us; as if we gave our ſelves Eaſe by laying a Load upon others.

And there are Two Things that make *Anger* to be evil and ſinful.

1. When it is without Cauſe.
2. When it is without Bounds.

Firſt, Cauſleſs Anger is a Kind of Murther, when Men will fret and rage although there be no Provocation at all given them. Some Mens Galls overflow ſo much, that upon every Trivial Occaſion, or perhaps when there is none, but only their own Umbrage and Suſpicion, they fly out into Intemperate Speeches and Revengeful Acts, and are preſently all in a Flame and Combuſtion, when there is nothing to irritate them but their own Cholerick Fancies; like Clouds that break out in Thunder and Lightning, when all the Fire and Sulphur is bred only in their own Bowels. See this Teſty Spirit in *Jonah*, who though he were an Holy, yet it ſeems by his Hiſtory he was a very Paſſionate, Man: Firſt, he is angry that

that God would ſpare *Nineveh* after he had propheſied Ruin and Deſtruction to it, he grows into a Pet, even with the Mercy of God, as if he circumvented him, and deſign'd to make him accounted a Falſe Prophet. *Jonah* 3. 1. *It diſpleaſed* Jonah *exceedingly, and he was very angry.* *Jonah* is angry becauſe God is appeaſed: The Froppiſh Man thinks the Almighty too eaſie, and can hardly forgive that Mercy which ſo readily forgave the *Ninevites*. And again, when God had cauſed a Worm to deſtroy the Gourd which he had prepared to ſhade this Hot and Angry Head, *Jonah* falls into another Fit of Bitter Paſſion for the Loſs of ſo Poor a Thing as his Gourd; and when God meekly expoſtulates the Cauſe with him, *Doſt thou well to be angry for the Gourd?* His Paſſion ſo far tranſports him, that he dares to return this Malapert Anſwer, even to the Great God, *Yea, I do well to be angry to the very Death.* See here how his Gall overflows, and taints both his Reaſon and his Religion: He hurls his Fury about againſt God and Men; and (as he ſits in his Booth, looking and praying daily that Fire and Brimſtone might come down from Heaven to conſume that great City,) when he ſaw his Expectation fruſtrated, and the Date of his Prophecy expir'd without the Accompliſhment of it, he quarrels with God, ſtorms againſt every Thing, is weary of his Life, and could rather have fired it himſelf than it ſhould have eſcaped.

Secondly, As *Cauſleſs Anger*, ſo *Immoderate Anger*, is a great Sin, and a committing of Murther in our Hearts.

Now *Anger* may be immoderate Two Ways, either in the Degree, or in the Continuance and Duration of it.

Firſt, In the Degree, when it is vehement and exceſſive, tranſporting us beyond our due Bounds and Temper. I know no Law that forbids a Chriſtian to reſent an Injury. Our Saviour Chriſt himſelf, when he was buffeted, was ſenſible of and reproves that Inſolence. *John* 18. 23. *If I have ſpoken Evil bear witneſs of the Evil; but if Well, why ſmiteſt thou me?* Chriſtianity doth not make Men Stocks, but keeps them from being Furies; it doth not root up, but only prune, our Anger, and cuts off all *Superfluities of Naughtineſs* from it. It may, when juſt Cauſe is given, warm, but not fire, our Spirits; but when it breaks forth into Reviling Speeches, or into Revengeful Actions, be ſure it hath catch'd fire then, and is enkindled of Hell.

And yet the juſt Anger of Superiors, as Magiſtrates, or Maſters, or Parents, may lawfully break forth upon Inferiors in inflicting due Puniſhments. Nor will this fall under the Guilt of a ſinful Revenge, but a juſt Reward, whilſt they are careful that the Puniſhment exceed not the Fault and Crime committed.

But for thoſe who have no Authority over others to ſeek Revenge upon them, either by Railing or Defaming Speeches, or by repaying Injury for Injury, is a Tranſgreſſion of this Commandment, the Effect of Immoderate Anger, and a Kind of Murther in them.

Secondly, Anger may be Immoderate in the Continuance and Duration of it; for Age will ſoure it into Hatred, and turn what was Wine into Vinegar: And therefore the Apoſtle counſels us, *Be angry, and ſin not.* But how may that be done? *Let not the Sun*, ſaith he, *go down upon your Wrath*, Eph. 4. 26. And indeed he that goes to Bed, and ſleeps with Anger boiling in his Breaſt, will find the Scum of Malice upon it the next Morning. This is a Paſſion, which if it be long cheriſh'd, will, *excutere Spiritum*, drive away the Spirit: For how canſt thou think that the Dove-like Spirit of God will reſide where the Heart remains full of Gall, or that the Celeſtial Flame of Divine Love ſhould burn bright and clear where there are ſo many thick Fumes and Vapours continually riſing up to damp and choak it? How dareſt thou betake thy ſelf to reſt without firſt invoking the Great God, and locking up thy ſelf by Prayer into his Cuſtody and Safe Tuition? And how dareſt thou pray whilſt Wrath eſtuates and rankles in thy Breaſt? Canſt thou in Faith pray for Forgiveneſs who doſt not thy ſelf forgive? Our Saviour hath expreſly told us, that if we *forgive not Men their Treſpaſſes, neither will our Father which is in Heaven forgive us our Treſpaſſes:* And therefore as long as Anger, and Deſire of Wreaking our Revenge upon thoſe that have wronged us, are entertain'd by us, ſo long we invalidate our own Prayers, by not performing that Condition without which God will never hear nor accept them. And therefore be ſure you be no longer angry than you may lawfully abſtain from Prayer:

For

For we are commanded to *lift up Holy Hands, without Wrath*, 1 *Tim.* 2. 8. For certainly Diſſention and Animoſity with Men is no fit Temper to prepare us to hold Communion with God. And therefore though thy Gift be ready to be laid upon the Altar, remember thy ſelf, look inward, and ſee whether all be quiet and calm there; if there be no Grudge, no Anger, againſt thy Brother: If thou findeſt any, either go firſt, and actually reconcile thy ſelf unto him, or if Opportunity will not ſuffice for that, purge out the Leaven of Wrath and Malice, and reconcile thy ſelf unto him in thine own Heart; for under the Law no *Offering of the Lord was to be mingled with Leaven*; and now under the Goſpel God will accept of no Oblations that are offered up unto him with the Ferment of Wrath and Paſſion: Although it may ſurprize us, yet let it not poſſeſs us. See what the Wiſe Man counſels us, *Eccl.* 7. 9. *Be not haſty in thy Spirit to be angry:* Or if through Haſte and Incogitancy it may ſeize upon you, yet let it not dwell there; for he adds, *Anger dwelleth in the Boſom of Fools.* And certainly the calm and peaceable Spirit of God will not dwell in that Houſe where there are perpetual Tumults and Diſcords, and where our unruly Paſſions make ſuch a Noiſe and Uproar that his ſecret Whiſpers and Suggeſtions cannot be heard.

And thus you ſee what kind of Anger is ſinful; that which is cauſleſs, and that which is immoderate, either in Degrees, or in Duration: And likewiſe what Anger is lawful; that which is zealous for God's Glory, and that which is rightly tempered for our own and our Neighbour's Good.

Let us in the next Place conſider whence ſinful and unwarrantable Anger doth uſually proceed. You ſhall find this bitter Fruit to have likewiſe its Root of Bitterneſs. The Cauſes of it are commonly theſe.

Firſt, *Pride*, and an over-weening Conceit of our ſelves. *Pride* is the fruitful Mother of many Vices, but it nurſeth none with more Care and Tenderneſs than this of *Anger*; and therefore the Wiſe Man tells us, *Prov.* 13. 10. That only *from Pride cometh Contention*; and indeed, as the Philoſopher * obſerves, *Anger* uſually ariſeth from an Opinion that we are deſpiſed and contemned. Now the proud Man thinks every one contemns him that doth not value him as highly as he values himſelf; that is, beyond all Reaſon; and if he cannot meet with ſuch Fools he grows angry, and diſcontented with all the World. Proud Fleſh about a Sore is always tender, and cannot bear the leaſt Touch; and ſo proud Perſons, if they be never ſo little touch'd, preſently grow enraged, and think they have a great Injury done them, if others do not as much admire and reſpect them as they do themſelves. Whoſoever is much a Self-lover cannot fail of frequent Occaſions to make him angry. Now the proud Man is the greateſt Self-lover in the World; and the Miſery is, that he uſually loves himſelf without a Rival; and if all do not veil to him, to ſay what he ſhall dictate, and to think what he ſhall determine, and to do what he ſhall preſcribe, he takes it for an high Affront; and as he hath given himſelf an Authority over others, looks that they ſhould ſubmit to it, and acknowledge it: And others, perhaps, having no leſs Pride, or poſſibly more Reaſon, refuſing to gratifie his vain and arrogant Humour, Quarrels and Diſſentions ariſe, and endleſs Jars and Diſcords.

* Ἡ ὀργὴ ἐσὶν ὄρεξις μετὰ λύπης τιμωρίας φαινομένης διὰ φαινομένην ὀλιγωρίαν ἧς εἰς αὐτὸν, ἢ εἰς αὐτῷ τινὰ μὴ τεσσηκόντως. Ariſt. Rhet. l. 2. c. 2.

Ἀλλ' αὐτῆς, γε τῆς ὀργῆς ἀναθεωρῶν τὴν γένεσιν ἄλλως ὑπ' ἄλλων αἰτιῶν ἐμπίπλουσας εἰς αὐτὴν δώρων οἷς ἐπισχὼς ἄποσι δοξα τῷ καλαφρονεῖσθαι καὶ ἀμαλῶς παραγίνεται. Plut. de Ira cohib.

Secondly, Another Cauſe of this Paſſion is the Weakneſs and Feebleneſs of Nature: And therefore it is truly obſerved by *Plutarch*, † that thoſe who are of the infirmeſt Natures, and weakeſt Conſtitutions, are moſt harraſs'd with it; as Children more than Men, Old Age more than the ſtaid Part of Life, and Sick Perſons more than thoſe that are in Health: For *Anger* is a great Weakneſs, and therefore lodgeth moſt in the weakeſt; *Ants*, and *Piſmires*, and ſuch little Creatures, are moſt buſie with their Stings, whereas ſtrong and generous Creatures muſt be much provok'd before they will be injurious.

† Μείζων θυμὸς ἀπὸ μείζονος ἀσθενείας. Διὸ καὶ γυναῖκες ἀνδρῶν ὀργιλώτεραι, καὶ νοσοῦντες ὑγιαινόντων, καὶ γέροντες ἀκμαζόντων, καὶ κακῶς πράττοντες εὐτυχούντων. Plut. De Ira cohib.

There are many other Cauſes of the violent ſtirring of this exorbitant Paſſion, as over-much Love of vain Trifles; which, if they come to any Miſchance, as uſually they do, we are apt to be diſturbed at it; eaſineſs to believe at the firſt Recommendation,

commendation, and engaging our Affections in Things before we have had Trial and Experience of them; which, afterwards proving quite contrary to our Expectations, the Diſappointment will excite our Choler, *&c.* But I ſhall not inſiſt on theſe.

Let us therefore proceed to lay down ſome Rules for the Reſtraining and Moderating of Anger: And that,

Firſt, In others.
Secondly, In our ſelves.

Firſt, In others. It is an Helliſh Sport for us to irritate and ſtir up Anger in others only for us to laugh at, or to make our Advantages by it; ſcarce a leſs Sin than to make them drunk that we may abuſe them: For Prevailing Paſſion is for the Time a kind of Drunkenneſs; and both are a Degree of Frenzy and Madneſs. Thou oughteſt not therefore unneceſſarily to exaſperate thy Brother whom thou knoweſt prone to this great Weakneſs. Otherwiſe be aſſured that all his Intemperate Speeches and Raſh Actions ſhall be imputed unto thee, and are thy Sins as well as his; and whatſoever Revilings he diſchargeth againſt thee ſhall at laſt alſo be charged upon thee: And what a Fooliſh Thing is it for thee to bear the Sting of them here, and the Puniſhment of them hereafter? The Wiſe Man hath told us, *Prov.* 14. 9. That they are *Fools who make a Mock at Sin.* And if thou for thy Recreation provokeſt any to an Undecent and Misbecoming Paſſion, know that ſuch Laughter is deadly to thy ſelf, and thou art like thoſe Poiſoned Perſons who laugh themſelves to Death.

Secondly, To prevent and ſuppreſs it in thy ſelf, (for there it doth moſt Hurt, ſince another Man's Anger is none of my Guilt, if I have neither been faulty in ſtirring it up, nor too eaſie to catch the Flame from him,) take theſe following Rules and Directions.

Firſt, Labour and Pray for a Meek and Humble Spirit; think lowly of thy ſelf, and then certainly thou wilt not be angry if others conſpire with thee in thinking and ſpeaking of thee as thou doſt of thy ſelf. Moſt commonly Anger (as I have ſaid) proceeds from an Opinion of being deſpiſed: Now do thou firſt of all deſpiſe thy ſelf, and then all Reproaches and Injuries will ſignifie no more to thee than that other Men approve thy Judgment; and that certainly can be no Cauſe of Anger. Thou wilt not be angry for want of a Ceremony or Demonſtration of Reſpect which others impoſe or exact, nor wilt thou quarrel with any for not relying on thy Judgment, or contradicting thy Sentiments, when thou ſhalt reflect upon thine own Ignorance and frequent Miſtakes. They are the High Hills, whoſe Heads are wrapp'd about with Clouds and Tempeſts, when the Humble Valleys are calm and ſerene; ſo Humble Souls that lye low in their own Eſteem remain undiſturbed, when Lofty Perſons are ſtill moleſted with the Tempeſts of their own Paſſions.

Secondly, Conſider how often thou giveſt Good Occaſion to be angry with thee, which if he ſhould take thou wert for ever undone. He bears many Affronts and Indignities at thy Hands: And who art thou? A Poor Vile Worm. And who is he? Even the great Almighty God, the Univerſal King of Heaven and Earth, that he ſhould put up Wrongs at thy Hands. And ſhall God daily take Injuries from ſuch a Wretched Nothing as thou art? God, who is thy Lord and Maſter, and wilt not thou bear them patiently from thy Fellow-ſervant, who, it may be, is in every reſpect equal to thee, but only inferior to thee in this, that he provokes thee unjuſtly? Certainly were we as tender towards our Brethren, as we all deſire God ſhould be towards us, could we forbear others as we our ſelves would be forborn, there would never be any Quarrel commenc'd, or if it were it would be ſoon compounded. What ſaith the Pſalmiſt? *Pſalm* 103. 9. *He will not always chide, neither will he keep his Anger for ever. He hath not dealt with us after our Sins, nor rewarded us according to our Iniquities.* Let this great Example be ours, not to be ſoon moved to Anger, or quickly to free our ſelves from it. Indeed many there are that are ſlow to Anger, and in that they imitate God; but then they are tenacious and retentive of Wrath, and hardly placable again; their Anger is like an Impreſſion upon ſome Hard Mettal, very difficultly made, and as difficult to be effaced.

Let ſuch conſider what would become of them if God ſhould be as ſlow to be reconciled to them as they are to their Brethren: Nay, he is infinitely more wrong'd by you than you can be by them, and yet he ſo far condeſcends as firſt to ſeek Reconciliation. And although he be infinitely able by the leaſt Expreſſion of his Wrath and Power for ever to deſtroy you, yet herein God commandeth his Love unto you, that when you were Enemies ye were reconciled unto him by the Death of his Son. Certainly whoſoever doth but ſeriouſly reflect upon the Infinite Patience and Forbearance of God, if he hath any Sweetneſs diffus'd into his Soul by that Conſideration, if he hath any Conſcience of imitating his Heavenly Father in that which is his moſt Adorable Attribute, if he hath any Care to aſcertain unto himſelf the Pardon and Remiſſion of his own Offences, will therein find a Powerful Influence to ſway him to the like Acts of Mercy and Forgiveneſs.

Thirdly, Another Rule is, beware of Prejudice againſt thy Brother, for Prejudice is a very Ill Interpreter of Actions, and will be ſure to expound them in the Worſt Senſe. Be not eaſie to believe that thoſe who offend thee do it with Deſign, or that they deſpiſe and undervalue thee; rather think it any Thing elſe than Contempt of thee: Believe that his Offences proceed rather from his Folly and Indiſcretion, or that he is forced and neceſſitated to do it, that others have put him upon it. If they be thy Friends that wrong thee, ſuppoſe it to be only a Fault of their too great Familiarity, and a miſgovern'd Intimacy. If they be ſuch as are ſubject to thee, believe that ſince they know thou haſt Power to chaſtize them they would not do it purpoſely to provoke thee. If they be Vile and Sordid Perſons, trouble not thy ſelf with their Affronts, for thy Reputation is above them. Thus I ſay, incline to believe it any Thing rather than a deſign'd Abuſe: For though a ſtrict Jealouſie over our Reputation, and an Aptneſs to think our ſelves wrong'd, ſeem to proceed from Generouſneſs, and a Senſe of Honour, yet indeed it proceeds only from Baſeneſs, and Weakneſs of Mind. Whoſoever accounts himſelf deſpiſed by another is in a Senſe leſs than he, and confeſſeth himſelf his Inferior. He is the Noble and Heroick-ſpirited Perſon who is unſhaken with the Petty Affronts and Injuries of others, and hath ſo much Stable Confidence in the Integrity of his Actions, that he cannot believe any can traduce him or them; whereas to be angry at them doth but in a Sort juſtifie Slanders, and will beget a Belief that that is not altogether groundleſs where a the ſhews himſelf ſo much concern'd. It is an Old Maxim of Prudence, *Convitia ſi iraſcare, agnita videntur; ſpreta, exoleſcunt: If you be angry at Railings you ſeem to acknowledge them, if you contemn them they vaniſh.*

Fourthly, Be not familiar with any Angry Perſon; for as one Fire will kindle another, ſo it is likely that his Choler will kindle thine, till both flame into an inordinate and extravagant Paſſion. See the Direction expreſly given us, *Prov.* 22. 24, 25. *Make no Friendſhip with an Angry Man, and with a Furious Man thou ſhalt not go, leſt thou learn his Ways, and get a Snare to thy Soul.* Indeed there is no ſuch Fewel to Wrath as Wrath; and it is a very hard Matter to refrain being angry with him who will cauſleſly be angry with us. And as thou muſt ſhun the Company and Acquaintance of Cholerick Perſons, ſo likewiſe of Scoffers; for a Scoff and a Jeer is many Times more provoking than a Blow; and nothing will ſooner kindle the Coals of Contention than a Biting Taunt: And therefore *Solomon* adviſeth us, *Prov.* 22. 10. *Caſt out the Scorner and Contention ſhall go out, yea, Striſe and Reproach ſhall ceaſe.*

Fifthly, It is very Good Counſel, if thou feeleſt any Motions of this unruly Paſſion begin to ſtir in thine Heart, that thou arreſt it for ſome Time before thou either ſpeak or act. Let this Mud have ſome Time to ſettle again, that Reaſon may in the mean while recover its Throne, and direct thee how to govern thy ſelf like a Wiſe Man and a Chriſtian. Speak not whilſt thou art in the Impetuous Hurries of thy Paſſion; for it was well ſaid of * *Plutarch*, *That it is good in a Fever, but much better in Anger, to have the Tongue kept clean and ſmooth.* Put an Interval of Time between thy Anger and thy Actions; for thoſe who act in the Violence and Paroxiſms of their Anger do either they know not what, or elſe what they may have Reaſon to repent of. And therefore *Solomon* tells us, that *the Diſcretion of a Man deferreth his Anger*, Prov. 19. 11. and *the Beginning of Strife is as when one letteth out Waters*, *Prov.* 17. 14. At firſt when a Man cutteth the Bank of a River the Paſſage is but little, and the Stream may be eaſily ſtopp'd; but by continual running it will wear away the Earth, and widen the Gap, and whole Floods and Currents will pour out where but ſome few Drops were intended.

* Ἀγαθὸν μὲν ἐστὶν ἐν πυρετῷ χρῆπον δὲ ἐν ὀργῇ τὴν λῶτταν ἀποτὴ ἔχειν καὶ λείαν. Plut. de Ira. cohib.

Sixthly,

Sixthly, and Laſtly, Contemplate the huge Uglineſs and Deformity of this Sin in others; how it makes Men brutiſh in their Souls, and deformed likewiſe in their Countenance. It inflames the Face, fires the Eyes, and makes a Man look like a Fury, deafens the Ears, froths the Mouth, makes the Heart beat and pant, the Tongue ſtammer, the Voice harſh and rough, the Speech precipitate, and oftentimes ridiculous; briefly, it puts the whole Man into a preternatural Fever, and transforms the Body into a Monſter, and the Man into a Devil.

And what! Shall I give Way to Paſſion, ſo uncomely a Paſſion, that will make me ſcorned when I would ſeem moſt terrible; certainly, were there no other Thing whereof to accuſe this immoderate Anger it were enough to render it odious; but when it not only deſtroys what I was, but ſeeks the Ruin and Deſtruction of others, it concerns me to ſtop it in its firſt Riſe and Ebullitions, leſt the Boilings of my Blood proceed ſo far as to attempt the ſhedding of the Blood of others.

And ſo much for this Sixth Commandment.

The Seventh Commandment.

Thou ſhalt not commit Adultery.

IN opening the former Commandment we have ſeen what Care God takes for the Security and Indemnity of every Man's Perſon. This Command which I have now read unto you extendeth farther, and provides for his Security, as he is conſidered myſtically in Marriage-Union, which of Twain maketh One Fleſh: The one defends him from the Violence of bloody Rage and Revenge, the other from the Violations of impure Luſts.

I judge it not convenient to be too Circumſtantial in ſhewing you what is prohibited under this Precept. I know that ſome, eſpecially the Popiſh Caſuiſts, in their Treatiſes of Moral Divinity, ſuch as *Sanches*, *Diana*, &c. have ſpoken of theſe Things ſo minutely, and with ſuch a filthy Accurateneſs, that they ſtuprate the very Eyes and Fancies of their Readers; rather teach Vice than condemn it; and inſtruct the Ignorant to Sin skilfully, rather than convince the Guilty to bring them to Repentance. Some Wickedneſſes there are, which it is far better not to reprove than to name; it is more expedient to leave thoſe who are guilty of them, to be laſhed by their natural Light and Conſcience, than by exagitating ſuch Crimes teach others not ſo much to abhor as to practice them. And let this be my Apology if I paſs over this Subject with more than my accuſtomed Brevity.

Firſt, That which is here literally and expreſly forbidden is that deteſtable and loathſome Sin of Adultery, which, properly taken, is a Sin committed between Perſons, the one, or both of them, Married unto another. However, even in the higheſt Circumſtances, it is a moſt heinous Sin, but on the Married Perſon's Side moſt inexcuſeable and intolerable, *Gen.* 39. 9. It is called a great Wickedneſs againſt God on the Unmarried Man's Part. And *Levit.* 20. 10. *Deut.* 22. 22. The Temporal Puniſhment aſſigned unto it is no leſs than Death: The ſame Puniſhment that belong'd to Murther, and greater than was inflicted for Theft. And if Humane Laws were as ſevere in the Puniſhment of the Sin as Divine, the Fear of it might poſſibly be of greater Influence, to deter Men from ſuch Filthineſs, than either Shame, or the Denunciation of Eternal Puniſhments. Yea, we read in Hiſtory that our Progenitors, the *Engliſh Saxons*, * even while they remained Pagans and Idolaters, ſo hated this Sin, that they made it, yea, and ſimple Fornication alſo, puniſhable with Death, and ſeverely inflicted it upon thoſe that were found guilty; which Cuſtom continued among them after they were converted to Chriſtianity until the Year of Chriſt 750, when the Antichriſtian See of *Rome*, the Mother of Whoredoms, abrogated this Law, as too rigorous for Chriſtians. And *Job* calleth it *an heinous Crime*; *yea, an*

* *Steed's* Chron. *pag.* 289.

Iniquity to be puniſhed by the Judges. A Fire that conſumeth unto Deſtruction, Job 31. 11, 12.

But although they may eſcape the Judgment of Men, either through the Secrecy of their Wickedneſs, or the too gentle Cenſures of the Law, yet they ſhall not eſcape the Righteous Judgment of God, nor thoſe Everlaſting Puniſhments that he hath prepared for them in Hell, *Heb.* 13. 4. *Whoremongers and Adulterers God will judge.*

Now there are Two Things in this Sin of Adultery that make it ſo exceeding heinous.

Firſt, The Luxury and Incontinency of it, in letting looſe the Reins to a brutiſh Concupiſcence, and yielding up the Body to Pollution, and the Soul to Damnation.

Secondly, The Injuſtice of it, being a Deceit of the higheſt and moſt injurious Nature that can be: For,

Firſt, It is the Violation of a moſt Solemn Vow and Covenant, and ſo adds Perjury to Unfaithfulneſs, alienating that Perſon to another, who by the moſt Sacred and Strickteſt Obligations is bound only to that Partner and Yokefellow, to whom God, and their own Conſent, and the legal Rites of the Church and State, have addicted them.

Secondly, It is the Source and Cauſe of a Spurious and Suppoſititious Birth, bringing in a ſtrange Blood into the Inheritance of lawful Children, whereby this Unfaithfulneſs becomes Theft as well as Perjury.

But although this Sin of Adultery be alone mentioned in the Command, yet according to the Rules laid down in the beginning of this Work, all other Kinds of Uncleanneſs are forbidden under the Name of this one groſs Crime. For the Law of God is perfect; and as all manner of Chaſtity, both in our Thoughts, Speeches and Actions, is there injoin'd us, ſo likewiſe whatſoever is in the leaſt contrary and prejudicial to a ſpotleſs Chaſtity, and an inviolate Modeſty, is hereby forbidden. And therefore,

Secondly, This Commandment forbids the Uncleanneſs of Fornication, which properly is the Sin committed betwixt Two Single Perſons. And though it hath not ſome Aggravations that belong to the other, yet it is an Abominable Sin in the Sight of God. I know how it is extenuated by the impure * Romaniſts as a ſmall Stain, that may eaſily be waſh'd off by the Sprinkling of a little Holy Water. But it is no Wonder if they who have drank deep of the Cup of the Fornications of the great Whore, and are guilty of Spiritual Fornication, if they ſhould ſpeak lightly of Corporal Fornication alſo. But let us hear how God, who is infinite Purity, hath Sentenced this Sin, when he threatens that he himſelf will judge Whoremongers, and tells us, 1 *Cor.* 6. 9. *That neither Fornicators, nor Idolaters, nor Adulterers, ſhall ever inherit the Kingdom of God.* No, the New *Jeruſalem* which is above is an Holy City, and no Unclean Thing ſhall for ever enter into it. *Without are Dogs, and Sorcerers, and Whoremongers, and Murderers, and Idolaters*, Rev. 22. 15. And it were well with them if all their Puniſhment were only to be left without: But there is a Lake of Fire prepared for them, into which they ſhall be caſt and plunged, the Fire of Hell to puniſh the Flames of Luſt, *Rev.* 21. 8. *The Fearful, and the Unbelieving, and the Abominable, and Murtherers, and Whoremongers*, (you ſee how in both Places they are ſtrung up with the vileſt and moſt infamous Sinners,) *ſhall have their Portion in the Lake which burneth with Fire and Brimſtone, which is the ſecond Death.* The Apoſtle reckons up this as one of the Works of the Fleſh, *Gal.* 5. 19. *The Works of the Fleſh are manifeſt, which are theſe, Fornication, Uncleanneſs, Laſciviouſneſs*, &c. And exhorts us to a careful Mortification of it, *Col.* 3. 5. *Mortifie therefore your Members which are upon the Earth, Fornication, Uncleanneſs, inordinate Affection*, &c.

* Mazarin *In* Pſal. 51. Durand. Sent l. 4. diſt. 33. 92. Emman. Sa. Art. 20. Tit. Epiſcopus.

Thirdly, Here likewiſe are forbidden all inceſtuous Mixtures, or Uncleanneſs, between thoſe who are related to each other within the Degrees of Kindred ſpecified, *Lev.* 18. from the Sixth to the Eighteenth Verſe; whether the Kindred be by Affinity or Conſanguinity, *i. e.* whether by former Marriage, or by Blood and Deſcent. And the nearer any Perſons are ſo related to us, the greater is the Abomination if we approach unto them; whether it be with Pretence of Marriage, which in this Caſe is null and void, or without any ſuch Pretence.

Fourthly, Here is likewiſe forbidden *Polygamy*, or a taking *a Wife to her Siſter*, that is, to another, *Lev.* 18. 18. God indeed ſeemed to connive at this in the Holy Men

Men of Old; yet it never was otherwiſe than a Sin from the Foundation of the World. And therefore the Prophet *Malachy* refers us to the Primitive Inſtitution of Marriage, to ſhew the obliquity of this Practice, *Mal.* 2. 15. *Did not he make One?* That is, did not he Create One Woman for One Man? *Yet had he the Reſidue of the Spirit*; i. e. the ſame Spirit and Power whereby he Created all Things in the World reſided ſtill in God, and therefore he could as eaſily have formed more Women as well as one, had he not purpoſed to oblige them one to the other ſolely, and to teach them by their being paired at firſt not to ſeek Multiplication of Wives afterwards.

Therefore *Polygamy* was unlawful in the Beginning, even then when the Neceſſity of increaſing the World might ſeem to plead for it; and how much more unlawful now when that Neceſſity is ceaſed. Beſides this, the Apoſtle hath commanded, 1 Cor. 7. 2. *Let every Man have his own Wife, and every Woman her own Huſband.*

Fifthly, Here alſo are forbidden all thoſe Monſters of unnatural Luſt, and thoſe Prodigies of Villany and Filthineſs, which are not fit to be named among Men, but thought fit to be puniſh'd upon Beaſts themſelves, as ye may read, *Lev.* 20. 15, 16. *Lev.* 11. 22, 23.

Sixthly, All thoſe Things that may be Incentives to Luſt, and add Fewel to this Fire, are likewiſe forbidden in this Command; all Impurities of the Eyes, of Contact, of leud and obſcene Speech, all immodeſt Spectacles, wanton Actions, uncivil and gariſh Attire, or whatſoever elſe may kindle either in our ſelves or others any unchaſte Affections; for all theſe Things do but lay in Proviſion for the Fleſh, to fulfil it in the Luſt thereof.

Seventhly, Becauſe this Law is Spiritual, therefore it not only forbids the groſs outward Acts of Filthineſs, but the inward Uncleanneſs of the Heart; all luſtful Contemplations, and Idea's, and Evil Concupiſcences: For it is not enough to refrain unchaſte Deſires from breaking forth into Act, but we muſt alſo refrain our Hearts from entertaining any ſuch Deſires. Theſe Flames pent up in the Heart will ſoot and conſume it; and though its Ruin be more inviſible, yet it will be ſad and fatal: As there is an Heart-Murther, ſo there is is an Heart-Adultery; and he that commits ſpeculative Uncleanneſs, and proſtitutes his Thoughts and Imaginations to the impure Embraces of filthy Luſt, is, according to our Saviour's Interpretation, guilty of the Tranſgreſſion of this Command: So, *Mat.* 5. 27, 28. *Ye have heard that it was ſaid to them of Old Time, thou ſhalt not commit Adultery; but I ſay unto you, that whoſo looketh on a Woman to luſt after her hath committed Adultery already with her in his Heart.*

And thus you ſee what is prohibited.

All that now remains, is,

Firſt, To ſet forth the exceeding Heinouſneſs of this Sin; and to ſhew you why it is ſo juſtly odious unto God, and ought to be ſo unto us: And,

Secondly, To give you ſome Rules and Directions which may ſecure you from it.

The Greatneſs and heinous Nature of this Sin appears,

Firſt, In that it is a Sin which Murthers Two Souls at once; and therefore the moſt uncharitable Sin in the World. Other Sinners can periſh ſingly. The Swearer damns none by his Oaths but himſelf; and although he curſe others to the Pit of Hell, yet ſhall deſcend thither alone for them. The Drunkard with his Intemperance drowns but his own Soul in Perdition: The Bloody Murtherer may ſay with *Lamech*, Gen. 4. 23. *I have ſlain a Man to my wounding, and a young Man to my own Hurt.* And indeed all other Sinners, though their Wickedneſs prompt them to draw in Aſſociates and Partakers with them, yet the Nature of their Sin doth not require a Partnerſhip in their Guilt, but they may be Solitarily wicked, and periſh alone: Only this Sin of Adultery neceſſarily requires Partnerſhip, and involves another in the ſame Condamnation. And is it nothing to thee that another's Damnation ſhall be ſet upon thy Score, and the Blood of their Souls charged upon thine for ever? Think with your ſelves what horrid Greetings theſe unclean Wretches will give each other in Hell, when they who have here wallowed together in Beaſtly Senſuality, ſhall there wallow together in unquenchable Flames, and with ineffable Anguiſh exclaim againſt, and curſe both themſelves and one another, the one for enticing, the other for conſenting, and both for fulfilling, their impure Deſires: Or ſuppoſe that God ſhould vouchſafe thee Repentance unto Life, yet art thou ſure that his Juſtice and Severity will not

harden the other in this Sin to which thou haſt been the Author and Perſwader? How knoweſt thou but they may perſiſt and periſh in their Wickedneſs, Divine Vengeance may ſnatch them away, without affording them Space or Grace to repent? And is it nothing to thee that thou haſt damn'd a Soul as well as defil'd a Body; and for ſatisfying of thy Bruti ſh Luſt haſt brought upon them Everlaſting Woes and Torments? If God hath granted thee Mercy, how anxiouſly ſolicitous oughteſt thou to be to deliver thoſe out of the Snares of the Devil whom thou haſt entangled therein, and by all Holy Councels and Remonſtrances reduce them unto God by Repentance? Or if a Speedy Execution of Divine Juſtice ſhould cut them off before, what a Sad Conſideration will it be to thee that thou haſt eternally ruined a Poor Soul? This, if thou haſt any Senſe of Sin, or of the Wrath of the Great God due unto it, will make thee go mourning all thy Days, and bring down thy Gray Hairs with Sorrow to the Grave.

Secondly, This is the moſt degrading Sin of all others; it debaſeth a Man from the Excellency of his Nature, and reſembles him to the Condition of Brute Beaſts. The Perfection of a Man is to govern himſelf according to Law and Reaſon, to bound and circumſcribe his Actions by the Rules of what is fit and honeſt; whereas Beaſts ſhew the Inferiority of their Natures by the Scope and Range of their Unguided Appetities, *per vagas & effuſas libidines*. Hence the Prophet compares Adulterers to *fed Horſes, every one neighing after his Neighbour's Wife*, Jer. 5. 8. And God joins ſuch Impure Perſons with the vileſt and moſt deteſtable of Brute Beaſts. *Deut.* 23. 18. *Thou ſhalt not bring the Hire of a Whore, nor the Price of a Dog, into the Houſe of the Lord thy God for any Vow; for even both theſe are an Abomination to the Lord thy God.*

Thirdly, This is a Sin that doth moſt of all others obſcure and extinguiſh the Light of a Man's Natural Reaſon and Underſtanding. Nothing doth ſo much darken the Underſtanding as the Fumes of Luſt, *Hoſ.* 4. 11. *Whoredom, and Wine, and New Wine, take away the Heart.* And to this the Apoſtle gives Teſtimony, *Eph.* 4. 18, 19. *Having the Underſtanding darkned, being alienated from the Life of God through the Ignorance that is in them, becauſe of the Blindneſs of their Heart, who being paſt feeling have given themſelves over to work all Uncleanneſs with Greedineſs.* So far doth this Beaſtly Sin befot the Mind, and befool Men, that according to the Chaſte and Modeſt Phraſe of Scripture-language itſelf is frequently call'd *committing of Folly*; as if there were no Folly like to this, and it alone deſerved to carry away the Name and Title from all other Sins: And indeed it is a moſt Notorious and Egregious Folly for a ſhort Pang and Epilepſie of Senſual Delight to betray the Soul to a Gloomy Dulneſs, Bitter Remembrance, Guilt, and Eternal Shame and Death.

Fourthly, This is a Sin juſtly the moſt Infamous and Scandalous amongſt Men; a Sin that brands them with the greateſt Shame and Reproach; a *Reproach which can never be wiped away*; and certainly if ſuch an one doth ever ſeriouſly conſider his own Filth he cannot but be aſhamed of himſelf: For although there be a Shame conſequently upon the Act of every Sin, yet the Credit and Reputation of a Man is never ſo deeply blemiſh'd, nor ſo foully ſtain'd, by any Sin as that of Adultery. *Prov.* 6. 32, 33. *Whoſo committeth Adultery with a Woman lacketh Underſtanding: He that doth it deſtroyeth his own Soul; a Wound and Diſhonour ſhall he get, and his Reproach ſhall not be wiped away.* Yea, the Diſhonour of Adulterous Parents is ſo foul, that like a Black Blot it diffuſeth and ſpreads itſelf even upon their Children. *Deut.* 23. 2. *A Baſtard was not to enter into the Congregation of the Lord unto the Tenth Generation.*

Fifthly, Conſider that this Sin of Uncleanneſs is a Kind of Sacriledge; a Converting of that which is Sacred, and Dedicated unto a Prophane Uſe. What ſaith the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 6. 19. *Know ye not that your Body is the Temple of the Holy Ghoſt?* And if it were a Sacrilegious Impiety to turn the Temple of God, which conſiſted only of Vile Materials, Wood and Stone, to Vile and Inferior Uſes; if our Saviour's Zeal burn'd within him when he ſaw the Sanctuary turn'd into a Market, and the Houſe of God made a Den of Thieves, how much more Heinous Wickedneſs is it to convert the Living Temples of the Everliving God, even our Bodies, which were redeemed and conſecrated unto God by the Precious Blood of Jeſus Chriſt, unto Impure and Unclean Uſes, and to turn his Sanctuary into a Stew? The Body is not for Fornication, but for the Lord: And your Bodies are the Members of Chriſt; *Will ye then take the Members of Chriſt and make them the Members of an Harlot? God forbid.* And the Apoſtle thinks this Sacrilegiouſneſs of Uncleanneſs ſo high an Aggravation of the Sinfulneſs of it that he inſiſts on it again, 1 *Cor.* 3. 16, 17. *Know you not that ye are the Temples of God, and*

and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any Man defile the Temple of God him ſhall God deſtroy; for the Temple of God is Holy; which Temple are ye.

Sixthly, Conſider, if all theſe Things will not prevail, the dreadful Puniſhment that God threatens to inflict upon all who are guilty of this Sin: Yea, he ſpeaks of it as a Sin that he can hardly be perſwaded to pardon; a Sin that puzzles Infinite Mercy to forgive, *Jer.* 5. 7, 8, 9. *How ſhall I pardon thee for this? When I had fed thy Children to the full they then committed Adultery, and aſſembled themſelves by Troops in the Harlots Houſes They were as fed Horſes in the Morning, every one neighing after his Neighbour's Wife. Shall I not viſit for theſe Things, ſaith the Lord? And ſhall not my Soul be avenged on ſuch a Nation as this?* And indeed God doth often in this Life viſit this Sin, ſometimes by filling their Loins with ſtrange and loathſome Diſeaſes, *Prov.* 6. 26. ſometimes by reducing them to extream Beggery; for this Sin, as *Job* ſpeaks, is *a Fire that conſumeth to Deſtruction, and would root out all his Increaſe:* Yea, this very Sin is ſo great a Puniſhment for itſelf, that the Wiſe Man tells us, *Prov.* 22. 14. That *thoſe whom God hates ſhall fall into it.* Yea, and to expreſs this exceeding Sinfulneſs of this Sin of Uncleanneſs the Apoſtle tells us, That God made it the Puniſhment of ſeveral other Sins, as black and horrid as can be well conceived, *Rom.* 1. 23. When he had ſpoken of the groſs Idolatry of the Heathens in worſhipping Images, and falling down before Stocks and Stones, he ſubjoins, *ver.* 24. That *for this Cauſe God alſo gave them up unto Uncleanneſs*; as if Uncleanneſs were bad enough to puniſh Idolatry, and thoſe were ſufficiently plung'd for their Spiritual Uncleanneſs who were abandoned over unto Corporal Pollutions. But howſoever, although this Sin may ſometimes eſcape Infamy, through Concealment, and other Temporal Judgments of God, through Patience and Forbearance, yet it will certainly find them out at the laſt; and then thoſe who have burnt together in Luſt, ſhall burn together in unquenchable Flames; *They ſhall have their Portion in the Lake that burneth with Fire and Brimſtone.*

Theſe are the Demonſtrations of the Heinouſneſs of this Sin.

Let me now give you ſome cautionary Rules and Directions, by obſerving of which you may be preſerved from it.

Firſt, Be ſure that you keep a narrow watch over your Senſes: For thoſe are the Sluces which inſtead of letting in pleaſant Streams to refreſh, do commonly let in nothing but Mud to pollute the Soul. There is no actual Filthineſs in the Heart of any but came in by theſe Inlets: Through theſe the Devil caſts in abundance of Filth; he ſtirs up indwelling Luſt, and by the ſinful Object which the Senſes convey to the Soul he dungs that Ground, which of itſelf was too fruitful before. Thus the Devil makes uſe of an Adulterous Eye to range abroad, and fetch in Proviſion for Uncleanneſs; and by it, as by a Burning-glaſs, he ſets the Heart on Fire, and then blows up the Flames through the Ears, by hearing Laſcivious Diſcourſes; and therefore make a Covenant with thine Eyes, and carefully divert them from all looſe Glances, and all alluring and enticing Objects. Stop thine Ears againſt all rotten and filthy Communication; and if any begin ſuch obſcene Talk, as is the common Railery of our Days, and almoſt of every Company, bluſh not thou to reprove them, but by thy Reproofs make them bluſh at their own Shame and Wickedneſs.

Secondly, Addict thy ſelf to Sobriety and Temperance; and by theſe beat down thy Body, and keep it in ſubjection to thy Reaſon and Religion: For certainly they who indulge themſelves in Gluttony or Drunkenneſs their Exceſs will froth and foam over into Luſt. And therefore it is ſaid in that forementioned Place, *Jer.* 5. 7. that when the *Iſraelites were fed to the full then they committed Adultery.*

Thirdly, Continually exerciſe thy ſelf in ſome honeſt and lawful Employment. Luſt grows active when we grow idle: And therefore as *Fulneſs of Bread*, ſo likewiſe *Idleneſs*, is reckoned as one of the Sins of impure *Sodom*, Ezek. 16. 49. *David*, when he walked idlely upon the Roof of his Houſe, lyes open to the Snares, and is inveigled by the Beauty, of *Bathſheba.* Had he then been at his Harp, and his Pſalms, he might have driven the Evil Spirit from himſelf, as formerly he did from his Maſter *Saul.* Running Streams preſerve themſelves clear and pure, whereas ſtanding Pools ſoon corrupt, and breed noiſome and venomous Creatures. While our Mind is employed there will be no Time left for Luſt to dally with our Fancy, nor to dandle an unclean Affection in our Thoughts; and therefore it may be remarkable as a conſiderable Circumſtance in *Joſeph*'s rejecting the Enticements of his lewd Miſtreſs that the Text ſaith, *He went into the Houſe to diſpatch his Buſi-*

neſs;

neſs, Gen. 39. 11. Noting to us, that the honeſt Care of our Affairs is an Excellent Preſervative to keep us from this Sin of Wantonneſs and Uncleanneſs. But above all,

Fourthly, Be earneſt and frequent in Prayer; and if thou ſometimes joineſt Faſting with thy Prayers they will be ſhot up to Heaven with a cleaner Strength: For this Sin of Uncleanneſs is one of thoſe Devils that *goes not out but by Faſting and Prayer.* God is a God of Purity; inſtantly beg of him that he would ſend down his pure and chaſte Spirit into thy Heart, to cleanſe thy Thoughts and thy Affections from all unclean Deſires. Beg that the Holy Ghoſt would but once touch thy Heart with the Dear Senſe of his Eternal Love; that he would diffuſe ſuch a Celeſtial Flame through thy Soul as may raviſh it with an Heavenly Zeal and Ardour, and make it ſcorn to ſtoop to the ignoble Love of poor inferiour Objects: Repreſent to him that thy Body is his Temple, and thy Heart his Altar in it; and deſire of him that no ſtrange unhallowed Fire may flame on his Altar.

Whilſt thou diligently and conſcienciouſly mak'ſt uſe of theſe Means thou may'ſt comfortably expect to be kept pure and immaculate, innocent in thy Soul, and clean in thy Body; and as thou haſt kept thy ſelf undefiled here, ſo hereafter thou ſhalt be found worthy to walk with the *Lamb in White.*

The Eighth Commandment.

Thou ſhalt not Steal.

THE foregoing Commandment (as you have heard) requires Chaſtity in our Perſons; this which I have now read unto you requires Honeſty and Uprightneſs in our Dealings. A Vertue immediately Founded upon that firſt Practical Principle of all Humane Converſe which our Saviour lays down, *Mat.* 7. 12. *Whatſoever ye would that Men ſhould do unto you, do ye even ſo to them:* And recommends it to us as the brief Sum and Epitome of all the Scriptures; *For this is the Law and the Prophets.* A Principle that carries ſuch innate Light and clear Evidence in itſelf, that the very Heathens do frequently inculcate it in their Writings as the primary Dictate of that Morality which they taught. This is a Maxim which we all aſſent unto; not by any elaborate Inſtructions, or dint of Arguments, or any long Train of Conſequences; but it ſtrongly maſters our Underſtandings by its Native Evidence, and ſprings up in us an unpremeditated Reſolve of Reaſon. Both God and Nature have ſet up this Standard in our Conſciences: And uſually there needs no other Judge of our Actions towards others, than by comparing them with what in the like Caſes we would think juſt and fit to be done towards our ſelves. It may be we are all Partial to our ſelves in our preſent Concerns: And whilſt we look only that Way, we may poſſibly ſeek all Advantages to promote them, though to another's Detriment. But both Reaſon and Religion teach us to put our ſelves in their ſtead, and then to manage all our Tranſactions with them as we our ſelves would judge juſt and reaſonable were their Condition ours. And therefore when thou dealeſt with another thou ſhouldſt firſt be both Parties to thy ſelf. As for Inſtance, a Servant ſhould ſet down and conſider with himſelf what Reſpect he would require were he in the ſame Circumſtances with his Maſter, and had Servants under him: Children ſhould conſider what Duty and Obedience they would expect were they Parents of Children: Subjects what Honour and Submiſſion they might reaſonably demand were they Magiſtrates; and ſo in any other Relation. And when they have thus ſeriouſly pondered it in their own Thoughts, let them then perform the ſame Duties to others in their real Condition which they judged to belong to them in their perſonated Condition. For it is a never-failing Rule for the Direction of our Practice, that what thou judgeſt due to thy ſelf, were thou in another Man's Condition, is certainly as due to him in his own; and if thou acteſt not accordingly thou betrayeſt a great deal of Selfiſhneſs and ſinful Partiality. This is a Rule applicable to all Affairs; and there is ſcarce any one Occurrenc-

currence of a Man's Life, but he may regulate himſelf in it according to this Direction: And indeed there is ſcarce any need of any other. Whatſoever thou haſt to tranſact with thy Brother, though perhaps thou may'ſt ſpy Advantages upon him, and ſuch, as if thou ſhould'ſt take poſſibly he might never know, or never be able to redreſs, yet then take thy Conſcience aſide, and ſeriouſly ask whether thou could'ſt be content, and think it honeſt and juſt to be ſo dealt with thy ſelf; and if not, whatſoever the Temptation be, or how much ſoever thou mighteſt gain by hearkning unto it, reject it with Scorn, as that which would induce thee to violate the firſt Principle of common Honeſty among Men, and contradicts all the Laws both of Nature and Scripture. Were this Rule but more generally obſerved among Men the World would not have that Cauſe to cry out of Rapine, Extortion, Oppreſſion, Fraud and Injuſtice, that now it hath: The Rich would not grinde the Faces of the Poor, nor the Poor cauſleſly clamour againſt the Rich: Superiors would not tyrannize over their Inferiors, nor Inferiors murmur or rebel againſt their Superiors; but an equal Peace and uniform Juſtice would overſpread the Face of the whole Earth, and *Righteouſneſs would run down our Streets as a mighty Stream.* And therefore let me once again recommend it to you, (for indeed I cannot preſs it too often,) that you would frequently ſet this Golden Rule before your Eyes, to do nothing to any other Perſon, which, were you in his Capacity, you would think unjuſt to be done unto your ſelves, and whatſoever you would expect from others as your Due, were you in their Place, and they in yours, to perform the very ſame to them: For otherwiſe you cannot but condemn your ſelves in your Actions, whilſt you do that which upon this Suppoſition you cannot but be convinced is unjuſt, and withhold that which you know to be due, and which your ſelves would expect ſhould be yielded you by others. This is a Dictate of Nature and right Reaſon; this is the Sum of the Law and the Prophets; and all thoſe various Precepts which are given us in the Scriptures for the Conduct of our Lives are but as ſo many Lines that meet all in this Centre; and if we apply it to each particular Command of the Second Table we ſhall find them all Founded upon this, and to be Interpreted by it. We are required to honour Superiors, to abſtain from Murther, from Adultery, from Theft, from falſe Accuſations, from coveting what rightfully belongs to another; and all this according to the ſame Meaſures that we would have others to perform theſe very Duties to us. So that ſelf, which is now the great Tempter to Wrong and Injure others, were it governed according to this univerſal Maxim, would be the greateſt Patron and Defender of other Mens Rights and Dues.

I have the longer inſiſted on this, both becauſe it is of ſuch general Influence unto the right ordering of our Converſation, and alſo becauſe the moſt viſible and apparent Violation of this Natural Law is by the Sin of Theft forbidden in this Commandment, of which I am now treating.

Now *Theft* in the general is an unjuſt taking or keeping to our ſelves what is lawfully another Man's. He is a Thief who withholds what ought to be in his Neighbour's Poſſeſſion, as well as he who takes from him what he hath formerly poſſeſs'd.

All *Theft* preſuppoſeth a Right and Propriety: For where nothing doth of Right appertain unto me, nothing can be unjuſtly taken or detained from me.

Now here, *Firſt*, Certain it is that God is the great Lord and Proprietor both of Heaven and Earth, and of all Things in them, *Pſal.* 24. 1. *The Earth is the Lord's, and the Fulneſs thereof.* And 50. 10. *Every Beaſt of the Forreſt is mine, and the Cattle upon a Thouſand Hills.* By him, and of him, are all Things; and for his Will and Pleaſure's Sake they are and were Created.

Secondly, This great and abſolute Lord hath granted unto Man a large Charter of the World; and when he had taken an exact Inventory of thoſe Goods with which he had furniſhed this great Houſe, the Univerſe, (*He ſaw every Thing that he had Made, and behold it was very Good*, Gen. 1. 31.) then he ſets Man to live in it as his Tenant, and freely gives him the Uſe of, and Dominion over, all the Works of his Hands. Gen. 1. 28. *Repleniſh the Earth, and Subdue it, and have Dominion over all the Fiſh of the Sea, and over the Fowls of the Air, and over every Thing that moveth upon the Earth.* So the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 115. 16. *The Heavens, even the Heavens, are the Lord's, but the Earth hath he given to the Children of Men.* A large and regal Gift,

whereby

whereby he hath made over all ſublunary Things unto Men, reſerving unto himſelf the Sovereignty and Supream Lordſhip of all, and requiring only from Man the Homage and Payment of Obedience. Yet,

Thirdly, This large Charter and Donation gave no particular Propriety unto any; neither if Man had continued in his happy and innocent Eſtate would there have been any need of *Meum* or *Tuum*, or any Partition of theſe Earthly Poſſeſſions, but the common Bleſſings had been enjoyed in common; and all Things which Covetouſneſs and Corruption now ravine after would have been as promiſcuouſly enjoyed and uſed as the common Light and Air; and each particular Man's Share in thoſe Bleſſings would have been ſufficient and ſatisfactory. But,

Fourthly, Sin entring into the World, their Deſires grew immoderate after theſe Earthly Enjoyments, and their Attempts to attain them injurious unto others; ſo that it became neceſſary to preſcribe Bounds and Limits to them, and to divide among them what before lay in common among all; that each Man knowing his aſſigned Portion, might reſt ſatisfied with it, and be reſtrained from the unjuſt Invaſion and Uſurpation of another's Right. And,

Fifibly, and Laſtly, This could no otherwiſe be effected but by Humane Laws, by mutual Compact and Agreement, declaring what ſhould be accounted as every Man's Right and Propriety: So that it is Law which is the great Determiner of Propriety; and there is nothing *Mine* or *Thine* farther than this aſſigns it unto us: Indeed Equity muſt ſometimes interpoſe to moderate the Letter of the Law; for in ſome Caſes ſhould we rigorouſly proſecute our Right, and inſiſt upon every Punctilio that we may call our Due, this, although it would not be unjuſt, yet it would be Juſtice turned into Gall and Wormwood; it would be a Breach and Violation of the Law of Chriſt, and of Charity, which requires us rather to part with our own in ſmall Matters, than to be vexatious or contentious in recovering or defending it.

Thus you ſee how all Right and Property firſt came into the World: A general Right by the Donation of God, a particular Right by the Sanction of Laws, allotting to each Man his Portion, which to Invade or Uſurp from him is Injuſtice or Theft.

Whence it follows, That where there is no Society in Occupation of any Part of the Earth the Right accrues to the firſt Poſſeſſor; and where Things are found which appertain to none they fall to the firſt Seizer; for there can be no Theft committed where there is no precedent Title. If any therefore ſhould providentially be caſt into ſome Deſart, and Uninhabited Part of the World, that general Charter that God hath given unto Mankind of poſſeſſing the Earth empowers them to ſeize on it as theirs; and they may lawfully make uſe of the Bleſſings of it in common, till by mutual Conſent they ſhall divide to each other their Part and Portion: But after ſuch a Partition made, to uſe the ſame Liberty, is no longer Lawful, but Theft and Robbery.

Thus you ſee what *Theft* is; and that this Law of God, prohibiting us to ſteal what is another's, doth preſuppoſe a Law of Man, which makes Property, and cauſeth Things to become either ours or another's.

Now there are many Kinds of Theft.

Firſt, The higheſt and chiefeſt is that which is committed againſt God by Sacriledge. Now Sacriledge is an alienating from God whatſoever he hath appropriated to himſelf, or is upon good Grounds Dedicated to the Encouragement and Maintenance of his Honour and Service. Indeed, the alienating of what hath been given to Superſtitious or Idolatrous Uſes cannot be juſtly branded with this Black Mark of Sacriledge; for it was not ſo much given unto God as unto Ignorance and Superſtition: And therefore our Anceſtors have done well and piouſly in diſſolving thoſe Neſts and Cages of unclean Birds that were ſo Numerous and Burthenſome in theſe Kingdoms; but withal, in my Judgment, would have done much better if they had converted their Revenues to ſome Publick Uſe, either for the Benefit of the Church, or Commonwealth, rather than to their own private and particular Gain. But where any Thing is indeed Conſecrated unto God, and ſet apart for the Maintenance and Encouragement of his Worſhip and Service, it is no leſs than Sacriledge, and robbing of God, to alienate any Part of this to any Secular Uſes, or to detain it from that Uſe unto which it was ſeparated. And of this God himſelf grievouſly complains, *Mal.* 3. 8, 9. *Will a Man rob God?* As if it were a Sin ſo heinous as that it is hardly to be ſuppoſed any Man would be guilty of it: What! Not to allow that God his Share among

among them, who had liberally afforded them all things to enjoy! *Yet ye have robbed me. But ye ſay, Wherein have we robbed thee? In Tithes and Offerings. Ye are curſed with a Curſe, for ye have robbed me, even this whole Nation.* Certainly thoſe Things which are appointed for the Worſhip and Service of God, whether they be originally by Divine Right or not, yet they cannot be alienated nor detained without involving the Perſons, or the Nation that doth thus, in a moſt direful Curſe: For this is no other than a robbing God of his Right. And how far theſe Nations may be concerned in this Sin, and how deeply ſunk under this Curſe, I leave it to the Conſideration of thoſe who have no other Intereſts to ſway their Judgments but that of Piety and Honeſty.

Secondly, Theft is committed againſt Men by an unjuſt ſeizing or detaining what of Right belongs unto them; and this may be done either by Fraud or Force: And therefore our Saviour in reciting the Commandments mentions them both, *Mark* 10. 19. *Do not ſteal, defraud not.* This is a Sin that God hath threatned with many ſevere Curſes and Puniſhments.

Firſt, The Temporal Puniſhment which the Scripture awards unto it is a Fourfold, and ſometimes a Fivefold, Reſtitution, as you may ſee, *Exod.* 22. 1. And therefore *Zacheus*, when he was converted, offers a Fourfold Reſtitution to thoſe whom he had wronged; *Luke* 19. 8. *If I have taken any Thing from any Man by falſe Accuſation I reſtore him Fourfold.* And yet beſides this Reſtitution it ſeems that ſometimes the Offenders were to be put to Death, eſpecially if the Circumſtances of their Theft added Cruelty and Oppreſſion unto it. This appears in the Parable of *Nathan*, 2 *Sam.* 12. when he had moſt artificially aggravated the Crime of the Rich Man in taking away the Poor Man's Lamb, he ſo raiſed *David*'s Compaſſion and Indignation that he pronounceth this Sentence, *Verſe* 5, 6. *The Man that hath done this Thing ſhall ſurely die: And he ſhall reſtore the Lamb Fourfold, becauſe he did this Thing, and becauſe he had no Pity.* So that you ſee that even under the Law of *Moſes* it was not unlawful in ſome Caſes to puniſh a Thief with Death, although the uſual and preſcribed Puniſhment was Reſtitution. Indeed our Law condemns them to Death; nor is it juſtly to be reprehended, for rooting out ſuch Banes and Peſts from the Commonwealth. For ſince Puniſhments are to be inflicted, not ſo much out of Revenge as Caution; not becauſe ſome have offended, but to deter others from offending, it is but reaſonable that the Penalty ſhould anſwer this End; which we might very well doubt whether among us any lighter than Death would do, ſince we ſee ſo many ſtill perſiſt in this wicked Courſe of Life, notwithſtanding the Severity of the Puniſhment the Law provides for them. *Skin for Skin, and all that a Man hath will he give for his Life.* If therefore the Fear of Death itſelf cannot be forcible enough to deter them, certainly the Fear and Reſtitution would be much leſs effectual; and ſuch a gentle and mitigated Puniſhment would but open a wide Gap to all manner of Robbery and Rapine.

But beſides the Puniſhment which is threatned by the Law, conſider,

Secondly, God leaves a Curſe upon what is gotten by Theft and Deceit; a Curſe that will blaſt and conſume all ſuch wicked Increaſe. They put it into a Bag with Holes, and by ſome unperceivable Providence it ſtrangely waſtes, and ſlips away between their Fingers. But uſually Luxury and Intemperance devours what is got by Theft and Rapine, God by his Righteous Judgment making one Sin the Vengeance of another. But however ſome ſecret withering Curſe ſeizeth upon it; and what is thus wickedly added to our former Poſſeſſions, will rub its Ruſt and Canker upon them all; and if Reſtitution be not duly made, will inſenſibly prey upon them, and conſume them. And therefore ſaith the Wiſe Man, *Prov.* 21. 7. *The Robbery of the Wicked ſhall deſtroy them*; and, *Jer.* 17. 11. *As the Partridge ſitteth on Eggs, and hatcheth them not; ſo he that getteth Riches, and not by Right, ſhall leave them in the midſt of his Days, and at his End ſhall be a Fool.* Many times God raiſeth up ſuch againſt them who ſhall deal with them as they have dealt with others; and when theſe Spunges are full of what they have unjuſtly ſuck'd up, ſhall ſqueeze them, and make them refund their ill-gotten Treaſure. Thus God threatens the *Chaldeans*, Hab. 2. 8. *Becauſe thou haſt ſpoiled many Nations all the Remnant of the People ſhall ſpoil thee.* Such unjuſt Gettings tend only unto Poverty: And in this Senſe it is no Solœciſm to ſay they have but gain'd a Loſs, and treaſured for Themſelves, and their Poſterity, Want and Beggary. And therefore as you deſire to thrive in the World, and to have your Earthly Comforts multiplied, ſo be

ſure that no Gain of Robbery, or Oppreſſion, or Fraud, or Deceit, be found in your Hands, for this will devour even what you have gotten lawfully.

Thirdly, Anxieties and Perplexities of Mind do alway accompany ill-gotten Wealth: For it is a Sin ſo much againſt the very Light of Nature, that Conſcience, if it be not utterly ſtupified and ſenſleſs, will be ſtill moleſting and haunting them with troubleſome Thoughts and Reflections. Beſides, the Fear of Detection, and the Shame and Puniſhment which will follow upon it, muſt needs be a continual Diſturbance unto them: Whereas what is gotten with a good Conſcience, and in an honeſt and lawful Calling, whether it be more or leſs, it brings this Contentment with it, that a Man may quietly ſit down and rejoice in that Portion which the Providence and Bounty of a Gracious God, and Heavenly Father hath here afforded him; he drinks no Widows Tears, nor Orphans Blood; he eats not the Fleſh of the Poor, nor breaks the Bones of the Needy; his Conſcience gnaws not upon him whilſt he is feeding on what his honeſt Labour and Induſtry hath prepared for him; and although it be but a Bit of Bread, and a Cup of Water, that he can procure, yet is he entertained at a continual Feaſt: his Fare may be but mean yet his Chear, his Joy and Comfort, is great; and the coarſeſt Morſel he eats is far more ſavoury to him than all the heightned Delicates of Rich Oppreſſors, whoſe Conſciences mingle Gall and Wormwood with their moſt pleaſant Bits, and gnaws and grindes them as they grinde the Faces of the Poor and Needy. And therefore ſaith the Wiſe Man, *Prov.* 16. 8. *Better is a little with Righteouſneſs, than great Revenues without Right.* And the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 37. 16. *A little that a Righteous Man hath is better than the Riches of many Wicked.*

Fourthly, Robbery and Deceit provokes God to cut Men off by ſome untimely Stroke and immaturate Judgment; and that either by the Hand of Humane Juſtice with Shame and Reproach, or of Divine Juſtice with Wrath and Vengeance: For ſo we find it threatned, *Pſal.* 55. 23. *Thou, O God, ſhalt bring them down into the Pit of Deſtruction: Bloody and Deceitful Men ſhall not live out half their Days.* That is, they ſhall not lengthen out their Days to that Period which the Courſe and Strength of Nature might ſeem to promiſe them, but the Hand of God ſhall cut them off in the Vigour, and midſt of their flouriſhing Years.

But howſoever it may fare with them in this Life, howſoever they may eſcape the Reproach of Men, and the Sword of Juſtice, yet,

Fifthly, They ſhall certainly be eternally Curſed and eternally Miſerable: Their ill-gotten Goods ſhall not be able to redeem their Souls, or bribe the Juſtice of God, or give them the leaſt Solace and Comfort. And what wretched Fools are they who muſt eternally periſh for gaining of Things that periſh too; and bring Everlaſting Torments upon themſelves for that which before brought them Vexations and Diſquietments, 1 *Corinth.* 6. 10. *Nor Thieves, nor Covetous, nor Drunkards, nor Revilers, nor Extortioners, ſhall inherit the Kingdom of God.* Where then ſhall their Portion be but in that Lake which burneth with Fire and Brimſtone unquenchable? Where the Lord will ſpoil their very Souls, as the Wiſe Man's Expreſſion is. *Prov.* 22. 23. *Rob not the Poor, for the Lord will plead their Cauſe, and will Spoil the Souls of thoſe that ſpoil them.* And thus you have ſeen what various Ways God hath threatned that he will puniſh this Sin.

Before I can proceed farther here are Two Queſtions to be anſwered.

The firſt is, Whether in no Caſe it be lawful to Steal? What if the Neceſſity be urgent that I muſt certainly periſh, or elſe relieve my ſelf by this Means?

I ſay we ought not to do it in any Caſe: For Theft is in itſelf a Sin, and there can be no Neceſſity to Sin: For every Man is bound rather to chuſe the greateſt Evil of Sufferings, than to commit the leaſt Evil of Sin. Indeed ſuch Neceſſity doth ſomewhat mitigate the heinouſneſs of the Offence; but that is not at all conſiderable in the Direction of our Practice, ſince it continues a Sin ſtill, and deſerves Eternal Damnation. The Wiſe Man tells us, *Prov.* 6. 30, 31. *Men do not deſpiſe a Thief if he ſteal to ſatisfie his Soul when he is hungry.* But this muſt be underſtood only comparatively, *viz.* That the Reproach and Infamy which attends ſuch an one is not ſo great as that of an Adulterer, as it appears *Verſe* 32. As if he ſhould ſay, to be an Adulterer is a far fouler Reproach than to be a needy Thief. Yet he adds, *If he be found he ſhall reſtore Sevenfold, he ſhall give all the Subſtance of his Houſe:* That is, though his Neceſſity and Hunger may take off ſomewhat from the Shame, yet it ſhall not from the Puniſhment of his Offence, but he ſhall reſtore that which he hath ſtolen Sevenfold. Not that the Reſtitution ſhould be Seven Times as much as the Theft, for the ut-

that the Law requires was but a Fivefold Reſtitution, *Exod.* 22. 1. But as the Word Sevenfold is moſt frequently uſed in Scripture to ſignifie that which is compleat and perfect, ſo is it here, he ſhall reſtore Sevenfold; that is, he ſhall make a full and ſatisfactory Reſtitution. Since therefore the Puniſhment of Theft ſhall not be relaxed upon the Plea of Indigence and Neceſſity, it is apparent that Neceſſity cannot juſtifie any from the Guilt of Theft. And therefore let your Wants be what they will, or can be, you ought not to ſupply them by any ſuch wicked and unlawful Courſes; whatever* *Aquinas* ſays to the contrary. If God hath given thee Strength and Ability, thou oughteſt to Labour, and to uſe thine honeſt Induſtry, to procure Neceſſaries; if not, thou oughteſt to implore the Charity and Benevolence of others, whoſe Hearts God may open to thy Relief. Or if thou ſhouldſt meet with ſuch Cruel *Dives*'s, who will contribute nothing to thy Support, thou oughteſt rather with godly *Lazarus* to die in thine Integrity than to ſteal any thing from them; which although it be their Superfluity yet it is not thy Right without their Donation; and this is in Anſwer to the Firſt Queſtion.

* 22 *de q.* 65 Art. 7.

The Second is, What we ſhall judge of the *Iſraelites* ſpoiling the *Ægyptians* of their Jewels, of which we read, *Exod.* 12. 35, 36.

I anſwer, In this Action there was no Theft committed. For,

Firſt, The Supreme Dominion of all Things is the Lord's, and he may juſtly transfer the Right and Property where he pleaſeth. Now they were commanded by the Lord to take theſe Things of the *Ægyptians*, and therefore they were rightfully their own, being made ſo by him who hath the Soveraign Power of all Things, both in Heaven and Earth.

Altiſiodor. l. 3. Tract. 7. Q. 5.

Ὧν παρὰ πάλαι τὸν χρόνον ὑπερώτησαν τοὺς Αἰγυπτίους μισθὸν ἀναγκαῖον νομιζόμενοι. Clem. Alex. *Strom.* l. 1.

Secondly, Theſe Things which they thus took might be well conſidered in lieu of their Wages, which was not given them for their long Service in *Ægypt*; and therefore it was but Righteous in God to conſign over theſe Riches of the *Ægyptians* to the *Iſraelites* as a Reward for their tedious Servitude. Now thoſe who by the Command of the Supreme Lord of all take that which is but a due Reward for their Labour cannot certainly be condemned as guilty of Theft. And this (it ſeems) was* their Plea, when in the Time of *Alexander* the Great, ſo many Ages after the Thing was done, the *Ægyptians* ſued the *Jews* by a juridical Proceſs, to recover what was taken from them. But,

* Jun. Gerſon. *in* Talmud. German.

Repoſcunt Ægyptii *de* Hebræis *vaſa Aurea & Argentea. Contra* Hebræi *mutuas Petitiones inſtituant allegantes ſibi quoque eorundem Patrum Nomine, ex eodem Scripturæ Inſtrumento Mercedes, reſtitui oportere illius operariæ Servitutis, pro laterinis deductis, pro Civitatibus, & villis ædificatis.* Tertull. *contra* Marcion l. 2.

Thirdly, I anſwer, This Example is extraordinary and ſpecial, and not to be pleaded or introduced into Practice. For certainly it is that they had a moſt expreſs Command from God to ſpoil the *Ægyptians*: But whoſoever ſhall pretend any ſuch Warrant now, by Revelation, or the Impulſe of his private Spirit, may well be cenſured for Enthuſiaſm, and condemned for Robbery.

And thus I have done with the firſt and greateſt kind of Theft, taking away what rightfully belongs to another, whether God or Man.

Secondly, Another kind of Theft is Oppreſſion, and unreaſonable Exaction; and this eſpecially is the Sin of Superiors towards their Inferiors, taking Advantage either upon their Weakneſs, or their Neceſſity, to impoſe moſt unequal Conditions upon them, and ſuch as they cannot bear without their Detriment, or Ruin, contrary to that Law which God gave unto his People, *Levit.* 25. 14. *If thou ſell ought unto thy Neighbour, or buyeſt ought at thy Neighbour's Hands, ye ſhall not oppreſs one another.* Thus thoſe who ſet their Lands to the Sweat and Toil of others at too hard a Rate, ſo that the Laborious Tenant cannot ſubſiſt by his Induſtry; thoſe that let out Money at a biting Intereſt, or rigidly exact it from inſufficient Perſons; great Ones who fright the meaner into diſadvanta geous Bargains, and force them through Fear to part with what they enjoy at an under Price; theſe, and other like, though they may not be condemned by Humane Laws, which give too much permiſſion to Men to make the utmoſt Advantage of their own, yet they are guilty by the Law of God; and their Sin is no leſs than Oppreſſion; which is a Sin hateful both to God and Man. The Prophet *Micah*, Chap. 3. 2, 3. calls it a *plucking off their Skin from them, and their Fleſh from off their Bones*, and *chopping them in pieces, as for the Pot*, and *as Fleſh for the Caudron*. All Unmercifulneſs, and hard Dealings with others, is a kind of Theft; for the Law

of Nature, and much more the Law of Charity, binds thee ſo to deal with others that they may have no Cauſe to complain of thee to God, and in the Bitterneſs of their Spirits to imprecate his Wrath and Vengeance upon thee.

Thirdly, Another kind of Theft is detaining from another what is his Due either by Equity or Compact: And how many are there whoſe profuſe Riot and Luxury are maintained upon the intruſted Goods of others, whilſt the Poor Creditor in the mean time hath no other Satisfaction but good Words, and ſcarce any Thing to live upon but his own Tears and Sighs. And how many withhold the Hire of the Labourer, who when he hath wearied out himſelf in their Service, is denied that ſmall Reward which he requires for his neceſſary Refreſhment? Yea, not only denying it, but even deferring it beyond the time that they can conveniently be without it, is a kind of Theft and Oppreſſion, *Deut.* 24. 14. *Thou ſhalt not oppreſs an hired Servant that is Poor and Needy; at his Day thou ſhalt give him his Hire, neither ſhall the Sun go down upon it: for he is Poor, and ſetteth his Heart upon it; leſt he cry againſt thee unto the Lord, and it be Sin unto thee.* Yea, in all our Bargains and Agreements, though they be never ſo much to thine own Prejudice, thou art bound to ſtand to them, unleſs the other will voluntarily releaſe thee from the Obligation. For this is One of the Characters given of a Godly Perſon, *Pſal.* 15. 4. *He that ſweareth, and covenanteth to his own hurt, and changeth not*, but upon Demand is ready and willing to fulfil his Agreement: How much more heinous and abominable is it, when they have already received the full Value of their Compact, unjuſtly to withhold what they have agreed to give; which is no better than to take their Labour or their Goods from them by Violence and Robbery; yea, and in one Reſpect worſe, in as much as it adds Falſhood to Stealth.

Fourthly, Another kind of Theft is in Buying and Selling, and this is a very large and voluminous Deceit: For the Subtilty of Men hath found out ſo many Artifices to defraud and over-reach one another, that to recount them is almoſt as hard as to eſcape them. Here come in the falſe Weights, and the falſe Meaſures, which are *an Abomination to the Lord*, Prov. 11. 1. Falſe and Counterfeited Wares, overcommending or undervaluing of Goods for Advantage, and many other unjuſt Contrivances, which Mens Conſciences can better ſuggeſt to them than any Diſcourſe. The Apoſtle hath ſufficiently cautioned and threatned ſuch Men, 1 *Theſſ.* 4. 6. *Let no Man go beyond or defraud his Brother in any Matter, becauſe that the Lord is the Avenger of ſuch.* Believe it, there is a Day coming when the falſe Weights ſhall be themſelves weighed, and the ſcanty Meaſures meaſured by a Standard that is infallibly true. Poſſibly thou may'ſt deal ſo cunningly that thoſe whom thou over-reacheſt can have no Advantage againſt thee, nor right themſelves by Law: But remember that the great Judge will avenge them upon thee at the Laſt Day. Then all Accounts ſhall be ballanced, and ſo much found reſting due, which thou ſhalt certainly; though not to thoſe whom thou haſt wronged, yet to the Juſtice of God, who is the Great and Univerſal Creditor.

There are likewiſe many other Kinds of Theft, as Prodigality in waſting what ſhould ſatisfie the juſt Demands of others, taking of Wages and Reward for what we do not endeavour conſcienciouſly to perform, ſelling that which we have no right to diſpoſe of, or Things which ought not to be ſold, taking Bribes for Juſtice, or Rewards for Injuſtice. But I ſhall not particularly inſiſt upon theſe, and many others that might be mentioned.

And thus we have ſeen what the Negative Part of this Precept is.

But becauſe every Negative implies in it a Poſitive, let us ſee what is the Duty required from us; and that is Twofold.

Firſt, That every one of us ſhould have ſome Calling.

Secondly, That all of us ſhould be contented in that Eſtate and Condition of Life wherein the Divine Providence hath ſet us.

Firſt, *Thou ſhalt not ſteal:* Therefore every Man ought to have a Calling whereon he may comfortably ſubſiſt, and by his Labour and Induſtry may provide at leaſt Neceſſaries for himſelf and Family: *For he that provideth not for his Family hath denied the Faith*, (ſaith the Apoſtle,) *and is worſe than an Infidel:* Some there are who live without any Calling at all; ſuch are like idle Drones, that conſume the Labours of others, lazy Vagabonds, to whom the greateſt Charity would be Correction; who only ſerve to devour miſplaced Arms, and defraud the truly Poor of their Relief: Yea, if I ſhould rank with theſe a Company of ſuperfluous, debauch'd, Gentlemen,

Gentlemen, I think I ſhould do them no great Injury; ſuch I mean who are neither ſerviceable to God, nor their Country, who have nothing of true Worth and Gentility in them, but are a Company of leud and deſperate Royſters, the moſt unprofitable Members in the Commonwealth, and good for nothing but to kill and deſtroy one another in their drunken Quarrels. I know there is no neceſſity for Manual Employment and Labour to thoſe whom God hath liberally endowed with his Earthly Bleſſings; but yet they may have a Calling, and within their own Sphere may find Employment enough to take up their Time and Thoughts; and ſuch as may make them the moſt Beneficial Men on Earth, and truly honoured and loved by others: For by their Authority, their Example, the Ampleneſs of their Demeſnes and Revenues, and the Dependence that others have upon them, they may be as influential to promote Goodneſs and Vertue, as too commonly they are to promote Vice and Villany; and to ſuch truly generous Spirits, who intend to be ſo employed, let me commend the careful Peruſal of an Excellent Treatiſe directed unto them, Entituled, *The Gentleman's Calling.* But yet withal, if they ſhould condeſcend to ſome ſtated Vocation, and Courſe of Life, it would be no Diſparagement to their Gentility; for certainly *Adam* was as much a Gentleman, and had as large Demeſnes, as any of them, and yet God thought fit to place him in *Eden*, that he might dreſs and keep the Garden.

But as ſome have no Employment; ſo,

Secondly, Others have an unlawful Employment: Such whoſe only Work it is to inſtruct Vice, and excite Men to it. And how many ſuch are there who live by the provoking and encouraging the Wickedneſs of others; and continually make uſe of all the Allurements that might entice unto Evil, and recommend Debauchery firſt to the Fancy, and then to the Will and Affections.

Thirdly, Others have indeed an honeſt and a lawful Calling, but they are negligent and ſlothful in it. Now Sloth tendeth to Poverty, *Prov.* 6. 10, 21. *Yet a little Sleep, a little Slumber, a little folding of the Hands to Sleep, ſo ſhall thy Poverty come as one that travelleth*; drawing nearer and nearer to thee by ſoft and ſilent Degrees; *and thy want as an armed Man*; who, though his Pace be ſlow, by reaſon of the weight of his Armour, yet his Aſſaults are more irreſiſtible and deſtructive. And Poverty tempts to Theft, *Prov.* 30. 9. *Leſt I am Poor, and Steal.* And therefore this Command which forbids Theft, muſt by conſequence enjoin Labour and Induſtry in thoſe Lawful Callings wherein the Divine Providence hath ſet us; according to that of the Apoſtle, *Eph.* 4. 28. *Let him that ſtole ſteal no more; but rather let him labour, working with his Hands the Thing that is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth*; and ſo by his Induſtry of a Thief become a Benefactor and Almſgiver.

Secondly, It requires us to be contented with that Portion of earthly Comforts which our Heavenly Father allots unto us. *Heb.* 13. 5. *Be content with thoſe Things ye have.* And certainly he that is not content with what God allows him, lyes under a grievous Temptation, by fraudulent and unjuſt Courſes to carve out his own Condition to himſelf, and to invade the Rights and Properties of others: * Let us therefore check this repining Temper betimes, and not think that we have too little, and others too much; but whatſoever God affordeth us let us account it ſufficient Proviſion, and a Child's Portion; and although it be but Food and Raiment, neither the moſt delicate, nor the moſt ſumptuous, yet *having Food and Raiment, let us therewith be contented*, as the Apoſtle exhorts us, 1 *Tim.* 6. 8. Let us look upon all other Things as ſuperfluous, or indifferent, and not murmur, although we ſhould never obtain them: For whatſoever is needful to thy Subſiſtence, God's Providence and Bleſſing upon thy Induſtry will furniſh thee with it; and what is not needful to thee is not worth thy Envy and Repining.

And ſo much for the Expoſition of this Commandment.

I ſhall only ſubjoin a Word or Two unto thoſe who are Conſcious to themſelves that they have wronged others of what was their Due, and either withheld, or taken from them, what by Law and Equity belonged to them: Let ſuch know that they are bound to make them a perfect and plenary Satisfaction, by making an entire and plenary Reſtitution, if the Thing they have ſtolen or purloined be ſtill extant, and in their hand; or if not, then by making a full and ſatisfactory Compenſation. Yea, be the Thing great or ſmall, more or leſs, though it ſhould ſeemingly tend to the loſs of thy Credit, by acknowledging ſuch a Wrong, or viſibly

* Diſcontent and Covetouſneſs are the Root of all Injuſtice. He that thinks himſelf wronged that he hath not as much as ſome others, will be apt either thro' Fraud or Violence to increaſe his own by wronging of others.

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tend to thy impoveriſhing or undoing to reſtore it, yet notwithſtanding thou art bound to reſtore every Farthing of what thou haſt wronged and defrauded thy Brother. Nor is it enough to confeſs the Sin before God, and to beg Pardon at his Hands, but thou muſt likewiſe render unto Man what is his Due, and what thou unjuſtly keepeſt from him; whether it be his by thy Promiſe, or by his own former Poſſeſſion, as ever thou hopeſt to obtain Pardon for thy Sin from the Mercy of God; yea, and thou art bound likewiſe to the very utmoſt of thy Power to make him Recompence for all the Damage which he hath in the mean time ſuſtained by thy unjuſt withholding his Right and Due from him, or elſe thou ſhalt never obtain Pardon and Remiſſion for thy Guilt. And the Reaſon is, becauſe as long as you detain what is another's, ſo long you continue in the Commiſſion of the ſame Sin; for unjuſt Poſſeſſion is a continued and prolonged Theft: And certainly Repentance can never be true nor ſincere while we continue in the Sin of which we ſeem to repent; and thy Repentance not being true, Pardon ſhall never be granted thee.

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And thus much for this Eighth Commandment.

The Ninth Commandment.

Thou ſhalt not bear falſe Witneſs againſt thy Neighbour.

THE former Commandment provided for the Security of every Man's Property, that they may ſuffer no Wrong nor Detriment in their Goods; this which I have now read unto you provides for the Preſervation of their good Name, which is a much dearer Poſſeſſion: For *A good Name*, ſaith the Wiſe Man, *Prov.* 22. 1. is *rather to be choſen than great Riches*. And therefore it ought to be kept by us, although not delicately and nicely, yet tenderly, and with reſpect. Whoſo contemns Fame will ſoon proſtitute Vertue; and thoſe who care not what others ſay will ſhortly arrive to that Impudence of ſinning as not to care what they themſelves do. Indeed, a good Name is ſo excellent a Bleſſing, that there is but One Thing to be preferred before it, and that is a good Conſcience; when theſe Two ſtand in Competition Credit muſt give place to Duty; and in this Caſe it is far better to loſe our Repute with Men, than our Acceptance and Reward with God. It oftentimes ſo happens through the Ignorance and general Corruption of Mankind that what is Honeſt, and Pure, and Juſt, are not yet of good Report amongſt them. Piety is but Affectation, Strictneſs of Life a peeviſh Hypocriſie, the Croſs a Scandal, Chriſt himſelf a Wine-bibber, a Friend of Publicans and Sinners, his Doctrine Hereſie, and his Miracles Impoſtures: And if thou lighteſt upon any ſuch froward and perverſe Cenſures, as too many ſuch there are in all Ages, who *think it ſtrange*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *that ye run not with them into the ſame exceſs of Riot*; *ſpeak-*

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How ſhould I be able to look good Men in the Face again! Would not this Sin brand me for an Hypocrite in their Eſteem? Would they ever look upon me, or receive me with Affection, after this Fall? Should I not carry the Diſgrace, and Scar of this Wound, viſibly upon me to my Grave? No, one Sin ſhall never ruin all the Comfort, and all the Repute, of ſo many Years Piety: And I who have been ſo long noted and exemplary for Holineſs, will not by this one Fact make my ſelf a Scorn to the Wicked, and a Shame to the Godly; and by thoſe Conſiderations he rejects a Temptation that perhaps ran down all other Conſiderations before it. But now a Man of a loſt and deſperate Credit ſins impudently, without any ſuch Reſtraint upon him: He thinks it is but in vain for him to abſtain from any Wickedneſs; for whether he doth or not People will ſtill believe him guilty: His Credit is ſo diſfigured, and his Name ſo infamous, that he thinks he cannot be worſe than he is already reported; and ſo rubs his Forehead, and outfaceth Cenſure, and with a brazen Impudence cares not how wicked he is, nor how many knew him to be ſo.

Thus you have ſeen how cautious we ought to be in maintaining our own good Name.

But this Command requires us alſo to preſerve the Repute and good Name of others as well as our own. And it forbids,

Firſt, The Sin of Lying.

Secondly, Detraction and Slander.

Thirdly, Baſe Soothing, and unworthy Flattery.

Firſt, This Command prohibits Lying; a Sin that comprehends under it all other Violations of this Precept: For Slander and Flattery are both of them Lies, different only in Manner and Circumſtance.

And as it is a Sin large and comprehenſive in its Nature, ſo it is general and univerſal in its Practice: We may well complain with the Holy Prophet, *That Truth is periſhed from the Earth.*

Here I ſhall firſt ſhew you what a Lie is: And then the Heinouſneſs and Aggravation of this common Sin.

* *Voluntaria Falſi Enunciatio, fallendi Cauſa, Aug. de mendac. ad Conſentium, c. 4.*

Firſt, A Lie, according to St. * *Auſtin*'s Definition of it, is a voluntary ſpeaking of an Untruth, with an intent to deceive. And therefore in a Lie there muſt be theſe Three Ingredients.

Firſt, There muſt be the ſpeaking of an Untruth.

Secondly, It muſt be known to us to be an Untruth, and a Falſhood. And,

Thirdly, It muſt be with a Will and Intent to deceive him to whom we ſpeak it, and to lead him into Error. And therefore,

Firſt, Parables, and Figurative Speeches, are no Lies: For neither as to the Drift and Scope of them are they Falſhoods; nor yet are they ſpoken with an Intent to deceive, but rather to inſtruct, the Hearers, and ſo have neither the Matter nor the Form of a Lie. The Scripture abounds with theſe Tropical Expreſſions, which although in the proper ſignification of the Words they cannot be verified of the Things to which they are applied, yet do very fully agree to them in their figurative and transferred Senſe: Thus *Jotham*'s Parable of *Trees chuſing them a King* was aptly accommodated to that Senſe which he meant, and which thoſe that heard him well enough underſtood. And thus our Saviour Chriſt calls him a *Door*; ſignifying by that Metaphor that by him alone we muſt enter into Heaven and Eternal Life: A *Vine*, ſignifying, that without our Inciſion into him, and Spiritual Union unto him, whereby we derive Grace from his Plenitude, and Fulneſs of Grace, as the Branches do Sap and Juice from the Stock, we ſhall be caſt out as withered and fruitleſs Branches, fit for nothing but to be burned. Innumerable other *Metaphors* are everywhere diſperſed up and down in the Scriptures. And beſides *Metaphors*, the Scripture uſeth *Hyperbolies*. I ſhall only inſtance in that Famous one, *John* 21. *ult. Many other Things Jeſus did, which if they ſhould be written every one, I ſuppoſe that even the World itſelf cou'd not contain the Books that ſhould be written.* This high Expreſſion the Evangeliſt uſeth only to exaggerate the Number of the Miracles and remarkable Paſſages of our Saviour's Life; and to ſignifie to us that he did very many other Things which are not upon Record.

And ſometimes the Scripture uſeth Ironical Taunts. Thus in that Bitter Sarcaſm of *Elijah* to the Prieſt of *Baal*. 1 King 18. 27. *He mocked them, and ſaid, Cry aloud, for he is a God.* Which Kinds of Ironical Speeches are ſo far from being intended to create

create Errour in the Minds of Men, or to confirm them in it, that they are ſpoken on purpoſe to convince them of their Errours, and to make them appear to be ſhameful and ridiculous, and therefore are no Lies.

But here we muſt take this Caution, that in uſing ſuch Figurative Speeches we ought ſo to circumſtantiate them, that the Hearers may eaſily perceive the Drift and Scope of our Diſcourſes; or at leaſt may be aſſured that we intend ſome other Meaning by them than what the Words do properly and in themſelves bear; otherwiſe, though it may not be a Lie in us, yet it may be an Occaſion of Errour and Miſtake in them.

Secondly, Every Falſhood is not a Lie; for though it hath the Matter, yet it may want the Form and Complement, to make it ſuch: For many times Men do ſpeak and report that which is not true, which yet they themſelves do believe to be true, and ſo are rather deceived than Deceivers; and perhaps are far from any Intention of impoſing upon the Credulity of others *. Such an one is not ſo much to be accuſed of Lying as Folly and Raſhneſs, in reporting that for Truth, the Certainty of which is not clear and evident unto him.

* *Vir bonus præſtare debet ne mentiatur, prudens ne mendacium dicat.* P. Nigid. *apud* A. Gell. noct. Att. 3. *l.* 11. *c.* 11.

Thirdly, A Man may ſpeak that which is true, and yet be a Liar in ſo doing: As in theſe Two Caſes.

1. When we report that to be a Truth, which, although it be ſo, yet we believe it to be a Falſhood, and report it with an Intent to deceive thoſe that hear us. Or,

2. When we report the Figurative Words of another, leaving out thoſe Circumſtances which might make them appear to be Figurative. And therefore, *Matth.* 26. 60. they are called *falſe Witneſſes*, which came in againſt Chriſt, and teſtified that he ſaid he was *able to deſtroy the Temple of God, and to build it in Three Days.* In which, though there were many Falſifications of the Words of our Saviour, yet had they reported the very Words that he ſpake they had nevertheleſs been falſe Witneſſes, becauſe by their Teſtimony they wreſted them to another Senſe than what Chriſt intended by them; for certainly he is a Liar who reports my Words with a Purpoſe to beget a wrong Conſtruction of them, as much as he who reports me to have ſpoken what I never ſaid.

Fourthly, It is no Lie to conceal part of the Truth when it is not expedient or neceſſary to be known. Thus, 1 *Sam.* 16. 2. God himſelf inſtructs *Samuel* when he ſent him to *anoint* David *King over* Iſrael, that he ſhould anſwer, *He came to Sacrifice unto the Lord*; which was Truth, and one End of his going into *Bethlehem*, tho' he had alſo another, which he prudently concealed.

Fifthly, A Man may act contrary to what he before ſaid, if the Circumſtances of the Thing be altered, without being guilty of Lying. We have frequent Examples of this in the Scripture. Thus, *Gen.* 19. 2. the *Angels* tell *Lot*, *That they would not come into his Houſe, but would abide in the Street all Night*; yet upon his Importunity and earneſt Intreaties *they went in with him.* And thus St. *Peter*, with ſome Heat and Vehemency of his Humility, refuſed that Chriſt ſhould waſh his Feet, *John* 13. 3. *Thou ſhalt never waſh my Feet:* But when he was inſtructed in the Significancy of this Condeſcention of our Saviour, not only permits, but intreats, him to do it. So likewiſe in all Things of ſuch a Nature we may lawfully change our Words upon the change of our Minds; and upon the Inducement of ſome Circumſtances that were not known or conſidered by us, we may, without the Imputation of Lying, do otherwiſe than we before reſolved and declared: But this muſt be heedfully cautioned.

Firſt, That the Actions be not ſuch as we are bound to perform by Divine Precept. Nor,

Secondly, Such as we have bound our ſelves unto by the voluntary Obligation of a Vow made unto God. Nor,

Thirdly, Such as our not doing them, or doing otherwiſe than we have promiſed, ſhould be hurtful or prejudicial unto others: For if I have promiſed another that which is Beneficial unto him, however I may change my Opinion, yet I muſt not change my Purpoſe; but unleſs he will releaſe me, or hath forfeited the Benefit of my Promiſe, by failing in the Conditions of it, I ſtand engaged to perform what I have plighted unto him.

And thus you ſee what a Lie is, and what is not a Lie: The Sum of all I ſhall contract into this Deſcription of it. A Lie is a Falſhood, either real, or ſuppoſed ſo by us, ſpoken purpoſely, and with an Intention to deceive another. And therefore neither Falſhoods, nor thought to be ſo, nor Figurative Speeches,

not Truth partly concealed, nor the Change of our Mind and Purpoſes, upon the Changing and Alteration of Circumſtances, can be chargeable with that foul and ſcandalous Sin of Lying.

Now Lies are uſually diſtinguiſhed into Three Kinds:

The Jocular,
Officious, and
Pernicious, Lie.

Firſt, There is a Jocular Lie; a Lie framed to excite Mirth and Laughter, and deceive the Hearer, only to pleaſe and divert him. This, though it may ſeem very harmleſs to deceive Men into Mirth and Recreation, yet Truth is ſuch an awful and ſevere Thing, that it ought not to be contradicted; no, not in Jeſt: And God reckons it up as a Sin againſt the *Iſraelites*, *Hoſea* 7. 3. that they *made the King and Princes glad*, or merry, *with their Lies*.

Secondly, There is an Officious Lie, which is told for another's Benefit and Advantage; and ſeems to make an abundant Compenſation for its Falſhood by its Uſe and Profit: But yet neither can this excuſe it from being a Sin; for ſince a Lie is intrinſically evil in itſelf, let the Advantage that accrues by it be never ſo great, we ought not to ſhelter either our ſelves or others under that rotten Refuge. That ſtated Maxim holds univerſally true in all Caſes, *We ought not to do Evil that Good may come thereof*. And therefore, although thine own Life, or thy Neighbour's, depends upon it; yea, put the Caſe it were not only to ſave his Life, but to ſave his Soul, couldſt thou by this Means moſt eminently advance the Glory of God, or the general Good and Welfare of the Church, yet thou oughteſt not to tell the leaſt Lie to promote theſe great and bleſſed Ends. This the Apoſtle takes for granted, *Rom.* 3. 7. Which Place, becauſe it may ſeem at firſt glance ſomewhat obſcure, I ſhall briefly expound unto you. *If the Truth of God hath more abounded through my Lie unto his Glory, why yet am I alſo judged as a Sinner?* The Words, as they lye, ſeem to be favourable to ſuch a Beneficial Lie; but if we conſider the Scope and Drift of them we ſhall ſee that they clearly condemn it. For the Apoſtle had in the foregoing Verſes taught that the Unrighteouſneſs and Sins of Men did occaſionally conduce to the Manifeſtation of the Juſtice and Veracity of God, in fulfilling his Threatnings upon them; and againſt this Poſition he raiſeth an Objection; *Verſe* 5. If the Unrighteouſneſs of Men commend and illuſtrate the Righteouſneſs of God, how then can God be juſt in taking Vengeance on thoſe Sins by which he is glorified? To this the Apoſtle anſwers Two Ways.

Firſt, He abhors the Conſequence, *Verſe 6. God forbid* that we ſhould think him unjuſt, becauſe he puniſheth thoſe Sins which accidentally ſerve for the Manifeſtation of his Glory. For if God were unjuſt how then ſhould he judge the World?

Secondly, He anſwers by putting a like Caſe, and giving a like Inſtance, *Ver.* 7. *the Truth of God hath more abounded through my Lie, why yet am I judged as a Sinner?* As if he ſhould ſay, by the like Reaſon as you infer that it would be Unrighteous in God to puniſh thoſe who are the Occaſion of ſo much Glory to him through their Sins, by the like I might infer, that if by my Lie I might glorifie God I were not to be accounted a Sinner for Lying. But this, ſaith he, *Ver.* 8. is a moſt wicked Conſequence, and ſuch as would juſtifie the Slanders of thoſe who report that we affirm it lawful *to do Evil that Good may come, whoſe Damnation is juſt*: That is, it is juſt with God to damn thoſe who ſlander us with ſuch a groſs Untruth; and it is juſt with God to damn thoſe who hold ſo wicked and deſtructive a Doctrine. So that you ſee nothing could be more expreſly ſpoken againſt theſe Officious Lies than what the Apoſtle here produceth in this Place. He aſſerts in the general that we muſt not do Evil that Good may come thereof; and he inſtanceth in particular, that we muſt not Lie, although the Glory of God may be promoted by it.

Thirdly, There is a malicious and pernicious Lie, a Lie deviſed on purpoſe for the Hurt and Damage of my Neighbour, which is the worſt and the moſt heinous Sort of all, and hath nothing that might excuſe or extenuate it. It ſhews an Heart brimful of the Bitterneſs of Malice, when this Paſſion works out at the Mouth in ſlanderous Reports, and falſe Accuſations. All Lies are in themſelves ſinful, but this the vilest and moſt abominable of all.

Now for the Aggravations of this Sin, conſider,

Firſt,

First, It is a Sin that makes you moſt like unto the Devil. The Devil is a Spirit, and therefore groſs carnal Sins cannot correſpond unto his Nature: His Sins are more refin'd and intellectual, ſuch as are Pride and Malice, Deceit and Falſhood. *John* 8. 44. *He is a Liar, and the Father of it.* And the more of Malice goes into the Compoſition of any Lie, the more nearly it reſembles him. This is the First-born of the Devil, the Beginning of his Strength, for by Lies he prevailed over wretched Man; and therefore is his darling and beloved Sin, and the greateſt Inſtrument of promoting his Kingdom. 'Tis that which in his own Mouth ruin'd all Mankind in the Groſs, when he falſly ſuggeſted to our First Parents that they ſhould be as Gods, and that which he ſtill puts into the Hearts and Mouths of others, to ruin and deſtroy their Souls, and the Souls of others, *Acts* 5. 3. *Why hath Satan filled thine Heart to lie unto the Holy Ghoſt? When he ſpeaketh a Lie he ſpeaketh of his own*, ſaith our Saviour: And certainly when we ſpeak a Lie we repeat only what he prompts and dictates to us. Thou never lieſt, but thou ſpeakeſt aloud what the Devil whiſpered ſoftly to thee. The Old Serpent lyes folded round in thy Heart, and we may hear him hiſſing in thy Voice: And therefore when God ſummoned all his Heavenly Attendance about him, and demanded who would perſwade *Ahab* to go up, and fall at *Ramoth-Gilead*, an Evil Spirit, that had crowded in among them, ſteps forth, and undertakes the Office, as his moſt natural Employment, and that wherein he moſt of all delighted, 1 *Kings* 22. 22. *I will go forth, and be a Lying Spirit in the Mouth of all his Prophets.* Every Lie thou telleſt conſider that the Devil ſits upon thy Tongue, breathes Falſhood into thine Heart, and forms the Words and Accents into Deceit.

Secondly, Conſider that it is a Sin moſt contrary to the Nature of God, who is Truth itſelf; a Sin that he hates and abominates. *Prov.* 6. 17. *Theſe Six Things doth the Lord hate; yea, Seven are an Abomination unto him; a proud Look, a lying Tongue*, &c. And *Prov.* 12. 32. *Lying Lips are an Abomination unto the Lord*; and therefore we have ſo many expreſs Commands given us againſt this Sin. *Lev.* 19. 11. *Ye ſhall not deal falſly, nor lie one to another.* Col. 3. 9. *Lie not one to another.* Eph. 4. 25. *Wherefore putting away Lying, ſpeak every Man Truth to his Neighbour.*

Thirdly, Conſider that it is a Sin that gives in a fearful Evidence againſt us that we belong to the Devil, and are his Children, for he is the Father of Lies, and of Liars: God's Children will imitate their Heavenly Father in his Truth and Veracity. And it is a very obſervable Place, *Iſa.* 63. 8. *Surely*, ſaith God, *they are my People, Children that will not Lie; ſo he was their Saviour.*

Fourthly, Conſider how dreadfully God hath threatned it with Eternal Death; ſcarce any one Sin more expreſly and particularly, *Rev.* 21. *ult. Without, even in outer Darkneſs, are Dogs, and Murtherers, and Idolaters, and whatſoever loveth, or maketh, a Lie.*

Fourthly, A Lie ſheweth a moſt degenerous and cowardly Fear of Men, and a moſt daring Contempt of the Great God. Whoſoever Lies doth it out of a baſe and ſordid Fear, leſt ſome Evil and Inconveniency ſhould come unto him by declaring the Truth. And this *Montaigne* in his *Eſſays* gives as the Reaſon why the Imputation of Lying is the moſt reproachful Ignominy that one Man can lay upon another, and that which moſt paſſionately moves them to Revenge; becauſe, ſaith he, *to ſay a Man lieth, is to ſay that he is Audacious towards God, and a Coward towards Men.* Lib. 2. c. 18.

Sixthly, Mankind generally accounts it the moſt infamous and reproachful Sin of all others: A Liar loſeth all Credit and Reputation among Men; and he who hath made himſelf ſcandalous by Lying, is not believed when he ſpeaks Truth. Yea, it is ſo odious and foul a Sin, that we find it generally eſteemed worſe than any other Sin; and the avoiding of this thought a good Excuſe for the Commiſſion of others: For when Men are moved with ſome violent Paſſion they oftentimes reſolve to do ſuch Things, which, when their Paſſion is allayed, they muſt look upon as grievous Sins; yet rather than be falſe to their Word, and ſo cenſured for Lying, they will venture to perpetrate. Thus *Herod*, for his Oath's ſake, Beheaded *John the Baptiſt*. And the common Excuſe for raſh and unwarrantable Actions is, *I ſaid I would do thus or thus, and therefore I thought my ſelf bound in Honour to do it.*

Seventhly, It is a Sin that God will detect, and expoſeth thoſe who are guilty of it to Shame and Contempt. *Prov.* 12. 19. *Lying Lips are but for a Moment.* And when they are found out, as uſually they are, by their own Forgetfulneſs, and the interfering of their own Speeches, how ſhameful will their Sin be to them? And the only Reward they ſhall have for it is, that thoſe who have accuſtomed themſelves to Lying ſhall not be believed when they ſpeak Truth.

Thus much concerning that heinous and odious Sin of Lying.

There remains Two other Violations of this Commandment; the one is by Slander and Detraction, the other by Baſe Flattery and Soothing; and both theſe may reſpect either our ſelves or others. I ſhall firſt ſpeak of that common Sin of Slander and Detraction, a Sin that is reigning and triumphant in this our Age, and if I ſhould likewiſe ſay in this Place, I think I ſhould not my ſelf be guilty of it by that Cenſure. Indeed Slander and Detraction ſeem ſomewhat to differ: For Slander properly is a falſe Imputation of Vice; but Detraction is a cauſleſs, diminiſhing, Report of Virtue. The one traduceth us to be what indeed we are not, the other leſſens what we really are; and both are highly injurious to our good Name and Reputation, the beſt and deareſt of all our Earthly Poſſeſſions.

When a Man's Life and Actions are ſo blameleſs and exemplary, that even Malice itſelf is aſham'd to vend its Venom by Baſe Slanders, leſt it ſhould appear to be Malice, and the Reproach ſhould light rather upon the Reporters, than him whom they ſeek to defame, then it betakes itſelf to thoſe little ſly Arts of nibbling at the Edges of a Man's Credit, and clipping away the Borders of his good Name, that it may not paſs ſo current in the World as before. Thus when any are ſo juſt as to give others their due Commendation, either for Learning, or Wiſdom, or Piety, or any other Perfection, either of Grace, or of Nature, you ſhall have thoſe who lye in wait to cut off other Mens Eſteem, if they ſee it ſo ſtrongly fortified by the Conſpicuouſneſs of it, and the general Vote of the World, that they dare not attack the whole, then they lurkingly aſſault part of it; and what they cannot altogether deny they will endeavour to diminiſh: *'Tis true, ſuch a Man is, as you ſay, Learned and Knowing; but withal ſo knowing as to know that too. He is Wiſe, but his Wiſdom is rather Politick than Generous; and all his Deſigns are byaſs'd with Self-ends. He is Charitable, but his Charity ſeems too indiſcreet; or if ſuch, if you did not proclaim his good Works he himſelf would He is Pious and Devout indeed, Poor Man, after his Way, and according to his Knowledge.* Thus by theſe Blind Hints they endeavour either to find or to make a Flaw in another Man's Repute; well knowing that a crack'd Name, like a crack'd Bell, will not ſound half ſo clear and loud in the Ears of the World as elſe it might.

Thus you ſee what Slanders and Detractions are. Now,

Firſt, A Man may be a Self ſlanderer, and a Self-detracter; and ſuch are thoſe who traduce and defame themſelves, and either aſſume to themſelves thoſe Wickedneſſes they have not committed, or blameably conceal thoſe Gifts and Excellencies they are endowed with, when they are called to diſcover them for the Glory of God, and the Publick Good. Some ſlander themſelves out of hope of Reward, when they ſuppoſe the Crimes they boaſt of may be accepted as Services by others. Thus when *Saul* had ſlain himſelf, an *Amalekite* falſly reports to *David* that he had ſlain him, hoping to obtain a Reward from him for diſpatching his Enemy. Sometimes Men Impiouſly boaſt of thoſe Sins which they never did, they never durſt, commit, meerly out of a braving Humour of Vain glory, and that among their debauch'd Companions they might gain the Reputation of valiant and daring Sinners. Others falſly accuſe themſelves of thoſe Sins of which they were never guilty, out of a deſpairing and dejected Spirit. Thus many a poor Soul that hath laboured under ſevere Convictions begins firſt to doubt, and then to conclude, that he hath certainly committed the unpardonable Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt; and in extream Anguiſh and Horror cries *Guilty*, and confeſſeth the Indictment that is falſly drawn up againſt him by the Calumny of the Devil, and his own Black Fears and Melancholy. Sometimes Men detract from themſelves out of a lying and diſſembled Humility, making this kind of Detraction only a Bait for Commendation; as knowing the Ball will rebound back the farther to them the harder they ſtrike it from them. This is uſually an Artifice of proud and arrogant Perſons; and thoſe who cannot endure to be contradicted in any thing elſe, would be very loth you ſhould yield to them in this. And laſtly, Others detract from themſelves out of a too baſhful Modeſty, or to avoid ſome troubleſome and unpleaſing Employments which they are allied unto. Thus we find *Moſes*, Exod 4. 10. making many Excuſes, that he was not *eloquent*, *but of ſlow Tongue*, *and a ſlow Speech*, and all becauſe he was loth to undertake that difficult and dangerous Charge of bringing out the Children of *Iſrael* from the Bondage of *Egypt*. All theſe Kinds of Self-ſlander and Detraction are Evil, and ſome of them moſt Vile and Abominable.

Ἡ ὑπερβολὴ καὶ ἡ λίαν ἐλλειψις ἀλαζονικόν. Ariſt. Eth. l. 4. c. 7.

Secondly, There

Secondly, There is a Slandering of, and Detracting from, another, wronging him unjuſtly in his Fame and Reputation, which we ought tenderly to preſerve and cheriſh. God and Nature have intruſted us mutually with each other's good Name. Thy Brother's Credit is put as a Precious *Depoſitum* into thy Hands; and if thou wickedly laviſheſt it out by ſpreading Falſe Rumours of him, or careleſly keepeſt it by ſuffering another to do ſo when it is in thy Power to juſtifie him, know aſſuredly that it will be ſtrictly requir'd of thee; for in this Reſpect every Man is his Brother's Keeper.

Now this Slandering of others may be either in Judicial Proceſs, or elſe in Common and Ordinary Converſe.

Firſt, In Judicial Proceſs; and then it is truly and properly *Falſe Witneſſing*: When thou riſeſt up againſt thy Brother in Judgment, and atteſteſt that which thou knoweſt to be falſe and forged, or which thou art not moſt infallibly aſſured to be true: And this Sin is the more heinous and dreadful upon the Account of Two Aggravating Circumſtances that attend it.

Firſt, Since uſually all Actions in Law and Judgment concern either the Perſon or the Eſtate of thy Brother, by a Falſe Witneſs thou not only wrongeſt him in his Name and Reputation, but in one of theſe, and ſo art not only a Slanderer, but a Thief or Murtherer. *Prov.* 11. 9. *An Hypocrite with his Mouth deſtroyeth his Neighbour.* And by ſo much the more odious is thy Crime in that thou perverteſt the Law, which was intended to be a Fence and Safeguard to every Man's Property, and turneſt it againſt itſelf, making it the Inſtrument of thy Injuſtice and Cruelty. The Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 52. 2. compares *Doeg*'s Malicious Tongue to a *Sharp Razor*; and certainly when thou giveſt a Falſe Teſtimony againſt thy Brother thy Tongue is a Sharp Razor; and it not only wounds his Credit, but cuts his Throat.

Secondly, Since uſually all Judicial Proceedings exact from the Witneſſes a Tremendous Oath ſolemnly taken by the Name of the Great God of Heaven, to give in a Falſe Teſtimony is not only to be guilty of Slander, but of Perjury too: Yea, and let me add one Thing more to make it a moſt Accumulate Wickedneſs, ſuch a Falſe Teſtimony is not only Slander and Perjury, but it is Blaſphemy too: For what elſe is it but to bring the moſt Holy God, who is Eternal Truth, to confirm a Falſhood, and a Lie? What can be an higher Affront to his moſt Sacred Majeſty than this? For a Sworn Witneſs is therefore accepted becauſe he brings God in to be a Witneſs too. And wilt not thou tremble, O Wretch, to cite God to appear a Witneſs to that which a Thouſand Witneſſes within thee (I mean thy own Conſcience) do all depoſe to be falſe and forged; and ſo to transfer thy Injuſtice, and Rapine, and Bloody Murther, upon him, and shelter them all under the Shadow of his Veracity and Faithfulneſs?

You ſee then how horrid an Impiety this is; and yet how common, not only thoſe who by this Wicked Means ſuffer Wrong, but others, who are converſant in ſuch Judiciary Trials, do too truly report. May it pleaſe God to put it into the Hearts of our Rulers to enact more Severe and Rigorous Laws againſt thoſe who are found guilty of it. It is ſad to think, that whereas a Thief ſhall be adjudged to Death for ſtealing ſome petty, inconſiderable, Matter, and perhaps too for the Relief of his Preſſing Neceſſities; yet Two Villains that have conſpir'd together by Falſe Accuſations, and Perjur'd Teſtimonies, to take away a Man's whole Eſtate, or poſſibly his Life, ſhould for theſe far greater Crimes be ſentenc'd to ſo eaſie a Puniſhment, that only Shame and Reproach make up the Severeſt Part of it. Certainly methinks it were but juſt that the leaſt they ſhould ſuffer ſhould be a Retaliation of their Intended Miſchiefs; and that the ſame they deſign'd againſt their Brother ſhould be inflicted upon themſelves, whether it be loſs of Life, or loſs of Goods and Eſtate. It is but all Equity that the Contrivers and Artificers of Miſchief ſhould periſh by their own Craft. And if this Rigour and Wholeſome Severity were but once uſed, we ſhould not have ſo many Oaths let out to Hire, nor would any make it a Trade to be a Witneſs, but Innocency would be ſecured under the Protection of the Laws, and the Laws themſelves be innocent of the Ruin of many Hundreds, who by this Means fall into the Snares of Ungodly Men. Of this One Thing I am ſure that God himſelf thought it a moſt Equitable Law, when he thus provided for the Safety of his People *Iſrael*, Deut. 19. 18, 19, 20. *If the Witneſs be a Falſe Witneſs, and teſtifie falſly againſt his Brother, then ſhall you do unto him as he had thought to do unto his Brother, ſo ſhalt thou put away the Evil from among you; and thoſe who remain ſhall hear, and fear, and ſhall henceforth commit no more any ſuch Evil among you.*

Secondly, There is a Slandering of others in our Common and Ordinary Converſe. And this is done Two Ways; either,

Firſt,

Firſt, Openly and avowedly, in their Preſence, and to their Faces. And that is alſo Twofold.

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Thirdly, Take another Rule: If thou wouldeſt not be guilty of Slander, be frequent in reflecting upon thine own Miſcarriages, or thy Proneneſs to fall into the ſame or greater Faults; when thou heareſt or knoweſt of any Foul and Scandalous Sin committed by another look backwards upon thine own Life and Actions. Canſt thou find no Blots in thy Copy? Is the whole Courſe of thy Life fair written upon thy Conſcience? If not, how canſt thou with any Shame and Modeſty upbraid thy Brother with his Miſcarriages, when thou thy ſelf haſt been guilty of the like, or greater? Or why, *O Hypocrite, beholdeſt thou the Mote that is in thy Brother's Eye, and ſeeſt not the Beam that is in thine own?* Methinks our Shame for our own Sins ſhould be a Covering to our Brother's; and when we our ſelves are guilty, we ſhould not be ſo malicious nor fooliſh as to reproach our ſelves by reproaching him; otherwiſe, to eclipſe and darken his Good Name, is but as when the Moon eclipſeth the Sun, her own Darkneſs and Obſcurity is made the more remarkable by it.

Or if God by his Reſtraining Grace hath kept thee from thoſe Wickedneſſes into which he hath ſuffer'd others to fall, yet then look inward, view and ſearch thine own Heart, ranſack over thy Corrupted Nature, and there thou ſhalt find thoſe, yea, and far greater Abominations than thoſe, like Beds of Twiſted Serpents, knotting and crawling within thee; ſay with thy ſelf, How can I reproach him who hath but copied forth mine own Nature? How can I expoſe his Infamy who hath but done what I have much ado to keep my ſelf from doing? Poſſibly the ſame Temptation might have prevailed over me too had God let it looſe upon me. I owe my Preſervation not to any difference that was between us, but only to the Free and Arbitrary Grace of God; by this it is that I ſtand, and ſhall I reproach him for falling, who ſhould alſo my ſelf have fallen were I not ſtrongly upheld by another? Thus, I ſay, by reflecting on our ſelves we ſhall be withheld from being injurious in our Cenſures, and in our Reports, of others; we ſhall hardly divulge their real Miſcarriages, much leſs accuſe and ſlander them with falſe and forged ones. This is the Apoſtle's Rule, *Gal. 6. 1. Brethren, if a Man be overtaken in a Fault, you which are Spiritual reſtore ſuch an one in the Spirit of Meekneſs, conſidering thy ſelf, leſt thou alſo be tempted.*

Fourthly, If you would not be guilty of Slander, liſten not unto thoſe who are Slanderers and Detracters; lend not your Ears to thoſe who go about with Tales and Whiſpers, whoſe Idle Buſineſs it is to tells News of this Man and t'other: For if theſe Kind of Flies can blow in your Ears, the Worms will certainly creep out at your Mouths; for all Diſcourſe is kept up by exchange; and if he bring thee one Story, thou wilt think it Incivility not to repay him with another for it: And ſo they chat over the whole Neighbourhood, accuſe this Man, and condemn another, and ſuſpect a third, and ſpeak Evil of all. I with that the moſt of our Converſe were not taken up this Way, in recounting Stories of what paſs'd between ſuch and ſuch, when all is to no other End but to bring an Evil Report upon them. Now if any ſuch Backbiters haunt thee, who make it their Trade to run up and down with Tales and News, give them no Countenance, liſten not to their Detractions, but rather ſharply rebuke them, and ſilence their Slanderous Tongues; and this will either drive the Slander from them, or the Slanderer from thee: *Prov.* 25. 23. *The North Wind driveth away Rain, ſo doth an Angry Countenance a Backbiting Tongue.*

Fifthly, If you would not be Slanderers of others, be not Self-lovers; for Self-love always cauſeth Envy, and Envy Detraction. An Envious Man cannot endure

dure another's Praiſe, and therefore ſeeketh all he can to blaſt it by Falſe Reports, and Lying Slanders, as if all that were detracted from another were added to his own Reputation. When his Neighbour's Fame begins to grow tall, and to ſpread about him, he then ſeeks what he can to cut it down, becauſe he thinks it hinders his Proſpect, and the World cannot take ſo fair a View of him as he deſires; and therefore he is ſtill hewing at it, ſometimes with oblique, and ſometimes with direct, Blows; ſometimes ſtriking at his Parts, and ſometimes at his Piety; and if he can but make theſe fall in the Eſteem of the World, then he thinks none ſhall be ſo much reſpected and honoured as himſelf. A Man that is a Self-lover thinks all due unto himſelf; all Praiſe and Commendation muſt run in his Channel, or elſe it takes a wrong Courſe, and he accounts juſt ſo much taken from him as is aſcribed to another; and this puts him upon this Baſe Art of Detraction, that by depreſſing others he may advance himſelf, and raiſe the Structure of his own Fame upon the Ruins of his Neighbour's. And therefore if thou wouldſt not ſlander others, be ſure do not too much admire thy ſelf. For Self-applauſe, and Self-eſteem, is like a Pike in a Pond, that will eat up and devour all about it, that itſelf may thrive and grow upon them.

Sixthly, Be not too eaſie and facile to entertain ſuſpicious and evil Surmiſes againſt others. For if thou begin to ſuſpect Evil of another, the next Thing is to conclude it, and the next to report it. This Suſpicion is a ſtrange Shadow that every Action of another will caſt upon our Minds; eſpecially if we be beforehand a little diſaffected towards them. Thus very Dreams increaſed Suſpicion againſt *Joſeph* in his Brethren: And if once a Man be out of Eſteem with us, let him then do what he will, be it never ſo vertuous and commendable, Suſpicion will ſtill be the Interpreter. And where Suſpicion is the Interpreter of Mens Actions, Slander and Detraction will be the Gloſs and Comment upon them. Indeed Suſpicion is always too haſty in concluding; and many times our Jealouſies and Diſtruſts upon very ſmall Occaſions prompt us to conclude that what we have thus ſurmized is certainly come to paſs; and ſo we take Shadows for Enemies, and report that confidently for Truth which yet we never ſaw acted, but only in our own Fancies.

Now notwithſtanding that this Sin of Slander and Detraction is ſo great and heinous, yet may it not be juſtly feared that many place their whole Religion in it, and think themſelves ſo much the better by how much the worſe they think and report of other Men? Do they not think it a piece of Zeal and Warmth for the Worſhip and Service of God to cry down all as Superſtitious that do not Worſhip him in their Way? Do they not make it, if not a Part, yet a Sign, of Holineſs, to be ſtill finding Faults, and crying out againſt others, to be cenſorious and clamorous? Such a Sort of Men are all Leud and Profane; and ſuch a Sort are all Rebellious, and Hypocrites: And then to juſtifie their Cenſures, inſtance, poſſibly in Two or Three, of whom perhaps they know no more than the bare Names: And what tends all this to but mutual Exaſperation? Thoſe that do not believe them are exaſperated againſt the Reporters, and thoſe who do believe them are exaſperated againſt the Slandered: And as it tends to Exaſperation, ſo likewiſe it encourageth and hardneth many in their Sins: For when they hear ſo much Evil blazed abroad in the World, and few or none eſcape without having ſome foul Blot rubb'd upon him, and infamous Crime reported of him, whether truly or falſly, they think that Sin and Wickedneſs is no ſuch ſtrange Thing, and ſo embolden themſelves to commit that which they hear is ſo common.

I beſeech you therefore, O Chriſtians, for the Peace of the Church, which elſe will continue ſadly rent and divided; for the Sake of Chriſtianity, which elſe will be diſcredited and reviled; for your Brethrens Sake, who elſe will be diſcouraged or exaſperated; be very cautious what Reports you either receive or make of others. Their good Name is very precious; precious to God, when their blameleſs Converſation deſerves it; and precious to themſelves; howſoever, unleſs there be abſolute Neceſſity, and you be conſtrained to do it for the Glory of God, and the Good of others, divulge not their Imperfections, though they be real, and in no Caſe whatſoever feign or deviſe falſe Rumours concerning them. *Take heed leſt if ye bite and devour one another, ye be not conſumed one of another, and one with another.*

Theſe are the Rules to keep you from being guilty of Slander againſt others.

But now if any are guilty of raiſing an ill Report againſt you, obſerve theſe following Rules and Directions, how you ought to demean your ſelves in this Caſe.

Firſt, If the Reproach they caſt upon thee be true and deſerved, though they perhaps have ſinned in diſcloſing it to the VVorld, yet make this Uſe of it, go thou and diſcloſe it in thy moſt humble and penitent Confeſſions unto God; yea, and if thou art called thereunto by due Form of Law, give Glory unto God by confeſſing it before Men. Men poſſibly may upbraid thee with it, but by this Courſe God will forgive thee without upbraiding thee.

Secondly, If thou art falſly charged with that which never was in thine Heart to do, yet improve this Providence to ſtir thee up to pray the more fervently that God would for ever keep thee from falling into that Sin with which others ſlander thee; ſo ſhall all their Reproaches be thrown meerly into the Air, and fall at laſt heavy upon their own Heads, whilſt thou rejoiceſt in the Whiteneſs and Innocency of thine own Soul.

Thirdly, If any unjuſtly ſlander thee, revenge not thy ſelf upon them by ſlandering them again: I muſt confeſs this is a very hard Leſſon, and requires almoſt an Angelical Perfection to perform it well. We read in the Epiſtle of St. *Jude*, that *when* Michael *and the Devil contended about the Body of* Moſes, it is ſaid that the Holy Angel durſt *not bring a railing Accuſation againſt* that wicked Spirit, but only ſaid, *the Lord rebuke thee.* And ſo when Men of Deviliſh Spirits ſpew out their Slanders, and broach all the malicious Accuſations that their Father, the great Accuſer, hath ever ſuggeſted unto them, return not Slander for Slander, for ſo the Devil would teach thee to be a Devil; but with all Quietneſs and Meekneſs deſire of God to rebuke their Lies and Calumnies, and by all wiſe and prudent Means vindicate thy ſelf, clear up thine Integrity, and make it appear that though *the Archers have ſhot at thee, and ſorely grieved thee with their Arrows, even bitter Words, yet ſtill thy Bow remaineth in its Strength.* What ſaith the Apoſtle? 2 *Pet.* 3. 9. *Render not Evil for Evil, or Railing for Railing.* And indeed whoſoever doth ſo ſeeks only to heal a Wound in his Name, by making a much deeper one in his Conſcience.

Fourthly, When thou art falſly aſpers'd and ſlander'd, refer thy ſelf, and appeal to the All-knowing God; retire into the Peace and Refuge of thine own Conſcience, and there ſhalt thou find enough for their Confutation, and thy Comfort. Know that a good Name is in the Power of every Slanderous Tongue to blaſt; but they cannot corrupt thy Conſcience to vote with them. Poſſibly it is only the Excellency and Eminency of thy Grace that offends them; if ſo, glory in it; for the Reproaches of wicked Men are the beſt Teſtimonials that can be given of an excellent and ſingular Chriſtian. In a ſtrict and holy Converſation there is that Contradiction to the Looſe, Prophane, of the World, as at once both convinceth and vexeth them, reproves and provokes them. And if thou doſt thus reproach them by thy Life, wonder not at it if they again reproach thee by their lying Slanders. Be not too ſolicitous how they eſteem of thee: It is miſerable to live upon the Reports and Opinions of others; let us not much reckon what they ſay, but what Reports our own Conſciences make; and if a Storm of Obloquy and Reproaches, Railings and Slanders, do at any Time patter upon thee, how ſweet is it to retire inwards to the calm Innocency of our own Hearts! There are a Thouſand Witneſſes will tell us we have not deſerved them. How comfortable is it to remit our Cauſe unto God, and to leave our Vindication to him, for whoſe Cauſe we ſuffer Reproach? Thus *Jeremiah* appeals to God, *Jer.* 20 10. *I heard the defaming of many; report, ſay they, and we will report it: But, O Lord of Hoſts, thou that trieſt the Righteous, and ſeeſt the Reins and the Heart, to thee have I opened my Cauſe.* Thus if whilſt wicked Men are maliciouſly conſpiring how to blot and ſully our Names we can but keep our Conſciences clear, what need we much trouble our ſelves how the VVind blows abroad, ſince we are harboured under the Retreat of a peaceable Heart? They may poſſibly perſuade others to believe their Calumnies, but God, who ſearcheth the Heart and Conſcience, knows that we are injur'd; and he is haſtening on a Day wherein he will clear up our Righteouſneſs, and then the Teſtimony of a good Conſcience ſhall put Ten Thouſand Slanderers to ſilence.

And thus I have ſpoken of this Second Sin, of Slander and Detraction.

The Third Sin againſt this Commandment is baſe Flattery and Soothing, which is a quite oppoſite Extream to the other, as both are oppoſite to Truth.

Now this is either Self flattery, or the Flattering of others.

Firſt, There is a Self flattery. And indeed every Man is (as *Plutarch* well obſerved it) his own greateſt Flatterer; and however empty and defective we

may be, yet we are all apt to love our ſelves, perhaps without a Rival, and to be puft up with a vain Conceit of our own imaginary Perfections, to applaud and commend our ſelves in our own Thoughts and Fancies, and to think that we excel all others in what we have; and what we have not we deſpiſe as nothing worth. From this abundance of a vain Heart break out arrogant Boaſtings of our ſelves, contemning of others, a preſumptuous intruding our ſelves into thoſe Employments and Functions which we are no Way able to manage. Learn therefore, O Chriſtian, to take the juſt Meaſure of thy ſelf. Let it not be too ſcanty, for that will make thee puſillanimous and cowardly; and through an Extream of Modeſty render thee unſerviceable to God and the World. But rather let it be too ſcanty than too large; for this will make thee proud, and arrogant, and undertaking; and by exerciſing thy ſelf in Things too high for thee thou wilt but ſpoil whatſoever thou raſhly and overweeningly ventureſt upon. If thou art at any time called or neceſſitated to ſpeak of thy ſelf, let it rather be leſs than the Truth than more: For the Tongue is of itſelf very apt to be laviſh when it hath ſo ſweet and pleaſing a Theme as a Man's own Praiſe. Take the Advice of *Solomon*, Prov. 27. 2. *Let another Man praiſe thee, and not thine own Mouth; a Stranger, and not thine own Lips.*

Secondly, There is a ſinful Flattering of others; and that either by an immoderate extolling of their Virtues; or what is worſe, by a wicked Commendation even of their very Vices. This is a Sin moſt odious unto God, who hath threatned to *cut off all flattering Lips*, Pſal. 12. 2. But eſpecially it is moſt deteſtable in Miniſters, whoſe very Office and Function it is to reprove Men for their Sins: If they ſhall *daub with untempered Morter, and ſew Pillows under Mens Elbows, crying Peace, Peace, when there is no Peace to the Wicked*, only that they may lull them aſleep in their Security, they do but betray their Souls, and the Blood of them God will certainly require at their Hands.

Thus much for the *Ninth Commandment.*

The Tenth Commandment.

Thou ſhalt not covet thy Neighbour's Houſe; Thou ſhalt not covet thy Neighbour's Wife; nor his Manſervant, nor his Maid-ſervant, nor his Ox, nor his Aſs, nor any Thing that is thy Neighbour's.

THus are we at laſt (through the Divine Aſſiſtance) arrived to the Tenth and laſt Precept of the Moral Law. Indeed the *Papiſts* and the *Lutherans* divide it into Two; making theſe Words, *Thou ſhalt not covet thy Neighbour's Wife*, to be one entire Command, and then putting together the other Branches of it, *Thou ſhalt not covet thy Neighbour's Houſe; nor his Servant*, &c. to piece up the laſt. But then withal, to keep the Number of them from ſwelling beyond a *Decalogue*, or *Ten Words*, the *Lutherans* join the Firſt and Second together into one; and the *Papiſts*, in propounding the Commandments to the People, wholly leave it out; fearing they may be corrupted by hearing it, becauſe it ſpeaks too boldly againſt their Idolatry and Image-worſhip. But how infinitely temerarious is it for vile Wretches either to invert or defalcate, and as it were to decimate, the Laws of the Great God, by the which they, and all their Actions, muſt be judged at the laſt Day? And certainly were it not that they might the better conceal from the ignorant common People the Dangerous and Heretical Words of the Second Commandment, they could have lain under no Temptation at all to do a Thing altogether ſo unreaſonable as the dividing of this Tenth Commandment into two: For upon the ſame Ground might they as well have divided it into Seven, ſince there are many more Concupiſcences mentioned in it, than that of our *Neighbour's Wife*, and of *his Houſe*. And if each of theſe muſt conſtitute a

diſtinct Precept, why not alſo *Thou ſhalt not covet his Man-ſervant: Thou ſhalt not covet his Ox*, &c? Beſides the Order of the Words makes clearly againſt them: For whereas they make *Thou ſhalt not covet thy Neighbour's Wife* to be the Ninth, in the Text thoſe Words, *Thou ſhalt not covet thy Neighbour's Houſe* go before them: So that either they muſt needs confeſs it to belong to the Tenth, or elſe muſt grant a moſt unintelligible *Hyperbation* both of Senſe and Words; ſuch as would bring in utter Confuſion and Diſorder amongſt thoſe Laws which God certainly preſcribed us in a moſt Admirable Method and Diſpoſition.

But to ſpeak no more of this: The Sin here prohibited is Concupiſcence, or an unlawful luſting after what is another Man's. For ſince God had in the other Commandment forbidden the Acts of Sin againſt our Neighbour, he well knew that the beſt Means to keep them from committing Sin in Act would be to keep them from deſiring it in Heart; and therefore he who is a Spirit impoſeth a Law upon our Spirits, and forbids us to covet what before he had forbidden us to perpetrate. It is true that other Precepts are Spiritual likewiſe, and their Authority reacheth to the Mind, and the moſt ſecret Thoughts and Imaginations of the Heart. For our Saviour, *Matth.* 5. accuſeth him of Adultery that doth but luſt after a Woman, and him of Murder that is but angry with his Brother without a Cauſe. And it is a moſt certain Rule, that whatſoever Precept prohibits the outward Act of any Sin, prohibits likewiſe the inward Propenſion and Deſires of the Soul towards it. But becauſe theſe are not plainly and literally expreſs'd in the former Commands, therefore the infinite Wiſdom of God thought it fit to add this laſt Command, wherein he doth expreſly arraign and condemn the very firſt Motions of our Hearts towards any ſinful Object. And whereas before he had commanded us not to Kill, not to Steal, not to commit Adultery, not to Slander, and bear falſe Witneſs; now, in the laſt Place, for the greater Security that theſe his Laws ſhould not be violated, he commands us not ſo much as to harbour in our Hearts any Deſire towards theſe. So that this Tenth Commandment may well be called *Vinculum Legis*; and it is eſpecially the Bond that ſtrengthens and confirms the Second Table. For becauſe all our outward Actions take their firſt Riſe from our inward Motions and Concupiſcence, there is no ſuch Way to provide for our Innocency as to lay a Check and Reſtraint upon theſe.

Now Concupiſcence is ſometimes taken in Scripture in a Good Senſe, but more often in an Evil. There is an Honeſt and Lawful Concupiſcence when we deſire thoſe Things which are lawful, to which we have Right, and of which we have Need. There is likewiſe an Holy, and Pious, and a Wicked, and Sinful, Concupiſcence. We have both together, *Gal.* 5. 17. *The Fleſh luſteth againſt the Spirit, and the Spirit againſt the Fleſh.* It is only concerning this ſinful Concupiſcence that we are at preſent to ſpeak.

Now this Evil Concupiſcence is the Firſt-born of Original Sin, the firſt Eſſay and Expreſſion of that Corruption which hath ſeized on us, and on all the wretched Poſterity of *Adam*. For in Original Sin, (beſides the Guilt which reſults from the Imputation of the Primitive Tranſgreſſion to us, and makes us liable to Eternal Death,) there is likewiſe an univerſal Depravation of our Natures, conſiſting in Two Things.

Firſt, In a Loſs of thoſe Spiritual Perfections wherewith Man was endowed in his Creation. And this is the defacing of the Image of God, which was ſtamp'd upon our Nature in Knowledge, Righteouſneſs, and true Holineſs: And as a Conſequent upon this,

Secondly, In a violent Propenſion and Inclination to whatſoever is really Evil, and contrary to the Holy Will and Commands of God. And this is the Image of the Devil, into which Man by his voluntary Apoſtaſie and Defection hath transformed himſelf. Now this inordinate Inclination of the Soul to what is evil and ſinful is properly this Concupiſcence forbidden in this Commandment. For the Soul of Man being an active and buſie Creature, muſt ſtill be putting forth itſelf in Actions ſuitable to its Nature. But before the Fall Man enjoyed Supernatural Grace, though in a natural Way, which inabled him to point every the leaſt Motion of his Soul towards God, and to fix him as the Object and End of all his Actions: But forfeiting this Grace by the Fall, and being left in the Hands of meer Nature, all his Actions now, inſtead of aſpiring unto God, pitch only upon the Creature. And this becomes Sin unto us, not meerly becauſe we affect and deſire Created Good, (for that is lawful,) but becauſe we affect and deſire it in an inordinate Manner; that is, without affecting and deſiring God. And thus

Thus the Soul not being able without Grace, and the Image of God, to raiſe its Operations unto God, pitcheth upon what it can, *viz.* low, ſinful Objects, to the Neglect and Slighting of God, and the great Concernments of Heaven: And this is in the general that inordinate Diſpoſition of the Soul which is here called Coveting or Concupiſcence.

Now there are Four Degrees of this ſinful Concupiſcence.

Firſt, There is the *Motus primo primi*, the firſt Film and Shadow of an Evil Thought, the Imperfect *Embrio* of a Sin before it is well ſhaped in us, or hath received any Lineaments and Features. And theſe the Scripture calls the Imaginations of the Thoughts of Mens Hearts, *Gen. 6. 5. God ſaw that every Imagination of the Thoughts of Man's Heart was only Evil continually:* That is, the very firſt figment and ſhuſhing of our Thoughts is evil and corrupt: Indeed ſome of theſe are injected by the Devil. Many times he aſſaults the deareſt of God's Children with horrid and black Temptations, and importunately caſts into their Minds ſtrange Thoughts of queſtioning the very Being of God, the Truth of the Scriptures, the Immortality of the Soul, future Reward and Puniſhments, and ſuch other blaſphemous, hideous and unſhapen, Monſters, againſt the very Fundamentals of Religion, for the Truth of which they would willingly ſacrifice their very Lives as a Teſtimony to them. Theſe indeed are not their Sins, although they are their great Troubles and Afflictions; for they come only from a Principle without them, and they are meerly Paſſive and Sufferers by them, ſo long as they are watchful to abhor and reſiſt them, and to caſt theſe fiery Darts of the Devil back again into his Face. But then there are other firſt Motions ariſing up in our Hearts towards thoſe Sins, which are more delightful and pleaſant to our ſenſual Inclinations: Theſe, (whatſoever the Papiſts ſay to the contrary,) as ſoon as ever they do but begin to heave and ſtir in our Breaſts, are truly Sins, and do in their Meaſure pollute and defile the Soul. For the Soul of Man is like a clear Mirrour, upon which if you only breathe you ſully it, and leave a dimneſs upon it; ſo truly the very firſt Breathings of an evil Thought and Deſire up in our Souls do ſully their Beauty, and dim their Luſtre, and render the Image of God leſs conſpicuous in them than it was before.

Secondly, A farther Degree of this Concupiſcence is, when theſe Evil Motions are entertained in the ſenſual Mind with ſome Meaſure of Complacency and Delight. When a ſingle Object offers itſelf to a Carnal Heart there is a kind of inward pleaſing Titillation, that affects it with Delight, and begets a kind of Sympathy between them; that look as in natural Sympathies, a Man is taken and delighted with an Object before he knows the Reaſon why he is ſo; ſo likewiſe in this ſinful Sympathy that is between a Carnal Heart and a Senſual Object, the Heart is taken and delighted with it before it hath had Time to conſider what there is in it that ſhould ſo move and affect it. At the very firſt Sight and Glimpſe of a Perſon we many times find that we conceive ſome more particular Reſpect for him than poſſibly for a whole Croud of others, though all may be equally unknown unto us: So upon the very firſt Glimpſe and Apparition of a ſinful Thought in our Minds we find that there is ſomething in it that commands a particular Regard from us, that unboſoms and unlocks our very Souls unto it, even before we have the Leiſure to examine why.

Thirdly, Hereupon follows Aſſent and Approbation of the Sin in the Practical Judgment; which being blinded, and forcibly carried away by the Violence of corrupt and carnal Affections, commends the Sin to the executive Faculties. The Underſtanding is the great Trier of every deliberate Action, ſo that nothing paſſeth into Act which hath not firſt paſs'd Examination and Cenſure there. Whether this or that Action is to be done is the great Queſtion canvaſſed in this Court; and all the Powers and Faculties of the Soul wait what Definitive Sentence will be here pronounced, and ſo accordingly proceed. Now here Two Things do uſually appear, and put in their Plea to the Judgment againſt Sin, God's Law, and God's Advocate, Conſcience. The Law condemns, and Conſcience cites that Law: But then the Affections creep in, and bribe the Judge with Profit, or Pleaſure, or Honour, and thereby corrupt the Judgment to give its Vote and Aſſent unto Sin.

Fourthly, When any ſinful Motion hath thus gotten an Allowance and Paſs from the Judgment, then it betakes itſelf to the Will for a Decree. The Judgment approves it, and therefore the Will muſt now reſolve to commit it: And then the Sin is fully perfected and formed within, and there wants nothing but Opportunity to bring it forth into act.

And

And thus you ſee what this Concupiſcence is, and the Degrees of it; *viz.* the firſt Bubblings up of evil Thoughts in our Hearts; our Complacency and Delight in them, (as indeed it is very hard, and much againſt corrupt Nature, not to love theſe Firſt-born between our Souls,) the Aſſent and Allowance of our Judgment, and the Decree and Reſolution of our Wills, each of theſe are forbidden in this Commandment: But if the Sin proceeds any further it then exceeds the Bounds and Limits of this Commandment, and falls under the Prohibition of ſome of the former, which forbid the outward Acts of Sin.

Thus much concerning *Evil Concupiſcence* in the general: But here is mention likewiſe made of ſeveral particular Objects of it, *Thy Neighbour's Houſe, his Wife, his Servants, his Cattle*, (under which are comprehended all Sorts of his Poſſeſſions;) and all is included under the laſt Clauſe, *Nor any Thing that is thy Neighbour's*: So that to deſire to take from him either his Life, or his good Name, or his Virtue, is this condemned Covetouſneſs, as well as a Deſire to take from him his Temporal Poſſeſſions and Enjoyments.

I ſhall cloſe up all with ſome Practical Uſe and Improvement.

Firſt, Learn here to adore the unlimited and boundleſs Sovereignty of the Great God. His Authority immediately reacheth to the very Soul and Conſcience, and lays an Obligation upon our very Thoughts and Deſires, which no Humane Laws can do. It is but a Folly for Men to intermeddle with or impoſe Laws upon that of which they can take no Cognizance: And therefore our Thoughts and Deſires are free from their Cenſure any farther than they diſcover themſelves by Overt Acts. But tho' they eſcape the Commands and Notice of Men, yet they cannot eſcape God. *He ſeeth not as Men ſee, neither judgeth he as Men judge; the Secrets of all Hearts are open and bare before his Eyes.* He looks through our very Souls, and there is not the leaſt hint of a Thought, not the leaſt Breath of a Deſire, ſtirring in us, but it is more diſtinctly viſible unto him than the moſt opacous Bodies are unto us. *The Lord knoweth the Thoughts of Men, that they are Vanity*, Pſal. 94. 11. And therefore his Law, like his Knowledge, reacheth unto the moſt ſecret Receſſes of the Soul, ſearcheth every Corner of the Heart, judgeth and condemns thoſe callow Luſts which Men never eſpy; and if theſe find Harbour and Shelter there, condemns thee as a Tranſgreſſor, and guilty of Eternal Death, how plauſible ſoever thy External Demeanour may be. And therefore,

Secondly, Content not thy ſelf with an outward Conformity to the Law, but labour to approve thine Heart in Sincerity and Purity unto God, otherwiſe thou art but a Phariſaical Hypocrite, and waſheſt only the outſide of the Cup, when within thou art ſtill full of unclean Luſts. This was the corrupt Doctrine of the Scribes and Phariſees, that the Law reached only to the outward Man; and altho' we entertain'd and cheriſh'd wicked Deſires, and evil Purpoſes, in our Hearts, yet as long as they did not break forth into outward Crimes they were not to be imputed unto us; nor did God account them as Sins. And this St. *Paul* confeſſeth of himſelf, that whilſt he was trained up in Phariſaical Principles he did not underſtand the inward Motions of Luſts to be Sins. But alas! This is but gilding over a dry and rotten Poſt; which, tho' it may look beautiful to Men, yet when God comes to examine it will not abide the fiery Trial *. Thou art as truly a Murtherer, a Thief, an Adulterer, in God's Sight if thou doſt but harbour bloody, unclean, unjuſt, Thoughts in thine Heart, as thou would'ſt be in Mens if thou ſhould'ſt actually kill, or ſteal, or wallow, in the open and profeſſed Acts of Uncleanneſs. Indeed moſt Men do herein groſly delude themſelves; and if they can but refrain from the outward Commiſſion of groſs and ſcandalous Sins, they very ſeldom reflect upon their Heart-Luſts, which like deep Ulcers rankle inwardly, and perhaps grow incurable, when all the while they may be skinn'd over with a fair and inoffenſive Life. Altho' the Heart eſtuate and boil over with malicious, revengeful, laſcivious, Thoughts, yet they uſually diſpence with theſe, and their natural Conſcience indulgeth them without Diſturbance. But *deceive not your ſelves, God is not mocked*, nor can he be impoſed upon by External Shews; neither will he judge of thee as others do, or as thou thy ſelf doſt: I know it is a very difficult Thing to convince Men of the great Evil that there is in ſinful Thoughts and Excuſes, and therefore very difficult to perſwade them to labour againſt them; for becauſe they are of a ſmall and minute Being, therefore Men think they carry in them but ſmall Guilt, and little Danger. Every Man that hath but a Remnant of Conſcience left him will beware of groſs and notorious Crimes, that carry the Mark of Hell and

* *Scelus intra ſe qui cogitat ullum facti crimen habet.* Juv. Sat. 13.

Ἐν τῇ πεπρᾶξαι ἐστὶν ἡ μοχθηρία καὶ τὸ ἀδικεῖν. Ariſt. Rhe. c. 14.

and Damnation visibly ſtamp'd upon their Foreheads: Such as he, that can without Reluctance commit them, muſt needs own himſelf for the apparent Offspring of the Devil. But for an inviſible Thought, a Notion, a Deſire, a Thing next nothing, this certainly I may pleaſe my ſelf withal, for this can hurt nó one. By a malicious Purpoſe I wrong no Man; by a covetous Deſire I extort from no Man; and what ſo great Evil then can there be in this? It is true indeed, wert thou only to deal with Men, whom Immaterial Things touch not, there were no ſuch great Evil in them. But when thou haſt likewiſe to do with an Immaterial and Spiritual God, before whom thy very Thoughts and Deſires appear as ſubſtantial and conſiderable as thy outward Actions, then know that theſe, as ſlight and thin Beings as they are, fall under his Cenſure here, and will fall under his Revenge hereafter.

Now were this Perſwaſion effectually wrought into the Minds of Men, were it poſſible they ſhould indulge themſelves as they do, in vain, frothy, unclean, malicious, Thoughts and Deſires, were it poſſible they ſhould ſo cloſely brood on theſe Cockatrice Eggs, which will bring forth nothing but Serpents to ſting them to Eternal Death; were it poſſible they ſhould delight in rouling and toſſing a Sin to and fro in their Fancy, and by imagining it make the Devil ſome Recompence for not daring to commit it, certainly ſuch Men are altogether unacquainted with the Life and Power of true Grace, when, as thoſe Sins which they dare not act, yet they dare with Pleaſure contemplate, and dally with, in their Fancies and Imaginations.

Turn therefore your Eyes inwards; bewail and ſtrive againſt that natural Concupiſcence which lodgeth there; and never content thy ſelf that thou haſt dammed up the Streams of thy Corruptions from overflowing thy Life and Actions, till thou haſt in ſome good Meaſure dried up the Fountain of it.

Thirdly, See here the beſt and the ſureſt Methods to keep us from the outward Violation of God's Laws, which is to mortifie our corrupt Concupiſcence and Deſires. And therefore (as I told you) the Wiſdom of God hath ſet this Commandment in the laſt Place as a Fence and Guard to all the reſt; thou ſhalt not Covet, and then certainly thou ſhalt not Kill, nor Steal, nor commit Adultery, nor bear falſe Witneſs, but be kept pure from all outward Defilements of the Fleſh, when thou art thus cleanſed from the inward Defilements of the Spirit; for from theſe it is that all the more viſible Sins of our Lives and Actions have their Supply. And therefore ſaith our Saviour, *Matth.* 15. 19. *Out of the Heart proceed Evil Thoughts, Murders, Adulteries, Fornications, Theſts, falſe Witneſs, Blaſphemy.* Obſerve that he puts Evil Thoughts in the Front as the Leader of all this Black Regiment; for out of this Evil Treaſure of the Heart Men bring forth Evil Things; and all the Fruits of the Fleſh, the Grapes of *Sodom*, and the Cluſters of *Gomorrah*, receive their Sap and Nouriſhment from this Root of Bitterneſs. It ought therefore moſt deſervedly to be the great and chief Care of every Chriſtian to lay the Ax to this Root, and to purge and heal this Fountain, that ſends forth ſuch corrupt and poiſonous Streams, to keep his Heart clean from ſinful Thoughts and Affections, and then this Life will be clean by Conſequence. And therefore God very preſſingly requires this, *Jer.* 4. 14. *O* Jeruſalem, *waſh thy Heart from Wickedneſs; how long ſhall vain Thoughts lodge within thee?* And let me add, that unleſs we make this our chief Care, unleſs we do moſt ſolicitouſly obſerve this laſt Commandment, all our Care in obſerving the former will be utterly in vain; not only in reſpect of our Acceptance and Reward with God, but as to any good Iſſue and Effect. All other Endeavours will be as ſucceſleſs as to attempt the Cure of an Ulcerous Body without purging it, where the Corruption will quickly break forth again; or to attempt the emptying of a Pond that hath many Springs ſtill riſing up in the bottom of it, which will ſoon grow as full as ever it was.

A SERMON ON JOHN VII. xix.

Did not Moſes *give you the Law, and yet none of you keepeth the Law?*

I HAVE in ſeveral Diſcourſes, according to the Meaſure of Divine Aſſiſtance, endeavoured to unfold unto you the vaſt Contents of the *Law*, and thoſe various Duties that are ſummarily comprehended in thoſe *Ten Words*, which the infinite Wiſdom of God hath given us as an *Epitome* and *Abridgement* of all Morality. I well know, and am aſſured, that there never was, neither can there be, any Treatiſe ſo exact and particular as to drain this whole Subject: For ſince it comprizeth in it the *Whole Duty of Man*, in every particular Occurrence and Action of his Life; ſince the variety of Circumſtances is almoſt infinite, and yet theſe Circumſtances ſpecifie our Actions, and make them morally, either Good or Evil: And ſince every *Precept* extends its Branches ſo far as to injoin every Man's Duties collaterally, which it doth not touch directly, and to forbid very many Sins by Conſequence, which it doth not immediately prohibit: Therefore I cannot but judge it next to an Impoſſibility minutely to reckon up every Sin, and every Duty, methodically, to rank and diſpoſe them every one under that particular Command to which they do properly appertain. The ſerious Contemplation of this boundleſs extent of the *Law* occaſioned the *Pſalmiſt* to ſay, *Pſal.* 119. 96. *That he had ſeen an end of all Perfection*: He had taken the Dimenſions of all other Things, and found them ſuch as an inquiſitive Mind might deſcribe the whole Limits and Compaſs of them. *But thy Commandment is exceeding broad:* Not for the Indulgence it gives, for ſo it is exceeding narrow. The broad Way is not the Way of God's Commandments, but that which leadeth down unto Deſtruction: But broad it is in reſpect of its Comprehenſiveneſs, as it reacheth to every Thought of our Souls, and every Action of our Lives, and every Circumſtance of both. And therefore ſince the *Law of God* is of ſuch an unmeaſurable Latitude; as *Aſtronomers* take only the more conſpicuous and remarkable *Stars* into their Conſtellations, but leave innumerable others, with which the Heavens are everywhere thick ſtudded, to the caſual Obſervation of the Beholders: So I have contented my ſelf to remark unto you thoſe Duties and Sins which are moſt eminent; and to reduce them into Order under theſe ſeveral Precepts, where they are either required or forbidden, leaving innumerable others to your own private Obſervation.

I hope that what hath been ſpoken of them hath not been as Water ſpilt upon the Ground, or a Sound only ſcattered and loſt in the Air; for theſe Things are of infinite Concernment to us: The Knowledge and Practice of them is as much worth as Heaven and Eternal Life. And I may ſay unto you, as *Moſes* to the *Iſraelites*, I have ſet Life and Death before you: Life if you will hearken and obey, but Eternal Death and Deſtruction if ye refuſe and rebel. Entertain not any low and debaſing Thoughts of the *Law:* Think not the preaching of it unworthy the Freedom of *Goſpel Times*, or of *Goſpel Spirits:* I know that a Company of fluſh Notioniſts, who are very willing to ſhake off the Yoke from their Necks, and to deliver themſelves rather from the Conſcience, than from the Power of Sin, have clamoured againſt this Way of preſſing Duty, and enforcing the Authority of the *Law*, as *Legal Preaching*; and have blaſphemed it, as contrary to that Liberty which Chriſt hath purchaſed for us; and much beneath the Spiritual Attainments of thoſe that are made perfect in him. And I fear

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leſt ſome of that corrupt Leaven may ſtill remain in the Spirits of too many, who delight only to hear of the Riches of Free Grace, the Priviledges of Saints, the All-ſufficiency and Willingneſs of Chriſt to ſave them, and can melt themſelves away in the very Sweetneſs and Tenderneſs of their Souls under ſuch Glorious Diſcoveries. But if Obedience and Good Works be preſs'd; if we preach to them concerning *Righteouſneſs*, *Temperance*, and *Juſtice*, and thoſe Moral Duties of the *Law*, which reſpect our Deportment towards Men, as well as thoſe which reſpect the Worſhip and Service of God, this is flat and inſipid to theſe nice and refined Profeſſors, and they are ready with a ſcornful Pity to cenſure it for Honeſt, Moral, Doctrine, fit only for young Beginners, who are not as yet come from under a Legal Diſpenſation.

Beware, my Brethren, that you do not thus vilifie and diſparage the Holy Law of God. For let me tell you, this is the Rule that he hath given us to guide our Actions, and this is the *Law* by which he himſelf will judge them: There is no other Way to obtain Salvation but only through Obedience to it. This Law is the very Gate of Heaven, and the *Two Tables* are the Two Leaves of it. We ſhall never enter into it but only through theſe, *Rev.* 22. 14. *Bleſſed are they that do his Commandments, that they may have Right unto the Tree of Life, and may enter in through the Gates into the City.* Altho' our Salvation be the Purchaſe of Chriſt, and he alone hath redeem'd us from Death, and procured for us Glory and Immortality by his own moſt Precious Blood, yet here the Scripture affirms that we obtain a Right unto the Tree of Life; *i. e.* to Everlaſting Life, by our Obedience, and doing the Commandments of God. A Right, not indeed of Merit, but a Right of Evidence; our Obedience to the *Law* is the only ſound Evidence that we can have for our Right to the Promiſes of the *Goſpel*; and without an univerſal Obedience in the whole Courſe of our Lives, all our Joys and Comforts, and confident Expectations of Heaven and Happineſs, are but Splendid Deluſions, and Enthuſiaſtical Dreams, by which Men of looſe Principles and Practices ſeek to unite together Two Things which God hath put at an irreconcilable diſtance; that is to ſay, an unholy Life here, and an happy Life hereafter. And if to preſs this great Truth upon the Conſcience, and to inſiſt on the Neceſſity of New Obedience, and Repentance from dead Works, as well as Faith in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, be Legal Preaching, let mine be ever ſo accounted. But indeed this is ſo far from being a Legal Doctrine, that it is one of the greateſt and moſt precious Truths that the Goſpel exhibits. To preach of Juſtification by the Law as a Covenant is Legal, and makes void the Death and Merits of Jeſus Chriſt. But to preach Obedience to the Law as a Rule is Evangelical; and it ſavours as much of a New-Teſtament Spirit (as they phraſe it) to urge the Commands of the Law, as to diſplay the Promiſes of the Goſpel.

There are Two great Ends for which the Law was at firſt given, Conviction and Reformation.

Firſt, It was given, and ought ſtill to be preached for the Conviction of Sinners: And it ſerves to convince them of Three Things.

Firſt, Of their Guilt contracted by the Tranſgreſſion of the Law. For by laying their Actions to the Rule, and comparing the Strictneſs and Purity of the one, with the Obliquity and Defects of the other, they may diſcern wherein they have offended, and their natural Conſcience may have an Advantage to charge their Sin and Guilt upon them. Thus ſaith the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 3. 19, 20. *We know that what Things ſoever the Law ſaith, it ſaith to them that are under the Law, that every Mouth might be ſtopped, and all the World might become guilty before God, for by the Law is the Knowledge of Sin.*

Secondly, Of that Wrath and Eternal Death to which they ſtand expoſed by reaſon of their Sin and Guilt. *The Soul that ſinneth it ſhall die*, Ezek. 18. 20. And *Curſed is every one that continueth not in all Things that are written in the Book of the Law to do them*, Gal. 3. 10. And,

Thirdly, It ſerves to convince us of the utter Impoſſibility under which we lye in this our fallen and corrupt Eſtate of ever obtaining Juſtification by the Works of the Law, Rom. 3. 20. *By the Works of the Law ſhall no Man be juſtified, for by the Law is the Knowledge of Sin.* For we cannot be juſtified by our Obedience to it, ſince the Law demonſtrates that our Obedience is imperfect. Nor can we be juſtified by making Satisfaction for our Diſobedience, ſince the ſame Law aſſures us that the Divine Juſtice will accept no other Satisfaction from us but our undergoing the Penalty threatned, which is eternal Death: So that to hope for Life, by ſatisfying and recompencing Divine

Juſtice for our Offences is altogether as vain and fooliſh as to hope for Salvation by being damned.

Thus far the Convincing Work of the Law proceeds, and when it hath brought a Man to deſpair in himſelf, by ſhewing him his Guilt, and that Wrath to which he ſtands expos'd, and the Remedileſneſs of his Sad Condition by any Thing that he can either do or ſuffer, it there leaves him in this Horror of Darkneſs till the Spirit of God, who hath thus by the Miniſtry of the Law convinced him of his own Unrighteouſneſs in himſelf, doth alſo by the Miniſtry of the Goſpel convince him of a Righteouſneſs out of himſelf in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt: For it is the *Spirit that convinceth us of Sin, of Righteouſneſs, and of Judgment*, John 16. 8.

Secondly, Another great End of the Moral Law is Reformation and Obedience: That having our Rule before us we may endeavour to conform our Actions according unto it; and be deterred by the Majeſty and Authority of it from adding Sin to Sin, and *treaſuring up to our ſelves Wrath againſt the Day of Wrath*; and that by ſeeing our Defects we may endeavour to amend them. Thus the Apoſtle tells us, *Gal.* 3. 19. That *the Law was added becauſe of Tranſgreſſion*; *i. e.* becauſe of the exceeding Proneneſs of our Corrupted Natures to tranſgreſs, God hath given us an Holy and Severe Law to curb in our Luſts, to check our Head-ſtrong Deſires and Senſual Appetites, and to keep us within the Bounds of Duty and Obedience. For theſe Two great Ends was the Law given, Conviction and Reformation.

And upon both theſe Accounts the Preaching of the Law is of Abſolute Neceſſity. For,

Firſt, Where the Law hath not wrought its Convincing Work with Power upon the Conſcience, there the Preaching of Jeſus Chriſt will be altogether in vain: For until a Sinner be throughly convinc'd of his Guilt and Miſery, and his Conſcience awaken'd by the Threats and Terrors of the Law, that he ſtands forfeited to the Juſtice of God, liable to Eternal Wrath, and may every Moment be ſwallow'd up in the Abyſs of Woe and Torments, into which Thouſands before him have been already plung'd, it will be impoſſible to perſwade him ſeriouſly to embrace thoſe Tenders of Mercy which the Goſpel holds forth unto him by Jeſus Chriſt, he wraps himſelf in his own Carnal Confidence and Security, and ſees no need of looking out after any other Righteouſneſs than his own; and although his own Righteouſneſs be but filthy Rags, both imperfect and impure, yet being his own he thinks them better than borrow'd Robes. And therefore ſaith our Saviour, *Matth.* 9. 12. *The Whole need not a Phyſician, but they that are Sick*; *i. e.* thoſe who think themſelves Whole and Sound, although indeed they be Sick unto Death, they need not a Phyſician; *i. e.* they apprehend not their Need of him, nor will they be perſwaded to ſeek unto him. And,

Secondly, As Chriſt cannot be accepted where the Law doth not perform its Convincing Work, ſo he will not ſave where it doth not perform its Reforming Work. Where there is no Amendment of Life there can be no Forgiveneſs of Sins, nor True Hopes of Salvation: For Chriſt is given us not to ſave us in our Sins, but from them. *He is the Author of Eternal Salvation to all thoſe that obey him*, Heb. 5. 9.

And thus you ſee of what Abſolute Neceſſity it is to preſs the Law upon the Conſcience, to denounce its Terrors, to inculcate its Precepts, ſince the Convincing Work of it prepares us for Chriſt, and its Reforming Work for the Salvation purchaſed by Chriſt; without the one we ſhall never come unto him, and without the other we ſhall never come to Heaven by him.

That which I chiefly deſign for the preſent is to treat of the Convincing Work of the Law, and that in each of its Three Branches, *Conviction of Guilt*, *Conviction of Wrath*, and *Conviction of the Utter Impoſſibility we lye under to deliver our ſelves from it by our own Righteouſneſs*.

I ſhall now treat of the Firſt; to which Purpoſe I have choſen this Portion of Scripture, *John* 7. 19. *Did not* Moſes *give you the Law? And yet none of you keepeth the Law:* In which Words we have an Expoſtulation and an Accuſation.

In the Expoſtulation we may take notice of Three Things.

Firſt, That this Law, of which our Saviour ſpeaks, was the whole Syſtem of Divine Precepts, both concerning Ceremonial Rites, Judicial Proceſſes, and Moral Duties: For the *Jews* from *Moſes*'s Hands receiv'd Inſtructions for all their Obſervances, Gifts, Offerings, Waſhings, and other Typical Parts of Worſhip: And for all their Suits and Controverſies between Man and Man, which was the Common and Standing Law of their Nation; and laſtly, for all Moral and Natural Duties reſpecting either God

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or Man. But this laſt being the chief Part of the Law of *Moſes* is here likewiſe chiefly meant and intended. *Yet none of you keepeth the Law*; *i. e.* none of you obſerveth to do according to the Commands of the Moral Law. For our Saviour frequently bears them Witneſs that they were very punctual Obſervers of the Ceremonial and Judicial Laws, but condemns them for neglecting *the weightier Matters of the Moral Law, Judgment, Mercy, and Faith*, Matth. 23.

Secondly, Whereas it is ſaid, That *the Law was given unto them*, *i. e.* to the *Jews*, it muſt be underſtood that the Ceremonial and Judicial Law was given unto them both immediately, and only; but the Moral Law was given to them indeed immediately, but not only. No other People on Earth were neceſſarily obliged to the Obſervation of the Ceremonial Law, much leſs of the Judicial, but the *Jews* alone. Yea, and (as I have before obſerved,) Proſelytes of other Nations were admitted to the Hopes of Salvation, without binding them to any other Obſervances beſides the keeping of the Seven Precepts of *Noah*; *To renounce Idols, to worſhip the true God, to commit no Murther, nor Uncleanneſs, nor Theft, to execute Juſtice, and to abſtain from Blood.* But the Moral Law, although it was given to them immediately, yet not only to them; but its Obligation is as Univerſal as Humane Nature itſelf; for indeed it is the very Law of Nature and right Reaſon reduced into Precepts, and therefore although *Moſes* gave this Law unto them as the Miniſter and Mediator of the Old Covenant, yet it is likewiſe given to us by God as the Cauſe and Author of our Nature, and the Commands of it are as obligatory unto us as them; ſo that as our Saviour ſaith to the *Jews*, *Did not* Moſes *give you the Law?* I may ſay to you, *Did not God give you the Law? And yet none of you keepeth the Law.*

Thirdly, Whereas it is ſaid that *Moſes* gave them the Law, we muſt here Note,

Firſt, That *Moſes* gave it only Miniſterially, but God Primarily and Authoritatively: And therefore, *Gal.* 3. 19. it is ſaid, that *the Law was given by the Hand of a Mediator*, and *Moſes* is commended for being *faithful in all God's Houſe as a Servant*, *Heb.* 3. 5. as one who received Commands from the great Lord and Maſter of it, and delivered them to his Fellow-Servants.

Secondly, That although the Law were given by *Moſes*, yet as to the Moral Part of it, and ſome of the Ceremonial, it was owned in the Church of God long before his Miniſtry. As for ſome Parts of the Ceremonial Law, we read frequently of Sacrifices and Circumciſion in uſe among the Patriarchs many Ages before *Moſes*'s Time; and ſo ſaith our Saviour, *John* 7. 22. Moſes *gave unto you the Circumciſion, not becauſe it is of* Moſes, *but of the Fathers.* And for the Moral Law, all the Duties of it were incumbent upon Mankind from the very firſt Creation of the World, long before the Promulgation of the Law from Mount *Sinai.* Murther was forbidden, and known to be a Sin before the Lord Proclaimed, *Thou ſhalt not Kill.* Yea, and cauſleſs Anger, and bloody revengeful Purpoſes, as appears, *Gen.* 4. 5, 6. Fornication was then alſo accounted a Sin worthy of Death, as appeareth, *Gen.* 38. 24. The outward Worſhip and Service of God in Solemn and Publick Aſſemblies was then known to be a Duty, as appears, *Gen.* 4. 26. So that the Church of God never was, never ſhall be, without this Law, both written upon their Hearts, and likewiſe preach'd unto them publickly by the Miniſtry of the Church: For ſo *Noah* is ſaid to be *a Preacher of Righteouſneſs to the Old World*, 2 Pet. 2. 5. Yet,

Thirdly, It is ſaid to be given by *Moſes*, becauſe of the more ſolemn and conſpicuous Delivery of it at Mount *Sinai*, when God eſpecially magnified him, by calling him up into the Mount, converſing with him Forty Days, writing with his own Finger the Ten Commandments, or Two Tables of Stone, and delivering them into his Hands to exhibit unto the People. Now becauſe of this Solemn Promulgation of the Law by the Means and Miniſtry of *Moſes*, our Saviour tells the *Jews* that it was given them by him. And this is all that I ſhall conſider in the Expoſtulation, *Did not* Moſes *give you the Law?*

That which I principally intend to inſiſt on is the Accuſation, *And yet none of you keepeth the Law.* An Accuſation that may truly be laid not only againſt the *Jews*, but againſt all the World. Never any of the Sons of Men, from the very firſt Creation of the World unto this Day, excepting him only who was the Son of God, as well as the Son of Man, and *whom it became to fulfil all Righteouſneſs*, ever did, or can perfectly and exactly, fulfil all that the Law of God requires.

And to this the Scriptures give abundant Teſtimony, *Rom.* 3. 23. *All have ſinned, and come ſhort of the Glory of God.* Jam. 3. 2. *In many Things we offend all.*

And the Prophet confeſſeth the Corruption of our Natures, and the Imperfection of our beſt Performances, *Iſa.* 64. 6. *We are all as an unclean Thing, and all our Righteouſneſſes are as filthy Rags.* *Solomon* challengeth the beſt and holieſt upon this Point, Prov. 20. 9. *Who can ſay I have made mine Heart clean, I am pure from my Sin?* Many other Places may be alledged to the ſame Purpoſe; as 1 *John* 1. 8. *If we ſay that we have no Sin we deceive our ſelves, and the Truth is not in us.* And, *Verſe* 10. *If we ſay that we have not ſinned we make him a Liar.* And all theſe Exhortations which we find in Scripture to confeſs our Sins, to repent of them, to watch and ſtrive againſt them, do all clearly beat down the inſolent Pride of thoſe who except themſelves out of the Number of Tranſgreſſors and Offenders. And is it not very ſtrange, that after ſo many expreſs Teſtimonies of Scripture, than which nothing can be more plain and poſitive, notwithſtanding that every Day and Hour might Adminiſter abundant Conviction to them, yet there ſhould be a Generation of Men ſo impudently Vain-glorious as to boaſt of an abſolute Perfection in this Life? And yet this is the Doctrine of the *Papiſts*, that *a Man may all his Life-time eſchew every Mortal Sin, and do all that the Law of God requires of him.* And not only ſo, but as if God's Laws were not a Rule ſtrict enough for them to walk by, they hold, *he may do much more than he is oblig'd unto, and ſupererrogate, and merit for others who fall ſhort of Perfection, and lay the Alms of his good Works into the common Stocks and Treaſury of the Church, to be granted out to others that want them.* And although they affirm, that *a Juſtified Perſon is ſtill liable to commit Venial Sins*, yet they make theſe Venial Sins to be of ſo ſlight a Nature that *they are not repugnant to Grace, interrupt not our Friendſhip with God, deſerve not Eternal Puniſhments, require neither Confeſſion nor Repentance, and are of ſo harmleſs a Nature, that he that dieth in them may yet notwithſtanding be ſaved.* Certainly theſe be ſtrange kind of Sins, that do not offend God, nor deſerve Puniſhment, nor need Repentance; and if a Man live free from all theſe, I think he may readily conclude that he may live free from all Sin; for as they deſcribed theſe Venial Sins they can be none. Yea, ſome of them grant, *that by the ſpecial Grace of God a Man may live free from the Taint, not only of Mortal, but of Venial, Sins too, and ſo attain to a ſpotleſs Perfection.* And this proud Conceit of Perfection is not only entertained by *Papiſts*, but by a Sort of Frantick People among us, who yet exclaim againſt all others as *Popiſh* and *Antichriſtian*, but perceive not whoſe Craft hath taught them both that and many other Popiſh Doctrines; as *Juſtification by Works, the Inſufficiency of the Scriptures*, and *Infallibility ſeated in any Humane Breaſt: Certainly the Hand of* Joab *is in all this.* Concerning theſe I ſhall ſay no more but what the Wiſe Man obſerved of ſuch a Race of confident Self-Juſticiaries in his Days, *Prov.* 30. 12. *There is a Generation that are Pure in their own Eyes, and yet are not waſhed from their Filthineſs.*

Conc. Trid. Sef. 6. *c.* 11.

Bellar. de amiſ. Grat. l. 1. *c.* 3. *Nos docemus communi conſenſu peccata quædam ex natura ſua non indignum reddere hominem amicitia Dei, & Mortis æternæ reum.*

But what! Are then the Laws of God impoſſible to be fulfilled? Is it not our Imputation to the Equity and Wiſdom of God that he ſhould command that which we are not able to perform?

I Anſwer, *Firſt*, The Laws of God are in themſelves poſſible as well as juſt; and there is nothing which he now requires of us which he did not endow us with Strength in our Creation to perform.

Secondly, In this our fallen and corrupted Eſtate our perfect Obedience is become impoſſible; not becauſe the Law is more ſtrict and rigorous, but becauſe we are grown weaker, and more averſe.

Thirdly, It is no Injuſtice in God to require what is impoſſible for us to perform, when that Impoſſibility riſeth from our own Default. It is not God, but our ſelves, who have made the Obſervation of his Laws impoſſible. And altho' we have waſted our Stock, and are become Bankrupts, yet he may righteouſly exact from us the Debt of Obedience which we owe him.

Fourthly, Although a perfect and conſummate Obedience be now impoſſible, yet an inchoate and ſincere Obedience is poſſible through the Aſſiſtance of Divine Grace. And certainly that Law which commands abſolute Perfection from us, requires us to endeavour after the higheſt Degree that is attainable. So that theſe Commands which exceed our preſent Power are neither vain nor unjuſt: For they engage us to exert our Strength to the utmoſt, whereby we ſhall certainly attain unto a far greater Perfection in our Obedience, than if we were enjoined that which were eaſie, or meerly poſſible to perform; and ſuch is the Diſingenuity of our Temper, that as much as the Law were relaxed of its Severity, ſo much proportionably we alſo ſhould remit

remit of our Induſtry: And therefore ſince our Sloth will take Allowances to itſelf, it is far more expedient for us that God hath commanded from us Things beyond the Sphere of our preſent Ability, than if he had commanded what was within it. For I much doubt whether if God did not command us to do more than we can, we ſhould do as much as we do.

But you will ſay, to require more than is poſſible for us to perform may rather ſeem a Diſcouragement than an Excitement to our Endeavours. For what Natural Man will attempt that which he knows to be impoſſible?

To this I anſwer, *Firſt*, That there is a Twofold Impoſſibility; one that conſiſts in the Nature of the Thing propounded unto us, another that conſiſts only in an eminent and ſuperlative Degree of it. The firſt Sort of Impoſſibility, which conſiſts in the Nature of the Thing itſelf, doth utterly forbid all Attempts and Endeavours. Never any Wiſe Man attempted to climb up into the Sun, or to metamorphoſe himſelf into an Angel, becauſe the Thing itſelf in all conſiderable Degrees of it is impoſſible. But where the Impoſſibility conſiſts only in ſome eminent Degree, and yet every Degree that is attainable by us hath Excellency enough in itſelf to invite and engage our Endeavours, there the Impoſſibility of the higheſt Degree is no Diſcouragement to a Wiſe and Rational Man from attempting to do his uttermoſt. So it is in this Caſe, many Degrees of Holineſs and Obedience are attainable by us, and every Degree that we can attain unto is infinitely worth our Pains and Labour; and therefore though abſolute Perfection in it be impoſſible, yet this can be no Diſcouragement from uſing our utmoſt Endeavours. The more we ſtrive after it, the more we ſhall ſtill attain; and what we do attain is an abundant Recompence of our Induſtry, and carries in it ſo much Excellency as will quicken and excite us unto farther Improvements. And certainly whilſt we endeavour toward unattainable Perfection we ſhall attain unto much more than if we ſet our Mark ſhorter; as he that aims at a Star is likely to ſhoot much higher than he that aims only at a Turf.

Secondly, As we muſt diſtinguiſh of Impoſſibility, ſo likewiſe of Perfection, which is either Legal or Evangelical.

Firſt, There is a Legal Perfection, to which Two Things are neceſſarily required.

1ſt, Freedom from Original Sin, that there be no Taint derived down upon our Natures, no Corruption inherent in us, that ſhould incline us unto Evil: For where Original Sin is, there Legal Righteouſneſs and Perfection cannot poſſibly be, for even this Sin is a Violation of the Law.

2dly, There muſt be a perfect and exact actual fulfilling of all the Laws of God, without failing in the leaſt Circumſtance or leaſt Tittle of Obſervation, for Legal Perfection cannot poſſibly conſiſt with the leaſt Guilt.

Secondly, There is an Evangelical Perfection, which is a State, though not of Innocency, yet of ſuch a Perſonal Righteouſneſs and Holineſs as ſhall be accepted and rewarded by God. Now this Evangelical Perfection conſiſts in Three Things:

1ſt, In true and ſincere Repentance for our paſt Offences, begging Pardon at God's Hands, and endeavouring to abſtain from the Commiſſion of the like for the future.

2dly, In a true and lively Faith, whereby we rely upon the Merits and Satisfaction of Chriſt alone for the Remiſſion of our Sins.

3dly, In new and ſincere Obedience, endeavouring to live more holily, and to walk more ſtrictly and perfectly, before God, according to the Rules he hath preſcribed us in his holy Laws. And this conſiſts both in the Mortification of the corrupt and ſinful Deſires of the Fleſh, and in the daily quickning and renewing of the Spirit, whereby we grow in Grace, and make farther Progreſs in Chriſtianity; when we do all this in the Truth and Sincerity of our Souls, we are ſaid to be perfect with an Evangelical or Goſpel Perfection; and this indeed is all the inherent Perfection and Righteouſneſs that is attainable by us in this Life. Thus it is that the Saints are in Scripture termed Righteous. So *Noah* is called *Righteous*, Gen 7. 1. And *Abraham* pleads with God for the *Righteous in* Sodom, Gen. 18. 23, 24. And *Zachary* and *Elizabeth* have this Teſtimony, that *they were both Righteous, walking in all the Commandments of God blameleſs*, Luke 1. 6. Thus we have the Ways of Holineſs called *Ways of Righteouſneſs*, Pſal. 23. 3. And the Works of Holineſs, *Works of Righteouſneſs*, Pſal. 15. 2. Iſa. 64. 2, *&c.* This Evangelical Perfection is attainable in this Life, and indeed is attained by every ſincere and upright Chriſtian.

But

But for a Legal Perfection, it neither is, nor can be, attained in this Life; and that upon Two Accounts.

First, Becauſe of the infinite Exactneſs and Holineſs of the Law it is not attained.

Secondly, Becauſe of the Corruption of our Natures it cannot be attained.

First, The Law of God is infinitely Spiritual, and obligeth us not only to the Performance of the External Duties of Obedience, but requires alſo the abſolute Perfection of the inward Diſpoſitions; not only that our Love of God be ſincere and cordial, but that it muſt be intenſe and perfect to the higheſt Degree; thus, *Deut. 6. 5. Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Might.* The Law and Covenant of Works exact a Perfection of Degrees in our Love and Obedience, as well as of Parts: It muſt not only be ſincere, but compleat; it not only tries our Obedience by the Touchſtone, but weighs it in the Balance, and gives us no Grains of Allowance. Now is there any Man upon Earth that ſo loves God, or obeys him, that it is not poſſible he ſhould love him more, or obey him better? Do not ſome Chriſtians exceed others in their Grace and Holineſs? And might not all exceed themſelves if they would? The Law gives no Allowance for any Failings. And therefore if thou canſt love God more, and ſerve him better, than thou doſt, thou art not a Fulfiller of the Law, but a Tranſgreſſor of it. Hence St. *Auſtin* in his Confeſſions hath a Pious Meditation, *Woe to our commendable Life, if thou, Lord, ſetting thy Mercy aſide, ſhouldſt examine it according to the ſtrict Rules of Juſtice, and the Law.*

Secondly, Becauſe of the Corruption of our Natures this Legal Perfection cannot be attained in this Life: For we are totally depraved in every Power and Faculty of our Souls; and every Imagination of the Thoughts of our Hearts is only Evil continually. Our Underſtandings are darkned with the thick Miſts of Ignorance and Error, our Wills are perverted, and ſtand at a profeſſed Contradiction to the Holy Will of God, our Affections are become impure and ſenſual, our Hearts hard and inſenſible, our Conſciences ſeared and ſtupid, and our Carnal Minds are Enmity againſt God; *For they neither are ſubject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *Rom.* 8. 7. Now where there is this Corruption of Nature how can there poſſibly be Perfection of Life? For who can bring a clean Thing out of an Unclean? Not one. And although this Corruption be healed by regenerating Grace, yet it is healed but in Part. In the very beſt the Fleſh ſtill luſteth againſt the Spirit, and the Law of the Members warreth againſt the Law of the Mind, ſo that they cannot do the Things which they would, as the Apoſtle ſadly complains, *Rom.* 7.

Yea, let me add this too, That if Corruption were perfectly rooted out of the Heart of any, and ſuch an extraordinary Meaſure of ſanctifying Grace conferred upon them, as might inable them to perform whatſoever the Law of God required, and that to the laſt Degree of intenſe Love and Zeal, yet would not this their perfect Obedience amount unto a Legal Righteouſneſs. The Reaſon is, becauſe the Law of Works being given to Man in his pure and upright Eſtate, when he had a connatural Power of his own to obey it, requires Obedience to be performed only by his own Strength, and allows not the Auxiliaries of Divine and Supernatural Grace to inable him. If therefore we ſhould grant, (which yet we deny,) that through ſome extraordinary Aſſiſtance vouchſafed to ſome particular Man he ſhould perfectly fulfil the whole Law, yet this actual Obedience, becauſe it proceeds not from Original Righteouſneſs, and the Rectitude of his Nature wherewith he was at firſt endowed, would not at all avail him to the obtaining of Juſtification, according to the Terms of the Covenant of Works. For God requires not only Payment of the Debt of Obedience which we owe unto him, but alſo that this Payment be made out of the Stock of thoſe Abilities which he beſtowed upon our Nature in our firſt Creation. Now although it ſhould be poſſible for any Man to pay off the Debts of Nature, with the Treaſures of Grace received from Chriſt, yet this would not ſatisfie the Obligation of the Law, ſince in the firſt Covenant it was agreed between God and Man that Payment ſhould be made out of another Stock, *viz.* the Power and Free-will of uncorrupted Nature.

We are therefore under a Twofold Impoſſibility of being juſtified by the Law.

First, Becauſe our Obedience can never in this Life attain abſolute Perfection, but ſtill there will be Faults and Flaws in it from the Mixture of that Corruption which ſtill in part remains in the beſt and holieſt, who therefore ought daily to pray, not our

out of a Feigned and Complemental Humility, but a True and Deep Senſe of their Neceſſity: *Forgive us our Treſpaſſes.*

Secondly, Becauſe although our Obedience could be perfected, yet Perfect Obedience without Original Righteouſneſs will not amount unto a Legal Righteouſneſs.

And thus I have done with the Doctrinal Part of theſe Words, and ſhewn you the Impotency we all lye under of a Perfect and Exact Obedience to the Law.

Firſt, Then let this ſerve to abaſe the Pride, and ſtain the Glory, of all Fleſh. Search into thy ſelf, O Man! Conſider, what art thou but a Maſs of Sin, Rottenneſs and Corruption? Reflect back upon the whole Courſe of thy Life? How haſt thou ſpent thoſe Years which the Patience and Long-ſuffering of God hath lent thee? Haſt thou not lived in open Defiance with the Great God of Heaven, and a continual Violation of thoſe Laws which his Authority hath impos'd upon thee? Suffer thy Conſcience to awake, and bring in its Accompts; and though it ſhould be like the Unjuſt Steward, and ſet down Fifty for an Hundred, and ſmall Sins for great, yet even according to this Computation thou ſhalt find thy ſelf deſperately indebted to the Juſtice of God. Read over the Black Catalogue of thy Sins, and ſee with Aſtoniſhment and Horror how much thou oweſt.

Firſt, Art thou not Conſcious to thy ſelf of any Preſumptuous Sins committed againſt thy Knowledge, the Checks and Exclamations of thy Conſcience, againſt thy Natural Light and Reaſon, with a Deliberate and Reſolved Wilfulneſs? When thou haſt ſeen all the Curſes and Threatnings of the Law ſtand ready bent againſt thee, and Hell-fire flaſhing in thy very Face; when Conſcience hath commanded thee in the Name of the Great God to forbear, and denounced againſt thee Wrath and Death if thou dar'ſt commit it, haſt thou not then fallen upon thy Conſcience, violently ſtopp'd its Mouth, yea, wounded and ſtabbed it; and may not the Blood and Scars of it teſtifie againſt thee? Yea, to add Meaſure to this, haſt thou not frequently relapſed into the Commiſſion of theſe Preſumptuous and Daring Sins, and repeated them againſt thy Vows, and Proteſtations, and Prayers, and Seeming Repentance, and ſo ripping open the Wounds of thy Conſcience again before they were well cloſed, and making them bleed afreſh? Who of us all can acquit our ſelves of Sins againſt Knowledge and Conſcience, that have ever had any Knowledge or Conſcience?

Secondly, The Sins of Ignorance which you have committed are altogether numberleſs. The Soul naturally is a Dark and Confuſed Chaos, and until the Light of the Glorious Truth ſhine into it Sin and Duty lye undiſtinguiſhed, and in the Blindneſs of our Minds we oftentimes take the one for the other. We many Times tranſgreſs the Law becauſe we know it not, and many times tranſgreſs it when we intend to obſerve it. We heed not our own Actions, but let them paſs from us without Conſideration or Reflection; and truly the greateſt Part of our Lives is thus huddled up without pondering what we do; and we are equally ignorant as careleſs whether we do well or ill. And in ſuch neglected Actions the far greater Part muſt needs be ſinful; for when we heed not the Rule it is hard for us not to tranſgreſs it: And therefore ſaith the *Pſalmiſt*, Pſal. 19. 12. *Who can underſtand his Errors? Cleanſe thou me from my Secret faults?* Add to this,

Thirdly, All thy Sins of Infirmity and Weakneſs, Sins to which thou art betrayed, contrary to thy Purpoſe and Reſolutions by the ſudden Surprize of a Temptation; Sins which although they may not be wilful and preſumptuous, yet they may be very groſs and ſcandalous, as was St. *Peter*'s Denial of his Maſter. Caſt in alſo,

Fourthly, All the Swarms of thy Secret Sins, thy Vain Thoughts, and Sinful Deſires; Sins which though the World can take no Cognizance of them, yet are viſible and conſpicuous to the Eyes of the All-ſeeing God. He ſees a Sinful Object lying in the Embraces of thy Affections; and if there be but the leaſt hovering of thy Heart, the leaſt fluttering of thy Thoughts towards Vanity, he remarks it, and writes it down in his Debt-Book, although perhaps thy Conſcience may omit it. And, Oh how vaſt a Sum theſe alone amount unto! Thy Thoughts run as ſwift as Time, and click as faſt as the Moments. And ſuch a Giddy, Feathery, Unconſtant, Thing is the Mind of Man that we cannot dwell long upon any one Thought, but whilſt we are purſuing One, Ten Thouſand others ariſe: Our Thoughts are like thoſe Numberleſs Motes that play in a Sun-beam; they flit up and down in our Minds without any certain Scope or Deſign; we cannot turn our ſelves faſt enough to them, nor can we think what we think: But God knoweth them all, and for ſuch Infinite Multitudes of Thoughts he ſets down ſo many Sins; and yet beſides all theſe art thou not conſcious to thy ſelf,

Fifthly, Of

Fifthly, Of the Omiſſion of many Holy Duties which thou oughteſt to have performed in the ſeveral Times and Seaſons when God called for them: Canſt thou not call to Mind that thou haſt often refrained Prayer from God, or Charity from Men; that thou haſt not ſerved him, nor helped them, when thou mighteſt have done it? Haſt thou not neglected the Ordinances of Jeſus Chriſt, his Word and Sacraments, upon ſmall or fought Occaſions, or elſe fooliſh and groundleſs Prejudices? Endleſs it would be to recount all the Omiſſions we are guilty of; which certainly are many more than our Duties, and yet perhaps far more numerous.

Sixthly, All thy Miſcarriages in thoſe Duties which thou haſt performed, the Dulneſs of thy Affections, the Vagrancies of thy Thoughts, thy Hypocriſie and Formality, all thy Baſe and By-ends, which, like dead Flies, corrupt the moſt precious Ointment, are all Sins, and God's Law cenſures and condemns them for ſuch.

Now, O Sinner, having ſuch a Load of Guilt upon thy Soul how dareſt thou look the Holy and Juſt God in the Face? Conſider, O Wretch, what a Life is this which thou haſt led; that in all the Millions of Thoughts and Actions thou haſt employed thy ſelf about, the far greater Part ſhould be Sins for the Matter of them, and all the reſt ſinful for the Manner. Can thy Conſcience lye lulled aſleep when all thoſe Troops and Armies of *Philiſtines* be upon thee? Awake yet at length, O ſtupid Soul! Rouze thy ſelf, and conſider the woful and deſperate Eſtate in which thou art; wonder no longer at others that they complain and mourn, and go heavily under the Burthen of their Sins, and the Pangs and Smart of their Convictions: Muſe not that there ſhould be ſome few who with Horror cry out they are undone and ruined, eternally undone. Alas, wert thou but once ſhaken out of thy Lethargy, couldſt thou but look about thee, and ſeriouſly view and ponder the infinite Multitude and the Nature of thy Sins, nothing but the ſtrong Conſolations of God could keep thee from running up and down diſtracted with the Terrors of the Lord, and with the utmoſt Horror and Deſpair, crying out thou art damn'd, damn'd already. But the Truth is, Men are dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins; thoſe Sins which are the Cauſe of their Miſery keep them from feeling it. But believe it, you muſt be convinced of your Sins either here, or hereafter. Conſcience will revive in you, if not here, yet in Hell: Nay, it is now writing down your Sins againſt you, and drawing up the Bill of your Indictment; but as ſome uſe ſuch Juices that what they write ſhall not be legible till held to the Fire, ſo do many Mens Conſciences write down their Sins, which, although they cannot perhaps read them now, yet they ſhall read the long and black Scroul of them when they hold it againſt the Flames of Hell. And how ſad will it be then to know that you are Sinners, when you ſhall likewiſe know that you are eternally damn'd for your Sins? When your Conſciences, which are now peaceable and gentle, ſhall then on a ſudden rave, and ſhriek, and fly in your Faces, and begin then (but then alas too late) to terrifie and affright you, when there is no hope nor poſſibility of Remedy. Be perſuaded therefore now to recognize your Sins while there is yet Hope. The Day of Grace is not yet ſet upon you, Mercy and Pardon are yet offered to you, and thoſe Sins which you are convinced of by the Strictneſs of the Law, you may, if you will ſeek it by true Repentance, obtain Remiſſion of through the Grace and Mercy of the Goſpel.

Secondly, Are all Tranſgreſſors of the Law? Then here ſee a woful Shipwrack of the Hopes and Confidences of all Self-Juſticiaries. Hence learn, that an Honeſt, Quiet, Civil, Life, free from the groſs and ſcandalous Pollutions of the World, is no ſufficient Plea for Heaven; yet this alone is that which the Generality of the ignorant Sort eſpecially rely upon. Their Lives are Harmleſs, their Dealings Juſt and Upright, none can complain they are Wrong'd by them; and therefore certainly if God will ſave any they muſt be of the Number. I heartily wiſh that in theſe Words I could have perſonated you, but truly I doubt that the moſt of you are not yet come ſo far as Morality, nor have attained to the Honeſty of thoſe who yet ſhall fall ſhort of Heaven. But ſuppoſe you could really plead this, yet this Plea is invalid: For is there nothing that you know by your ſelves, either relating to God or Man, wherein you have offended? Had you never ſo much as a Thought in you that ſlipp'd awry? Have you never utter'd a Word that ſo much as liſp'd contrary to the Holy Law of God? Did you never do any one Action which Purity and Innocence itſelf might not own? Have your Lives in every Point been as ſtrict and holy as the Law of God commands them to be? If thou dareſt to affirm this thou makeſt not thy ſelf the more innocent thereby, but the more unpardonable, and art a ſenſleſs, ſtupid, Wretch,

for

for thinking thy ſelf pure and clean; or if upon a narrower Search thou findeſt ſome Miſcarriages by thy ſelf, remember thou art yet but at the Threſhold of thy Heart; enter farther into thy ſelf, and thou ſhalt diſcover yet greater Abominations. However, could it be ſuppoſed that thou art guilty but of one Sin, and that one the leaſt that ever was committed, yet this one Sin makes thee a Tranſgreſſor of the Law, and the Guilt of it can never be expiated by any Thing which thou canſt either do or ſuffer; but Eternal Death and Wrath muſt be thy Portion, unleſs the Blood of Jeſus Chriſt purge thee from it.

Thirdly, See then what abſolute need we all ſtand in of Jeſus Chriſt. Not only thoſe amongſt us whoſe Lives have been openly groſs and ſcandalous, but even thoſe alſo who are the moſt circumſpect and careful in their Walkings. Though they do not wallow and roul themſelves in the common Pollutions of the World, yet it is not poſſible but that in ſo dirty a Road they muſt be beſparkled, and their Garments ſpotted with the Fleſh. Abſolute Perfection is a State rather to be wiſh'd for than enjoy'd in this Life; the utmoſt we can here attain unto is not to commit preſumptuous Sins, nor to allow our ſelves in any, when through Infirmity we do commit them. But none of our Sins, whether of Preſumption, or of Weakneſs, whether of Ignorance, or againſt Knowledge, whether the Sins of our Thoughts, or of our Actions, can be pardoned without the Blood of God, and the Sufferings of our Almighty Saviour. It is the ſame Precious Blood that ſatisfied God's Juſtice for the Adultery and Murther of *David*, the Inceſt of *Lot*, the Perjury of *Peter*, that muſt ſatisfie it likewiſe for thy vain and fooliſh Thoughts, and raſh and idle Words, if ever thou art ſaved. For *without Blood there is no Remiſſion*, Heb. 9. 22. and *without Remiſſion there can be no Salvation*, Acts 22. 18. And indeed this is one of the great and main Ends of giving the Law, the Neceſſity and All ſufficiency of Chriſt to ſave us may be rendred the more conſpicuous. Thus ſaith the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 10. 4. *Chriſt is the End of the Law for Righteouſneſs to every one that believeth.* The Law was given us, not that we ſhould ſeek Juſtification by obſervance of it; but finding it impoſſible to be juſtified by fulfilling of it, we ſhould thereby be driven unto Chriſt's Righteouſneſs, who hath both fulfilled it in himſelf, and ſatisfied for our tranſgreſſing it: And therefore ſaith the ſame Apoſtle, *Gal.* 3. 24. *The Law was our Schoolmaſter to bring us to Chriſt, that we might be juſtified by Faith.* To this End was it promulgated, that ſeeing the Multiplicity and Strictneſs of its Commands, the Rigour and utter Inſupportableneſs of its Threatnings, and being withal ſenſibly convinced of our own Weakneſs and Impotency to fulfil the Commands enjoined, and thereupon of our liableneſs to undergo the Penalty threatned, we might thereby be frighted and terrified, and as it were by a School-maſter whipt, unto Chriſt, to find that Righteouſneſs in him that they may anſwer all the Demands of the Law, which in our ſelves we could not find. And whilſt we make this Uſe of the Law we bring it to be ſubſervient to the Goſpel.

A SERMON ON *GALATIANS* iii. 10.

For as many as are of the Works of the Law are under the Curſe: For it is written, Curſed is every one that continueth not in all Things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them.

THE Law conſiſts of Two Parts, a Syſtem of Precepts, and the Sanction and Enforcement of thoſe Precepts, by Promiſes and Threatnings. According to the Firſt it is the Rule of our Obedience, and ſhews what we ought to render unto God; according to the Second it is the Rule of Divine Juſtice, and ſhews what God will render unto us. I have already conſidered the Precepts of the Law, and in part treated of thoſe Important Duties, both of Piety towards God, and of Love and Equity towards Men, that are ſummarily comprehended in them.

The Sanction of this Law is Twofold.

Firſt, A Promiſe of Life and Happineſs to the Obſervers of it. *Rom.* 10. 5. *Moſes* deſcribeth *the Righteouſneſs which is of the Law, that the Man that doth thoſe Things ſhall live by them.* And again, *Gal.* 3. 12. *The Man that doth them ſhall live in them*, *i. e.* by them. Which we have once more confirmed to us, *Ezek.* 20. 11. *I gave them my Statutes, and my Judgments, which if a Man do he ſhall even live in them.* All which Places are tranſcribed from that of *Moſes*, Levit. 18. 5. *Ye ſhall keep my Statutes, and my Judgments; which if a Man do he ſhall live in them*, or *by them.* But becauſe our Natures are wofully degenerated from their Primitive Excellency, and we have contracted ſuch an Impotency, that the ſame Obedience which in our upright Eſtate was both eaſie and delightful, is now become irkſome and impoſſible, (as I have demonſtrated to you in the laſt Subject I treated of,) therefore we can receive no Conſolation from this Promiſe, not entertain any Hopes of Life and Salvation, according to the Tenour of this Covenant of Works: *For all have ſinned, and are come ſhort of the Glory of God.* The Precepts of the Law convince us of Sin, and our Sins convince us that we have no Right to the Promiſe of the Law.

And therefore as I have endeavoured to promote the Conviction of Sin, by repreſenting to you the infinite Defects, Irregularities, and Contrarieties, of our Actions, compared with the Divine Commands; ſo now likewiſe I ſhall endeavour to convince of that Wrath which is due unto the Tranſgreſſors of the Law.

For there is a Second Sanction of the Law, by the Threatnings of a moſt heavy and tremendous Curſe againſt all that tranſgreſs it; a Curſe that will blaſt and wither their Souls for ever. And this we have in the Words of my Text, *Curſed is every one who*, &c.

The great Deſign of the Apoſtle in this Chapter, and indeed in this whole Epiſtle, is to demonſtrate that Juſtification cannot poſſibly be obtained by the Righteouſneſs of the Law, nor according to the Terms of the Firſt Covenant, *Do this and live.* And among many others, one of the ſtrongeſt Arguments he makes uſe of to prove this his Aſſertion lyes couch'd in theſe Words which we are now conſidering.

Wherein

Wherein we have these Two Parts:

First, A *Thesis* or *Position*: *As many as are of the Works of the Law are under the Curse.*

Secondly, A Proof of this Position by an Irrefragable Testimony of Scripture: *For it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all Things that are written in the Book of the Law to do them.*

The Words are plain and obvious; only I shall briefly enquire,

First, What the Apostle means by these *who are of the Works of the Law.* And,

Secondly, What it is to be *Accursed.*

To the former I answer, To be *of the Works of the Law* signifies no other than to expect Justification and Eternal Happiness by Legal Works, to depend wholly on our Obedience unto, and Observation of, the Law, to render us acceptable to God, and worthy of Eternal Life. Those who thus rely on a Legal Righteousness are said to be *of the Works of the Law*, (as Persons are said to be of such or such a Party,) because they stiffly defended the Cause of the Law, and stood for Justification by the Observance of it, in Opposition to the Grace of the Gospel, and the Way of obtaining Justification and Eternal Life by believing. But, saith the Apostle, as many as are of this Party and Faction are accursed, even by the Sentence of that Law which they hope will justifie them. *For it is written in the Law, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all Things*, &c. Now,

Secondly, To be accursed, or to be under the Curse, is no other than to be liable unto, or actually under, that Wrath and Punishment which the Law threatens shall be inflicted on the Transgressors as a Satisfaction to Divine Justice for their Offences; so that the True and Proper Notion of a Curse is this, that it is the Denunciation, or Execution, of the Punishment contain'd in the Law, in order to the Satisfaction of Divine Justice for transgressing the Precepts of it. Some therefore are only under the Curse denounc'd, and so are all Wicked Men whose State is prosperous in this Life; though they flourish in Wealth and Honour, and float in Ease and Pleasure, yet are they liable to all that Woe and Wrath with which the Threatnings of the Law stand charged against them. Some are under the Curse already executed, and so are all Wicked Men, on whom God begins to take Vengeance, and exact Satisfaction in the Miseries and Punishments which he inflicts on them in this Life. He sometimes puts the Cup of Fury and Trembling into their Hands while they are on Earth, and gives them some Foretastes of that Bitter Draught, the Dregs of which they must for ever drink of in Hell, and there they are accursed compleatly and eternally. For the Curse of the Law contains in it all the Direful Ingredients of God's Wrath, whatsoever we can suffer either in this World, or in the World to come, all Plagues, Woes and Miseries, being comprehended in that Death threatned in the Covenant of Works, *In the Day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die*, Gen. 2. 17. 'Tis true, many Godly Men suffer Sore Afflictions in this Life, Pains, Diseases, Losses, Persecutions, from Men, and Chastisements from God; yet these are not Curses to them, because not inflicted for the Satisfaction of Divine Justice, but for the Exercise of their Graces, and the Manifestation of his Holiness, (as I shall hereafter shew you more at large:) But whatsoever Evil any Wicked Man suffers, it is from the Malignity of the Curse, which will at last pour all its Venom into their Cup in Hell.

And thus you have seen what it is to be of *the Works of the Law*, and what it is to be of the *Curse of the Law.*

Suffer me only to Paraphrase the Words, and I shall add no more for Explication. It is impossible, saith the Apostle, that any should be now justified by the Observation of the Law; for as many as rely upon their Works only to justifie them, and endeavour to uphold the Faction of a Legal Righteousness, against the Grace of the Gospel, and the Way of Justification by Faith, they are under a Curse, and stand liable to all the Punishments which the Law threatens: *For even in the Law it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all Things that are written in the Book of the Law to do them*; which because no meer Man hath done, therefore all lye under the Doom of this Curse, and those who expect Justification by no other Way must for ever lye under the Execution of it. And this I take to be the Clear Scope of the Apostle's Argument.

Now whereas he saith, *It is written*, he certainly refers us to *Deut.* 27. 26. *Cursed is he that confirmeth not all the Words of this Law to do them.* In the Original

it is, קוים *Non ſtabilet*, doth not eſtabliſh or ratifie. In the *Septuagint*, οὐκ ἔμμένο, *non permanet*, doth not continue. And according to that Tranſlation the Apoſtle both read and uſed them. However the Senſe is the ſame in both.

You ſee then what an Univerſal Curſe theſe Words denounce: A Curſe that ſets its Mouth, and diſchargeth its Thunder, againſt all the ſinful Sons of *Adam:* A Curſe it is, which, as *Zachary* ſpeaks, *Chap.* 5. 3. *Goes forth over the Face of the whole Earth*, and will, if Mercy rebate not the Edge of it, *cut off on every Side* all thoſe that ſtand in its Way; that is, all that are Sinners; and all are ſo, for the Characters which the Apoſtle doth here give to thoſe who are under the Curſe of the Law are ſo general and comprehenſive, that no Man living could poſſibly eſcape if God ſhould judge him according to the Conditions of the Covenant of Works. For,

Firſt, It is ſaid that every one is accurſed that doth not thoſe Things which are written in the Book of the Law; and this is a Curſe that cuts off on both Sides: On this Side it cuts off thoſe who are but negatively Righteous; who ground all their Hopes for Heaven and Happineſs upon what they have not done, and put into the Inventory of their Virtues that they have not been Vicious, no Extortioners, no unjuſt Perſons, no Adulterers, *&c.* But alas! this Account will not paſs in the Day of Reckoning. The Law requires thee not only to forbear the groſs Acts of Sins, but to perform the Duties of Obedience: And it cuts off on that Side all thoſe who have done contrary to what is written in the Law; and that not only ſcandalous and outrageous Sinners, but even thoſe who have been leaſt peccant, and rather Sinners in Thought and Imagination than in Practice; yet theſe alſo fall under the Curſe of the Law.

Secondly, Thoſe alſo who have not done all that is written in the Law are ſtruck with this *Anathema*, or Curſe: And where's the Man that dares lift up his Face to juſtifie himſelf againſt this Charge? Is there no one Duty, either of the Firſt or Second Table, reſpecting either God or Man, that thou haſt utterly neglected? Is there no one Sin that thou haſt committed, either Ignorantly or Knowingly, either out of Weakneſs or Wilfulneſs, by Surprize, or upon Deliberation? Certainly the Law of God is ſo vaſtly large and comprehenſive, that we can ſcarcely know all that is contained in it; and our Impotence and Corruption ſo great, that much leſs can we perform it; and yet in a Caſe of the leaſt Failure in any one Particular we become obnoxious to the Curſe and Malediction. But ſuppoſe that at ſome Time or other thou ſhouldeſt have performed every particular Duty, yet,

Thirdly, Haſt thou continued in all Things that are written in the Law to do them? Haſt thou ſpun an even Thread of Obedience? Are there no Flaws, no Breaks, no Breaches, in it? Haſt thou been always conſtant in the higheſt Fervour of thy Zeal for God? Haſt thou been in the Fear of the Lord all the Days of thy Life? Have thy Affections never languiſh'd, thy Thoughts never turned aſide, ſo much as to glance upon Vanity? Didſt thou never drop one unſavoury Word, nor do any one Action, which both for the Matter and Manner of it was not perfectly agreeable to the Law? If otherwiſe (as indeed ſuch an abſolute Perfection of Holineſs is to be found in no Creatures but the glorified Spirits,) thou art ſtill expoſed to the Curſe of the Law; for curſed is every one that continueth not in all Things that are written in the Book of the Law to do them.

Now this Curſe is moſt dreadful, if we conſider that it is Univerſal, and extends itſelf not only over all Perſons, but unto all Things; every Thing which a Sinner either doth or hath is accurſed to him: Let us a little rip up the Bowels of this Curſe that you may ſee how much Rancour and Venom is contained in it.

Firſt, He is accurſed in all his Temporal Enjoyments. His Bread is kneaded, and his Drink mingled, with a Curſe; his Table becomes a Snare to him, and every Morſel he eats is dipp'd in the Bitterneſs of God's Wrath and Curſe. In his Health his Food is poiſoned with this Curſe, and in his Sickneſs his Phyſick. He is curſed in every Place where he comes, and the Place curſed for his ſake: *Curſed in the City, and curſed in the Field; curſed in his Basket and Store; curſed in the Fruit of his Body, and in the Fruit of his Land; in the Increaſe of his Kine, and of his Flocks; curſed when he cometh in, and when he goeth out*; as we find this Bed-roll of Curſes denounced againſt him, *Deut.* 28. from the 15th to the 20th Verſe. His very Mercies are Curſes unto him; as on the contrary, a true Believer's Afflictions are Bleſſings. He is bleſſed in Poverty, in Sickneſs, in Perſecution, yea, in Death itſelf: So Unbeliever's Mercies are all turned into Plagues and Curſes: For as in an unſound and corrupted

corrupted Body, the wholſomeſt Food converts to Putrefaction and peccant Humours, and nouriſheth the Diſeaſe more than the Man; ſo to a corrupt and ſinful Soul the beſt of God's Temporal Favours turn to the Nouriſhment of his Diſeaſe. His Plenty and Proſperity do but purvey for his Luſts; and Abundance that God gives him doth but lay in Proviſion for the Fleſh; and through the Secret, but Righteous, Judgment of God proves only a ſtronger Temptation unto Sin, and makes him the more fit to promote the Devil's Service, and his own Damnation.

Secondly, He is accurſed in all his Spiritual Enjoyments. The Sacred Ordinances of Jeſus Chriſt, which are the only ordinary Means which God hath appointed to make us Eternally Bleſſed, yet even theſe are all Curſed to him; for they do but the more harden and confirm him in his Sins, and ripen him the ſooner for Everlaſting Deſtruction. For as the Rain which falls upon the Earth makes a living Tree, whoſe Sap is in it, to bud and flouriſh, and bring forth its ſeaſonable Fruits, but only ſerves the ſooner to rot a dead and wither'd Tree: So thoſe very Ordinances and Diſpenſations of the Means of Grace, which diſtil alike both upon Believers and Unbelievers, have a far different Influence upon them. Into the one they kindly inſinuate, and call forth their latent Graces; and where they find the Root of the Matter, make them ſprout and bloſſom into a Beautiful Profeſſion, and make them bring forth plentiful Fruits unto Holineſs. But to the other, that are dead Trunks, theſe Showers of Heaven, and Droppings of the Sanctuary, which fall upon them, tend only to rot them, and to make them the ſooner fit Fewel for Hell, and Everlaſting Burnings. And Oh, what a ſad and dreadful Curſe is this, that thou who comeſt to hear the ſame Word preached, which to others proves the *Savour of Life unto Life Eternal*; to thee, through the Corruption and Wickedneſs of thine own Heart, it ſhould prove the *Savour of Death unto Death Eternal*; and inſtead of humbling thee under the Power and Evidence of the Truth, ſhould only exaſperate thine Heart againſt the Truth, and thoſe who diſpence it, that the Sound of the Goſpel ſhould only deafen thine Ears, and the Light of the Glorious Truth only blind thine Eyes! That thou who perhaps partakeſt of the Sacrament ſhould'ſt eat thine own Damnation when thou eateſt the Body of a Saviour, and drink a deep Curſe to thy ſelf when thou drinkeſt the Cup of Bleſſing! Thy Sins are of ſo baneful a Nature that they poiſon even the Blood of Chriſt unto thee; and whilſt the Heavenly Meat is in thy Mouth, even the Body of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, which is Meat indeed to a believing Soul, the Curſe of God cometh upon thee! And yet how many ſuch Spiders have we who ſuck Poiſon out of the ſweeteſt Flowers? Clayey and Earthly Souls, that are but harden'd by the Sun-ſhine of the Goſpel, and made the more incapable of any Impreſſions to be wrought upon them: And what a dreadful Curſe is this, when the Means of Grace ſhall be turned into the Occaſion of Sin? How Deplorable is their Eſtate when Mercy itſelf ſhall Ruin them, and Salvation itſelf ſhall Deſtroy them?

Thirdly, If all the Favours of God's Providence, and all the Diſpenſations of his Grace, then certainly much more are all their Chaſtiſements and Afflictions turned into Curſes. If there be Poiſon in the Honey, much more certainly is there in the Sting. If God be wroth with them when he ſhines, much more when he frowns, upon them. Indeed true Believers may with a great deal of Peace and Calmneſs undergo all their Afflictions; for though they be ſore and heavy yet there is nothing of the Curſe in them. That was all received into the Body of Chriſt when he hung upon the Croſs; and their Father corrects them, not to ſatisfie his Juſtice upon them, but only by ſuch a ſharp Medicine to purge them from their Sins, and to make them Partakers of his Holineſs; though the Potion may be Bitter and Irkſome in the taking, yet the Effects of it are Salutary and Healthful; it is not the Evils we ſuffer that are Curſes, but the Ordination of thoſe Evils to the ſatisfying of Divine Vengeance upon us. And therefore ſad and dreadful is the Condition of guilty Sinners who are out of Chriſt; for there is not the leaſt Affliction that befals them, not the leaſt Gripe of any Pain, not the leaſt Loſs of their Eſtates, the moſt ſlight and inconſiderable Croſs that is, but it is a Curſe inflicted upon them by the Juſtice of God for the Guilt of their Sins. God is beginning to ſatisfie his Juſtice upon them; he is beginning to take them by the Throat, and to exact from them what they owe him. Every Affliction is to them but part of Payment of that vaſt and infinite Sum of Plagues which God will moſt ſeverely require from them in Hell. And there,

Fourthly,

Fourthly, They ſhall be curſed to Purpoſe, and lye for ever under the Revenging Wrath of God: Their Sentence is, *Depart from me ye Curſed*, Matth. 25. 41. Hell indeed is the General Aſſembly of all Curſes and Plagues. All the Curſes they have undergone in this preſent Life are but the Curſes and Preparations to this Fatal and Final Curſe. They are eternally curſed,

Firſt, In their Separation from the Sight and Preſence of God. They have indeed the Preſence of his Wrath to torment them, and of his Power to uphold them under their Torments, and to enlarge their Souls to contain all thoſe Vials of Pure Wrath and Fury which he will pour into them; but they are for ever cut off from the Preſence of his Grace, and of his Glory. The Enjoyment of God is the Sole Bleſſedneſs of a Rational Creature: And therefore to be cut off from thoſe Ineffable Communications of himſelf, which he vouchſafes to the Bleſſed Spirits, is ſuch a Curſe as is as Ineffable as are the Joys and Happineſſes which they loſe.

Secondly, They are curſed in the Society of Devils and Damned Spirits; hideous Company, who both upbraid and torture them for their Sins.

Thirdly, They are accurſed in the Work of Hell; for their whole Employment ſhall be Blaſpheming and Curſing, and in the Anguiſh and Horror of their Spirits roaring out, and exclaiming both againſt God and themſelves: Then *as they loved Curſing, and cloathed themſelves with it as with a Garment, ſo it ſhall come into their Bowels like Water, and like Oil into their Bones*; as the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks, *Pſalm* 109. 18.

Fourthly, They ſhall be curſed in the Pains and Torments they muſt eternally ſuffer. Every Limb ſhall drop with Flakes of Unquenchable Fire, and the Worm of Conſcience ſhall prey upon them, and ſting them with Unſupportable Anguiſh; and in this Unſpeakable Torture ſhall they ever live a never-dying Death. This is their Final Curſe, *Upon the Wicked God ſhall rain Fire, Snares and Brimſtone, and an horrible Tempeſt; this ſhall be the Portion of their Cup.*

And thus you ſee what Malignity and Venom the Curſe contains, which the Law threatens againſt all the Tranſgreſſors of it.

Now briefly to apply this.

Firſt, See here what an Accurſed Thing Sin is, that carries wrapp'd up in its Bowels Woe, Wrath, and Eternal Death. To this it is that you owe all the Miſeries you have already felt; and to this are due all that God hath threatned to inflict hereafter. The Law is not to be condemned for condemning the Tranſgreſſors of it; the Juſtice of God is not to be cenſur'd for taking the Forfeiture of our Lives and Souls; but all our Miſery is to be charged upon our ſelves, upon our Corrupt Natures, and our Sinful Lives. We our ſelves breed thoſe Vipers that gnaw our very Bowels: And as Putrified Bodies breed thoſe Filthy Worms and Inſects which devour them, ſo do we breed thoſe Filthy Luſts in our Hearts which are continually preying upon our Vitals, and will at laſt fatally deſtroy us. As God is an Holy God, ſo he infinitely hates Sin; and as he is a Juſt God, ſo he will aſſuredly puniſh it: Not a Soul of Man ſhall eſcape, not a Sin paſt by without having its due Curſe; yea, we find God ſo hates Sin, that when he found but the Imputation of it upon his own Son, Divine Vengeance would not ſuffer him to eſcape, but loads him with Sorrow, and fills his Soul with Darkneſs and Agonies, nails him to the Croſs, and there exacts from him a Dreadful Recompence, which he was fain to make good to the Utmoſt Demand of his Father's Juſtice before he could be diſcharged. One Drop of this Poiſon being let fall upon the once Glorious Angels turn'd them into Devils, made all their Rays of Light and Luſtre fall off from them; and being once tainted with this Venom, God could no longer endure them in his Preſence, but hurls them down all flaming into Hell. It is Sin that is the Fewel of thoſe unquenchable Flames, and lays in all thoſe Stores of Fire and Brimſtone, which ſhall there burn for ever. It is a Sin that diſrobed Man of his Innocence, turned him out of Paradiſe, and will certainly, if not repented of and forſaken, turn him into Hell. And therefore as ye love God, or your own Souls, be ſure that ye hate Iniquity; entertain not any Kind Thoughts of it, however it tempt and ſolicite you. Remember the Curſe of God is affix'd inſeparably unto it; and if you will ſuffer the Accurſed Thing to cleave unto you, you muſt for ever be accurſed with it.

Secondly, If every Tranſgreſſor of the Law be accurſed, ſee then the Deſperate Folly of thoſe Wretches who make ſlight of Sin, and account the Commiſſion of it a Matter of ſmall or no Concern to them. They play with Death, and dally with Woes and Curſes; and ſo ſtupid and inſenſate are they, that they think that

to

to be of no great Moment, which yet can everlaſtingly damn them. Did we but ſeriouſly conſider with what a weighty Curſe every Sin is burthened, how much Fire, and Sulphur, and deadly Materials, are contained within the Bowels of it, we ſhould be as fearful to touch, or come near, it, as to take up a lighted Grenado when it is juſt ready to break about us, and tear us in pieces; and certainly they are moſt juſtly to be condemned of Madneſs and Folly that will raſhly venture upon their own Everlaſting Deſtruction, and hurl Firebrands, Arrows, and Death, which will aſſuredly light upon themſelves, and yet ſay, *Am I not in Sport?*

Thirdly, If every Tranſgreſſion expoſeth us to the Curſe, beware then that you never encourage your ſelves to commit any Sin, becauſe perhaps the World accounts it but ſmall and little. For the leaſt is as much a Tranſgreſſion of the Law, and makes thee as liable to the Curſe of God, and Eternal Damnation, as the greateſt and moſt flagitious. They are all mortal and deadly, and thou maiſt as well ſuffer a little Stab at the Heart, as allow thy ſelf in the Commiſſion of any Sin becauſe it is little.

Fourthly, See here what Reaſon we have to bleſs God for Jeſus Chriſt, who hath delivered us from the Curſe of the Law. But ſo much for this Time.

An Expoſition on the Lord's Prayer: With a Catechiſtical Explanation thereof, by Way of Queſtion and Anſwer, for the Inſtructing of Youth.

A Practical Expoſition on the Lord's Prayer.

Matth. vi. 9, 10, &c.

After this manner therefore Pray ye, Our Father, which art in Heaven: Hallowed be thy Name: Thy Kingdom come: Thy Will be done, in Earth as it is in Heaven: Give us this Day our daily Bread: And forgive us our Debts as we forgive our Debtors: And lead us not into Temptation: But deliver us from Evil: For thine is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory, for ever. Amen.

HAving often ſeriouſly conſidered with my ſelf of the great Uſe that is made of this moſt Excellent Form of Prayer, Compoſed by our Bleſſed Lord and Saviour himſelf; as alſo of the great Benefit and Advantage that might accrue unto all thoſe that with Underſtanding make a due Uſe of it in their daily Devotions, I thought it might be very neceſſary for your Inſtruction, and

and greatly conducible unto your Salvation, to lay before your Consideration as brief and succinct an Exposition thereof as the large Extent and various Copiousness of the Matter contain'd therein will permit.

The Blessed Apostle St. *Paul* in 1 *Cor.* 14. 15. tells us, *That he would pray with the Spirit, and he would pray with Understanding also.* And indeed when we pray to pray with Understanding what we pray, is one great Requisite to make our Prayers Spiritual, and through the Prevailing Intercession of Jesus Christ to become acceptable unto God the Father. But to mutter over a Road of Words only, (as the Papists are taught, and as Multitudes of many Ignorant Persons among us do also,) without understanding what they signifie, or being duly affected with those Wants and Necessities which we beg of God the Supplies of, is not to offer up a Prayer unto the Almighty, but only to make a Charm.

Now because there is no Form of Prayer that ever we have heard or read of that is deservedly so much in use as this of our Lord's is, I shall endeavour, in some Discourses thereupon, to unfold to you those Voluminous Requests which we offer up unto God when we thus pray, as our Saviour teacheth us; wherein, as I doubt not but as I may greatly instruct the Ignorance of many, so possibly I may bring very much to the Remembrance of those who have attain'd to great Understanding in Religion those Things which may provoke their Zeal, and excite their Affections: And both these Undertakings, through the Blessing of God upon it, may be very usefully profitable to enable them to pray with Understanding, and with the Spirit also, when they approach the Throne of Grace to present their Petitions unto the Great God, as by the Intercession, so in the Words, of his Dear Son.

In this Chapter, which contains in it great Part of our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount, our Lord lays before his Hearers several Directions concerning Two Necessary Duties in a Christian's Practice, and they are Almsgiving and Prayer; the former a Duty relating more immediately unto Men, the latter a Duty in a more especial Manner respecting God himself; in both which he not only cautions us against, but strictly forbids, all Ostentation and Vainglory. *Therefore*, says he, *when thou doft thine Alms do not sound a Trumpet before thee, for this is the Practice of Hypocrites, that they may have Glory of Men*, Verse 2. *And when thou prayest be not as the Hypocrites, for they love to pray in the Synagogues, and Corners of the Streets, that they be seen of Men*, Verse 5. Thus must we not do in either of these Cases; for as we must not give Alms that we may be seen of Men, so neither must we pray that we may be heard and observ'd of Men: For what can be more absurd and ridiculous, as well as wicked and impious, than to be begging Applause from some when we are giving Alms to others? Or, whilst we are praying to the Great God of Heaven and Earth, to make frail Mortal Men, like our selves, our Idols? Which we do whensoever we pray rather that we may be heard and admir'd by Men, than that God should hear us, and accept us.

In the next Words our Saviour proceeds in laying down some other Directions concerning the Duty of Prayer, and therein he forbids his Hearers to use Vain Repetitions in Prayer, *Verse 7. When you pray use not Vain Repetitions, as the Heathens do.* Not that all Repetitions in Prayer are Vain Babblings in the Sight of God; for our Lord himself pray'd Thrice, using the same Words; for so we read, *Matth.* 26. and 44. For doubtless as Copiousness and Variety of Fluent Expressions in any usually flow from raised Affections, so when those Affections are heightned and raised to an Extasie and Agony of Soul in our Wrestlings with God in Prayer, Ingeminations are then the most Proper and most Elegant Way of expressing them, doubling and redoubling the same Petitions again and again, not allowing God (if I may so speak with Holy Reverence) so much Time, nor our selves so much Leisure, as to form in our Minds, much more with our Lips, to offer up any New Requests, till by a Holy Violence in wrestling with God we have extorted out of his Hands those Mercies and Blessings our Hearts are set upon the suing to him for. Vain Repetitions therefore are such as are made use of by any without New and Lively Stirrings and Motions of the Heart and Affections at the same Time: And that which makes a Prayer vain, makes a Repetition in Prayer to be vain also. Now that is a Vain Prayer, and we shall certainly find it so, when the Requests we offer up to God therein are heartless and lifeless. For we must know God hath commanded us to pray, not that he might be excited and moved by hearing the Voice of our Cries in Prayer to give unto us those Mercies and Blessings which he himself was not

not reſolved beforehand to beſtow upon us, but that we our ſelves might be fitted and prepared to receive from him what he is always ready and willing to confer upon us. He requires Prayer from us, not that he might be affected therewith; for as the Apoſtle St. *James* tells us, *With him there is no Variableneſs, nor ſhadow of Turning*, James 1. 17. but that we our ſelves might have our Hearts raiſed and affected therewith. And therefore the chiefeſt Effect of Prayer being to affect our ſelves, if Prayer itſelf be not vain, neither are Repetitions in Prayer vain, if whilſt we are ſpreading the ſame Requeſts before God we do it with new Affections and Deſires. No Prayer therefore ought to be accuſed of idle Babbling, and vain Repetitions; but thoſe that Pray may (I fear) too often be charged with it. And here by the Way I deſire all thoſe who are offended at, or refuſe to join with, the Stated Forms of Prayer that the Church hath appointed to be made uſe of, either in Publick or Private, becauſe the ſame Requeſts do many times occur therein, to keep a ſtrict Eye upon their Hearts and Affections, and then the Scruples and Objections that they make will preſently be removed; for it is much in their own Power to make them to be either vain Repetitions, or the moſt fervent Ingeminations of their moſt Affectionate Deſires unto God, and the moſt Spiritual and Forcible Part of all their Prayers and Supplications they offer up unto him.

But then further, as our Saviour forbids vain Repetitions in Prayer, ſo he likewiſe forbids much Speaking; for they think, ſays our Saviour, St. *Matth. 6. 7. That they ſhall be heard for their much Speaking.* Now as the former Prohibition doth not exclude all Repetitions in Prayer, ſo neither doth this latter exclude (as ſome ignorant Perſons perhaps who are ſoon wearied out with the Service of God may be apt to think) long Prayers, for this would be a flat Contradiction to his own Practice, for it is ſaid in St. *Luke 6. 12. That he went out into a Mountain to Pray, and continued all Night in Prayer unto God.*

Some indeed take the Word προσευχὴ, Prayer, to ſignifie the Houſe of Prayer, as if our Saviour continued only in ſuch a Dedicated Houſe or Chapel all Night, according as *Juvenal* uſeth the Word, *in quâ te quæro proſeucha.* Yet as it will be hard to prove that the *Jews* had any ſuch Houſes for Prayer, beſides their *Synagogues*, which were not ſeated in Deſolate, (whither our Saviour went then to Pray,) but in Populous, Cities, and frequented Places, ſo it will be more hard to imagine that our Saviour would continue all Night in the Houſe of Prayer, if he had not been taken up in the performance of the Duty of Prayer.

There is therefore a great deal of Difference between much ſpeaking in Prayer, and ſpeaking much in Prayer; for certainly a Man may ſpeak much to God in Prayer, when yet he may not be guilty of much ſpeaking: For there is a Compendious Way of ſpeaking, to ſpeak much in a little; and there is a Babbling Way of ſpeaking, when by many tedious Ambages and long Impertinencies Men pour out a Sea of Words, and ſcarce one Drop of Senſe or Matter.

Now it is this laſt Way of ſpeaking unto God which our Saviour here condemns, and condemns it juſtly, for it ſhews either Folly or Irreverence: Folly, in that it is a Sign we do not ſufficiently conſider what we ask; Irreverence, in that it is a Sign we do not conſider of whom we ask: And ſuch Men are rather to be eſteemed Talkative than Devout.

But when a Man's Soul is full fraught with Matter, (of which if he duly weighs, either his Spiritual Wants, or his Temporal Sorrows and Afflictions, he can never be unfurniſhed,) to pour out his Soul, and with a Torrent of Holy Rhetorick lay open his Caſe before God, begging Seaſonable Supplies in ſuitable Expreſſions, certainly he cannot fall under the Reproof of much ſpeaking, although he may ſpeak much and long, for ſuch an one hath much to ſay; and whilſt Matter and Affections laſt, let his Prayer be an Hour long, yea, a Day long, yea, an Eternity long, as our Praiſes ſhall be in Heaven, he is not to be cenſured for a Babbler, but hath ſtill ſpoken much in a little.

It is true, the Wiſe Man hath Commanded, *That our Words be few in our Addreſſes to God*, Eccleſ. 5. 2. and he gives a moſt forcible Reaſon; *For God is in Heaven, and thou upon Earth.* His Infinite Majeſty ſhould therefore overawe thee from uſing any raſh and vain Loquacity. But yet this makes not againſt long Prayers; for many Words may be but a few to expreſs the Sentiments of our Souls; and none can be too many while the Heart keeps pace with the Tongue, and every Petition is filled with Matter, and winged with Affections.

And whereas our Saviour condemns the *Pharisees who devoured Widows Houses, and for a Pretence made long Prayers*, Mat. 23. 14. yet certain it is that it was not their long Prayers that he condemns, but their Pretence and Hypocrisie. Thus much I thought fit to observe from the Context.

Our Saviour having thus cautioned his Disciples against the Sins of the *Pharisees* and *Heathens* in their Prayers, comes in the Words I have read to instruct them how to pray; *After this manner therefore pray ye, Our Father*, &c.

Some taking Advantage from these Words deny this to be used as a Prayer itself, but only as a Model and Platform to direct us how to Pray.

But if we consult not only the Practice of the Church of Christ in all Ages, but the Scripture itself, we shall find it to be both the one and the other; for it is our Saviour's express Injunction, *Luke* 11. 2. *When ye pray, say*; and what should they say but the Words immediately following, *Our Father, which art in Heaven*, &c? One Evangelist says, *Pray after this manner*; the other saith, *When ye pray, say*; from both which being compared together it is easie to collect, that it is both a Pattern for us to form our Prayers by, and that it is a Prayer itself, which our Saviour, in Condescention to our Infirmities, hath framed for us; putting Words into our Mouths to beg of God those Blessings which through his most prevalent Intercession shall not be denied us.

And indeed of all Prayers this is the most absolute and comprehensive, containing in it not so many Words as Petitions; for there is not any one Thing that we can pray for, according to the Will of God, but it is summarily couch'd in this.

And yet this Comprehensiveness, which is the Admirable Excellency of this Prayer, hath been the only Reason why some of late have scrupled and refused to use it, because they cannot pierce through all that is signified by these substantial Expressions; they think they should take God's Name in vain in uttering that before him which they do not understand the utmost Extent of.

But if they did but consider their own Prayers the same Doubts would still remain. When they pray that God's Name may be glorified, can they comprehend in that short time, while they are uttering those Words, the infinite Latitude of that Request? Is it unlawful, at the close of our Prayers, to desire that God would give us all good Things which we have not mentioned before him? And yet who of us can conceive how large an Extent that Request may have? May we not say *Amen*, and Seal up our Prayers with a *So be it*, though while we are speaking it we cannot presently recollect all that hath been mentioned before God in Prayer? And for any to say that the Lord's Prayer is a Morsel too big for their Mouths, (as some have done,) I have always accounted it a most unworthy and unsavoury Speech. Certainly Christ thought it not too big for his Disciples, whose Capacities at that Time were possibly none of the largest, as appears in many Instances, particularly in the Nature of Christ's Kingdom, which he taught them to pray that it might come, which they thought to be Temporal and Earthly. And those who refuse the use of the Lord's Prayer, as too big for them, would yet think themselves much wronged if we should but suspect them as ignorant in that, and in many other Points of Christian Doctrine, as the Disciples were when our Saviour instructed them thus to pray.

It being therefore, as I hope, clear and evident, that we may often pray in these Words, and that we must always pray after this manner, let us now proceed to consider the Prayer itself, in which there are these Four Parts.

First, The Preface or Introduction to it.

Secondly, The Petitions or Requests we present to God, in which the greatest Part of it consists.

Thirdly, The Doxology, or Praise-giving; for Praise is a necessary part of Prayer.

Fourthly, The Conclusion or Ratification of all in the Sealing Particle, *Amen*.

I shall speak somewhat of these briefly in the general, and then more particularly of each, as my Text directs me.

First, For the Introduction or Preface unto the Prayer, and that is contained in these Words, *Our Father, which art in Heaven*. This is used as a Preparative to Prayer: And what greater Inducement can there be to dispose us into an Holy Awe and Reverence of God, than to set before us the Greatness and Glory of that Majesty before whom we prostrate our selves? And therefore we find that the

the Saints in Scripture, in all their Approaches to the Throne of Grace, were wont in the beginning of their Prayers to affect and over-awe their Hearts with the humble mention of God's Glorious Attributes. Thus *Solomon*, 1 Kings 8. 23. *O Lord God of* Iſrael, *there is no God like unto thee, in Heaven above, or in the Earth beneath, who keepeſt Covenant and Mercy with thy Servants.* Thus *Jehoſaphat*, 2 Chron. 20. 6. *O Lord God of our Fathers, art not thou God in Heaven? And ruleſt not thou over all the Kingdoms of the Heathens? And in thy Hand is there not Power and Might?* So *Hezekiah*, 2 Kings 19. 15. *O Lord God of* Iſrael, *who dwelleſt between the* Cherubims, *thou art God, even thou alone, who haſt made Heaven and Earth.* And ſo the Prophet, Jerem. 32. 17. *Ah Lord God, behold thou haſt made the Heaven and the Earth, by thy great Power and ſtretched-out Arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee. The great, the mighty God, the Lord of Hoſts is his Name, great in Counſel, and mighty in Working.* And thus our Saviour himſelf, *Matth.* 11. 25. *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth.* And ſo the Apoſtle, *Acts* 4. 24. *Lord, thou art God that haſt made Heaven and Earth, the Sea, and all that in them is.* And thus to conſider ſeriouſly of, and reverently to expreſs, the infinitely Glorious Attributes of God, is an excellent Means to compoſe us into a Holy Fear and Awe of God, ſuch as becomes vile Duſt and Aſhes to be affected with when it ſtands in the Preſence of its great Lord and Creator: Only here let us remember that we dwell not ſo long upon the Titles and Attributes of God, nor run ſo much out into Preface, as to forget our Errand unto him.

Secondly, Next after the Preface we have the Petitions following in their Order. Of theſe ſome reckon Six, others Seven; but which ſoever we take the Matter is not great: They may be all reduced under Two General Heads.

Firſt, Such as reſpect God's Glory.

Secondly, Such as reſpect our ſelves and others. The Three firſt reſpect God's Glory, and the Three or Four laſt our own Good; and that either Temporal or Spiritual. Temporal, in begging at God's Hands our daily Bread, Spiritual, in deſiring both the Pardon of and Deliverance from Sin.

And here again we may obſerve the Admirable Order and Method of this Prayer, in that our Saviour hath placed the Petition, which refers to our Temporal Good, as it were in the very Midſt and Centre of it, it being encompaſſed round about with Petitions for Heavenly and Spiritual Bleſſings. And this may intimate to us that we are only to bait at the World in our Paſſage and Journey to Heaven, that we ought to begin with Spirituals, and end with Spirituals, but only to take up and refreſh our ſelves a little with our daily Bread in our Way.

Thirdly, In the Doxology, or Praiſe, there are Four Things contained.

Firſt, God's Sovereignty, *Thine is the Kingdom.*

Secondly, God's Omnipotency, *And the Power.*

Thirdly, God's Excellency, *And the Glory.*

Fourthly, The Eternity and Unchangeableneſs of them, and of all God's other Attributes noted to us in that Expreſſion, *For ever.*

Fourthly, and *Laſtly*, Here is the ratifying Particle, *Amen*, added as a Seal to the whole Prayer; and it importeth a Deſire to have that confirmed or granted which we have prayed for. And thus *Benaiah* when he had received Inſtructions from *David* concerning the eſtabliſhing of *Solomon* in the Kingdom, anſwereth thereto, *Amen*, and explains it, 1 *Kings* 1. 36. *The Lord God of my Lord the King ſay ſo too.* So that when we add this Word, *Amen*, at the end and cloſe of our Prayers, it is as much as if we had ſaid, *the Lord God ſay ſo too*; or the Lord grant theſe Requeſts: For the proper Signification of *Amen* is, *ſo be it*, or *ſo it is*, or *ſo it ſhall be*; the former notes our Deſires, the latter our Confidence and Aſſurance, of being heard.

Now of all theſe Four Parts, of which this *Prayer* is compoſed, I ſhall ſpeak in their Order.

Firſt, Therefore let us conſider the Preface in theſe Words, *Our Father, which art in Heaven.* And here God is deſcribed by Two of his moſt eminent *Attributes*, his *Grace* and *Glory*, his *Goodneſs* and his *Greatneſs*; by the one, in that he is ſtiled *Our Father*; by the other, in that he is ſaid to be *in Heaven:* And both theſe are moſt ſweetly tempered together, to beget in us a Holy Mixture of Filial Boldneſs and Awful Reverence, which are ſo neceſſary to the ſanctifying of *God's Name* in all our Addreſſes to him. We are commanded to *come to the Throne of Grace with Boldneſs*, Heb. 4. 16. and yet *to ſerve God acceptably with Reverence, and with Fear*, Heb. 12. 28. Yea, and indeed the very calling of it a *Throne of Grace* intimates both theſe Affections at once. It is a *Throne*,

and therefore requires Awe and Reverence; but it is a *Throne of Grace* too, and therefore permits Holy Freedom and Confidence. And so we find all along in the Prayers of the Saints, how they mix the Consideration of God's Mercy and his Majesty together in the very *Prefaces* and Preparations to their Prayers. So *Neh.* 1. 5. *Lord God of Heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth Covenant and Mercy for them that love him.* So *Dan.* 9. 4. *O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping Covenant and Mercy for them that love him.* Now this excellent Mixture of awful and encouraging Attributes will keep us from both the Extreams, of Despair on the one Hand, and of Presumption on the other. He is *our Father*, and this may correct the despairing Fear which might otherwise seize us upon the Consideration of his *Majesty* and *Glory*: And he is likewise infinitely Glorious, a God whose *Throne* is in the highest Heavens, and the Earth his *Footstool*. And this may correct the presumptuous Irreverence, which else the Consideration of God, as *our Father*, might perhaps embolden us unto.

Now here I shall *first* speak of the Relation of God unto us as a *Father*, and then of the Place of his Glory and Residence, *in Heaven*, and of both but briefly; for I must not dwell upon every Particular.

First, To begin with the Relation of God to us, as a *Father*. Now God is a *Father* Three Ways.

First, God is a *Father* by Eternal Generation.

Secondly, By Temporal Creation and Providence.

Thirdly, By Spiritual Regeneration and Adoption.

First, God is a *Father* by Eternal Generation; having by an inconceivable and ineffable Way Begotten his Son, God Co-equal, Co-eternal, with himself, and therefore called *The only Begotten Son of God*, John 3. 16. Thus God is a *Father* only to our Lord Jesus Christ, according to his Divine Nature. And whensoever this Title *Father* is given to God, with relation to the Eternal Sonship of our Lord Jesus Christ, it denotes only the First Person in the Ever-blessed Trinity, who is therefore chiefly and especially called the *Father*.

Secondly, God is a *Father* by Temporal Creation, as he gives a Being and Existence to his Creatures; creating those whom he made Rational after his own Image and Similitude. And therefore *God* is said to be a *Father of Spirits*, Heb. 12. 9. And the *Angels* are called the Sons of God, *Job* 1. 6. *There was a Day when the Sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord.* And so *Adam* upon the account of his Creation is called the Son of God, *Luke* 3. 38. where the *Evangelist* runs up the *Genealogy* of Mankind till it terminates in God, *Who was the Son of* Adam, *who was the Son of God.*

Thirdly, God is said to be a *Father* by Spiritual Regeneration and Adoption, and so all true Believers are said to be the Sons of God, and to be Born of God, *John* 1. 12, 13. *To as many as received him, to them gave he Power to become the Sons of God, even to as many as believed on his Name, which were Born not of the Will of Man, but of God.* So *Rom.* 8. 17. we are said *to receive the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. For the Spirit itself witnesseth with our Spirits that we are the Children of God.*

Now in these Two last Significations this Expression, *Our Father, which art in Heaven*, is to be understood, and so they denote not any one particular Person of the Blessed *Trinity*, but it is a relative Attribute, belonging equally to all the Three Persons. God is the *Father* of all Men by *Creation* and Providence; and he is especially the *Father* of the Faithful by *Regeneration* and *Adoption*. Now as these Actions of Creation, Regeneration and Adoption, are common to the whole *Trinity*, so likewise is the Title of *Father*. God the First Person in the Blessed *Trinity* is indeed Eminently called the *Father*, but not in respect of us, but in respect of Christ, his only Begotten Son from all Eternity. In respect of us the whole *Trinity* is *our Father, which is in Heaven*, both *Father, Son*, and *Holy Ghost*; and in praying to our *Father* we pray to them all jointly; for Christ the Second Person in the *Trinity* is expresly called the *Father*, Isa. 9. 6. *Unto us a Child is born, and unto us a Son is given, and his Name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father.* And we are said to be Born of the Spirit, *John* 3. 5. *Except a Man be born of Water, and of the Spirit.*

Now that God should be pleased to take this into his Glorious Stile, even to be called *Our Father*, it may teach us,

First,

First, To admire his Infinite Condeſcenſion, and our own Unſpeakable Priviledge and Dignity, 1 *John* 3. 1. *Behold what manner of Love the Father hath beſtowed upon us, that we ſhould be called the Sons of God.* Indeed for God to be a *Father* by *Creation* and *Providence*, though it be a Mercy, yet is no Priviledge; for in that Senſe he is *Parens Rerum*, the common Parent of all Things, yea, the *Father* of *Devils* themſelves, and of thoſe Wretches who are as wicked, and ſhall be as miſerable, as *Devils*. But that God ſhould be thy *Father* by *Regeneration* and *Adoption*; that he ſhould make thee his Son through his only Begotten Son; that he ſhould rake up ſuch Dirt and Filth as thou art, and lay it in his Boſom; that he ſhould take Aliens and Strangers near unto himſelf, and adopt Enemies and Rebels into his Family, Regiſter their Names in the Book of Life, make them Heirs of Glory, Co-heirs with Jeſus Chriſt his Eternal Son, as the *Apoſtle* admiringly recounts it, *Rom.* 8. 17. *This is both Mercy and Miracle together.*

Secondly, It ſhould teach us to walk worthy of this High and Honourable Relation into which we are taken, and to demean our ſelves as Children ought to do, in all Holy Obedience to his Commands, with Fear and Reverence to his Authority, and an humble Submiſſion to his Will. This God Challengeth at our Hands, as being our *Father*, Mal. 1. 6. *If I be a Father where is mine Honour?* And, 1 *Pet.* 1. 17. *If we call on the Father, paſs the time of your ſojourning here in fear.* And likewiſe by giving thee leave to Stile him by this Name of *Father*, he puts thee in remembrance that thou ſhouldeſt endeavour by a Holy Life and Converſation to be like thy *Father*, and ſo approve it to thine own Conſcience, and to all others, that thou art indeed a *Child*, a *Son* of God.

Thirdly, Is God thy *Father?* This then may give us abundance of Aſſurance that we ſhall receive at his Hands what we ask if it be good for us; and if it be not we have no Reaſon to complain that we are not heard, unleſs he ſhould turn our Prayers into Curſes. And this very Conſideration ſeems to be the Reaſon why our Saviour chuſeth this among all God's Titles and Attributes to prefix before this Prayer: And indeed it is the moſt proper Name by which we can Stile God in our Prayers unto him; for this Name of *Father* emboldens Faith, and is as a Pledge and Pawn beforehand that our Requeſts ſhall be heard and granted; and therefore our Saviour for the Confirmation of our Faith argues very ſtrongly from this very Title of *Father*, Matth. 7. 9, 10, 11. *What Man is there of you, whom if his Son ask him for Bread, will he give him a Stone? Or if he ask a Fiſh, will he give him a Serpent? If ye then being evil know how to give good Things when your Children ask them, how much more ſhall my Father give good Things to them that ask him?* Indeed it is a moſt encouraging *Argument*; for if the Bowels of an Earthly Parent, who yet many times is humorous, and whoſe tendereſt Mercies are but Cruelties in reſpect of God; if his Compaſſions will not ſuffer his Children to be defeated in their reaſonable and neceſſary Requeſts; how much leſs will God, who is Love and Goodneſs itſelf, and who hath inſpired all Parental Affections into other *Fathers*, ſuffer his *Children* to return aſhamed, when they beg of him thoſe Things which are moſt agreeable to his Will, and to their Wants? What doſt thou then, O Chriſtian, complaining of thy Wants, and ſighing under thy Burthens? Is not God thy *Father?* Go and boldly lay open thy Caſe unto him; his Bowels will certainly rowl and yern towards thee. Is it Spiritual Bleſſings thou wanteſt? Spread thy Requeſts before him; for as he is thy *Father*, ſo he is the God of all Grace, and will give unto thee of his Fulneſs; for God loves that his Children ſhould be like him. Or is it Temporal Mercies thou wanteſt? Why, he is thy *Father*, and he is the *Father of Mercies, and the God of all Comfort:* And why ſhouldeſt thou go ſo dejected and diſconſolate who haſt a *Father* ſo able and ſo willing to relieve and ſupply thee? Only beware that thou askeſt not *Stones* for *Bread*, nor *Scorpions* for *Fiſh*, and then ask what thou wilt for thy Good and thou ſhalt receive it.

Fourthly, Is God thy *Father? This then may encourage us againſt Deſpair under the ſenſe of our manifold Sins againſt God, and Departures from him*; for he will certainly receive us upon our Repentance and Returning to him. This very Apprehenſion was that which wrought upon the *Prodigal*, Luke 15. 8. *I will ariſe and go to my Father.* The Conſideration of our own Guilt and Vileneſs, without the Conſideration of God's infinite Mercy, tends only to widen the Breach between him and us; for thoſe that are altogether hopeleſs will Sin the more implacably and bitterly againſt God; like thoſe the *Prophet* mentions, *Jer.* 2. 25. *That ſaid there was no Hope, and therefore they would perſiſt in their Wickedneſs.* But now to conſider that God is our *Father*,

and

and that though we have caſt off the Duty and Obedience of *Children*, yet upon our Submiſſion he will bid us welcome, and inſtate us again in his Favour: This to the ingenious Spirit of a Chriſtian is a ſweet and powerful Motive to reduce him from his wandring and ſtraying, for it will Work both upon his Shame, and upon his Hope: Upon his Shame, that ever he ſhould offend ſo Gracious a *Father*, and upon his Hope, that thoſe Offences ſhall be forgiven him through that very Mercy that he hath abuſed. Thus we read, *Jer.* 3. 4, 5. *Wilt thou not henceforth cry unto me, My Father, thou art the Guide of my Youth? Will he reſerve his Anger for ever? Will he keep it unto the end?* Noting that when we plead with God under the winning Name of *Father* his Anger cannot long laſt, but his Bowels of Mercy will at laſt overcome the Sentiments of his Wrath and Juſtice. And thus much concerning the endearing Title of *Father*, which our Saviour directs us to uſe in our Prayers unto God.

Secondly, The next Thing obſervable is the Particle *Our*, *Our Father*, which notes to us that God is not only the *Father* of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, but he is *Father* of all Men. He is the *Father* of all by Creation and Providence. And therefore we have the Interrogation, *Mal.* 2. 10. *Have we not all One Father? Hath not One God Created us?* But he is eſpecially the *Father* of the Faithful by *Regeneration* and *Adoption*; *who are Born not of Blood, nor of the Will of the Fleſh, nor of the Will of Man, but of God*, John 1. 13. This therefore ſhould teach us,

Firſt, *To eſteem one another as Brethren.* Outward Reſpects, the Grandeur and Earthly Priviledges and Advantages of the World, make no Diſparity in God's Love to us, or in our Relation to him: And therefore howſoever thou mayeſt be advanced in Wealth, or Honour, or Parts, above others, yet ſtill remember that they are thy *Brethren*, as they partake of the ſame common Nature, and much more if they partake of the ſame ſpecial Grace. Yea, Chriſt himſelf, who is the Lord of all, *is not aſhamed to call them Brethren*, Heb. 2. 11. And ſhalt thou, who art but an Adopted Son, no otherwiſe than the meaneſt Saint, be aſhamed of the Relation, eſpecially conſidering there is no Elderſhip, nor Right of Firſt-born, in the Family, for they are all Firſt-born, all Kings and Heirs with Chriſt Jeſus himſelf?

Secondly, *If thou art mean and low in the World this ſhould teach thee to be well Content with thy preſent State and Condition*, for God is thy *Father*, and a *Father* to thee equally with the greateſt. There is not the higheſt Perſon upon Earth, but, if he belong to God, prefers that Relation above all his other Titles: If he can write *Prince*, *King*, or *Emperor*, and can afterwards ſubjoin a *Child of God*, all his other Titles ſtand but for a Cypher with him. This, O Chriſtian, how mean, how deſpiſed ſoever thou art, this is thy Priviledge, and a Priviledge it is that equals thee with *David*, with *Solomon*, and with all the Great Ones of the Earth, that ever laid down their *Diadems* and *Scepters* at the Feet of God. What ſays the *Apoſtle?* Gal. 3. 28. *There is neither Bond nor Free, but all are One in Chriſt Jeſus.*

Thirdly, Since when we Pray we muſt ſay, *Our Father*, this teacheth us to Intereſt one another in our Prayers. *Our Father* would not have us ſelfiſh ſo much as in our Prayers, but in the very entrance into them we are put in Mind of the Communion of Saints, to beg thoſe Bleſſings for all that belong to God which we ask for our ſelves; for as Chriſt hath made us all *Kings*, ſo he hath made all *Prieſts* to *God* and his *Father*: Now the Office of a Prieſt is Interceſſion: And therefore when we go to God we ſhould bear upon our Breaſts the Name of our Brethren, and preſent them before God, through the *Interceſſion* and *Mediation* of Jeſus Chriſt, our Great *High Prieſt*, that both we and they may be accepted of God. And this we ought to do both in Publick and Private. It is true, in our ſecret Prayers we may pray particularly for our ſelves, and we have frequent Inſtances for it in *Scripture*; yet ought we in every Prayer that we make to God to be mindful of the State and Condition of our Brethren. Yea, and it is very Lawful and Commendable, even in Secret between God and our own Souls, in thoſe Caſes that are common to us, with the reſt of God's Saints and People, to join them in our Prayers; and although we are all alone, yet to ſay, *Our Father*. For we find *Daniel* praying, *Dan.* 9. 17. *O our God*, when yet he was in Secret, *O our God, hear the Prayer of thy Servant.* And this is to ſhew that near and entire Communion which ought to be between all the Saints, praying with, and praying for, all the Members of the Body of Jeſus Chriſt, and eſteeming their Intereſt as our own.

Fourthly, This ſhews us likewiſe the high Priviledge of the Children of God, that they have a Stock of Prayers going to Heaven for them from all their Fellow Saints throughout the World; yea, from thoſe whom they never knew, whom they never heard

heard of, yet are they continually appearing before the Throne of Grace on their behalf. And thou who wouldſt think it a great Favour if thou wert intereſted in the Prayers of ſome who are mighty in Prayer, and whom thou haſt begged to recommend thy Condition to God, mayeſt here have abundant Comfort, in that thou art nearly concerned and intereſted in all the Prayers that are put up to God throughout the whole World, by all thoſe that are moſt prevalent at the Throne of Grace; yea, which is more, thou haſt an Intereſt in all the Prayers that have ever been preferred to Heaven by all the Saints from the beginning of the World unto this very Day: For not only this preſent *Church*, but the *Church* in all Ages, is the Body of Chriſt, and every Member of it imitates the Pattern of Chriſt's Interceſſion, *John* 17. 20. *Neither pray I for theſe alone, but for all thoſe that ſhall believe in me.* The Difference is, that Chriſt's Interceſſion was Authoritative, theirs only Charitative.

And thus much ſhall ſuffice to be ſpoken concerning God's Goodneſs and Mercy, expreſſed in thoſe Words, *Our Father.*

The next Expreſſion ſets forth his Glory and Greatneſs, *Which art in Heaven.* But is not God everywhere preſent! Doth he not fill Heaven, and Earth, and all Things? Yea, is it not ſaid, that *the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain him?* How then are our Prayers to be directed to God in Heaven only, ſince he is as well on Earth as in Heaven? And were he only in Heaven, and not everywhere preſent on Earth, it would be in vain for us to *pray*, becauſe our *Prayers* could never reach his Ears, nor arrive to his notice.

I *Anſwer*, It is true, God is everywhere preſent, and all that we think, we think to him; and all that we ſpeak, we ſpeak unto him; he underſtands the ſilent Motion of our Lips when we whiſper a *Prayer* to him in our Cloſets; yea, the ſecret Motions of our Hearts when we only think a Prayer. Therefore when our Saviour bids us direct our *Prayers* to our *Father in Heaven*, this doth not imply that God is nowhere preſent, or that he nowhere hears Prayer, but only in Heaven: But this Expreſſion is uſed,

Firſt, Becauſe Heaven is the moſt Glorious Place of God's Reſidence, where he hath more eſpecially eſtabliſhed his *Throne of Grace*, and there ſits upon it. Now becauſe it is a moſt Glorious and Majeſtical Thing to hear the Suits, and receive the Petitions, that are tendred to him, therefore the *Scripture* aſcribes it to the moſt Glorious and Majeſtical Place, and that is to Heaven. And therefore we are commanded to pray to *our Father which is in Heaven* to keep alive a due Senſe of his Majeſty upon our Hearts. He would not have us think it a Mean and Trivial Thing to have our Prayers heard, and therefore he repreſents himſelf to us arrayed in all his Glory, and ſitting upon his Throne in the higheſt Heavens, willing to be thought a God never more Glorious than when he is a God hearing Prayer.

Secondly, Our Prayers are directed to *our Father in Heaven*; becauſe though he hears them whereſoever they are uttered, yet he nowhere hears them with Acceptance but only in Heaven; and the Reaſon is, becauſe our Prayers are Acceptable only as they are preſented before God through the Interceſſion of Chriſt: Now Chriſt performs his Mediatory Office only in Heaven; for he performs it in both Natures, as he is God and Man, and ſo he is only in Heaven, and therefore we are ſtill concerned to pray to *our Father in Heaven.* God indeed hears us upon Earth; for there is not a Word in our Tongue, but *behold, O Lord, thou knoweſt it altogether*; but this will not avail us, unleſs God hears our Prayers a ſecond Time, as repeated over in the Interceſſion of Jeſus Chriſt, and perfumed with the much Incenſe which he offers up with the Prayers of all the Saints. Since then we are directed to pray to *our Father which is in Heaven*, this,

Firſt, May inform us that there is no Circumſtance of Time or Place that can hinder us from Praying; for Heaven is over thee, and open to thee, whereſoever thou art; there is no *Clime* ſo remote which is not overſpread with that *Pavillion*; and thou art in all Places equally near to Heaven, and God is in it, ſitting upon his Throne of Grace to receive and anſwer thy Requeſts, whereſoever thou offereſt them up unto him. And therefore we find in the Scripture ſome praying in God's Houſe of Prayer, ſome making their Houſes Houſes of Prayer. St. *Peter* pray'd on the Houſe-top when he fell into his Trance, *Iſaac* in the open Fields, our Saviour on a Mountain, *Jonas* in a Whale's Belly, *Abraham*'s Servant in his Journey, and *Aſa* in the midſt of a tumultuous and bloody Battle; yea, whatſoever thou art doing thou mayeſt pray, ſo long as Heaven is over thee, and God in it: Whatſoever Company thou art in, whatſoever

whatsoever Employment thou art about, thou mayest still pray, for thy Father that is in Heaven still hears thee: He hears thy Thoughts and thy Desires, when either they are too big, or when it is not expedient to articulate them into Words.

Indeed thy Voice in Prayer is not always necessary, nay, sometimes it is not convenient; yea, it is never necessary, but only upon Three Accounts.

First, As that which God requires should be employed in his Service; for this was a great End why it was given us, that therewith we might Bless and Praise God: *With the Tongue*, saith the Apostle, *we bless God, even the Father*, James 3. 9. Or,

Secondly, When in Secret it may be a Means to help to raise up our Affections, keeping it still within the Bounds of Decency and Privacy. Or,

Thirdly, In our joining with others it helps likewise to raise and quicken their Affections; otherwise were it not for these Three Reasons the Voice is no more necessary to make our Wants and Desires known unto God, than it is to make them known to our own Hearts: For thy Father which is in Heaven is not certainly excluded from any Part of the Earth; he is with thee, and lays his Ear to thy very Heart, and hears the Voice of thy Thoughts when thy Tongue is silent: And thou mayest, whatsoever Work or Business thou art doing, dart up a Prayer and a winged Desire unto him, which shall be as acceptable and effectual as the more solemn Performance of this Duty at stated Times.

Secondly, Is thy Father in Heaven? Thy *Prayers* then should be made so as to pierce the Heavens where God is. But how can this be done since the Distance between Heaven and us is so infinite? This is not to be done by the Intention of raising thy Voice, but by the Intention of raising thy Zeal and Spirit; for Zeal and Affection is a strong Bow, that will shoot a Petition through Heaven itself. Let all thy Petitions therefore be Ardent, and carry Fire in them, and this will cause them to ascend to the Element of Pure Celestial Fire, from whence thy Breast was at first inflamed. It is a most remarkable Place, *Exod.* 14. 15. when the *Red Sea* was before the *Israelites*, and the *Ægyptians* pursuing them behind, and unpassable Mountains on each side, the People Murmuring, and *Moses* their Captain and Guide in an unextricable Streight, we read not of any Vocal Prayer that *Moses* then put up; and yet God calls to him, *Why criest thou unto me?* A *Prayer* it was, not so much as accented, not so much as whispered; and yet so strong and powerful that it pierced Heaven, and was louder in the Ears of God than the Voice of Thunder.

And thus much shall suffice to be spoken concerning the Preface of this Prayer, *Our Father, which art in Heaven.*

Let us now proceed unto the Petitions themselves; the first Three of which relate unto God's Glory, the other to our Temporal and Spiritual Good.

Of those which relate to God's Glory, the First desireth the Advancement of this Glory itself, *Hallowed be thy Name.*

The Second the Means of effecting it, *Thy Kingdom come.*

The Third the Manifestation of it, *Thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven.*

I begin with the *First* of these, *Hallowed be thy Name.*

In the Explication of which we shall enquire,

First, What is to be understood by the *Name of God.*

Secondly, What it is to *Hallow this Name of God.*

Thirdly, What is contained in this Petition, and what we pray for when we say, *Hallowed be thy Name.*

First, What is meant by the *Name of God.*

To this I Answer, That the Name of God is any Perfection ascribed to him whereby he hath been pleased to make himself known to the Sons of Men: For Names are given to this very intent, that they might declare what the Thing is to which that *Name* doth belong. Thus when God had created *Adam*, and made him Lord of this visible World, he caused the Beasts of the Field, and the Fowls of the Air, to pass before him, as it were to do Homage to their new Sovereign, and to receive *Names* from him; which according to the Plenitude and Perfection of his Knowledge did then aptly serve to express their several Natures, and were not only *Names*, but Definitions too. So when mention is made in *Scripture* of the Name of God, it signifies some Expression of his infinite Essence, in which he is pleased graciously to condescend to the weakness of our Capacity, and to spell out himself to us, sometimes by one Perfection, and sometimes by another; since it is utterly impossible for us finite

Creatures

Creatures to have a full and comprehenſive Knowledge of that Being which is Infinite; for ſo God is only known to himſelf, being as Infinite to all others, ſo Finite to his own Knowledge and Underſtanding: And therefore he hath Diſplayed before us his *Name*, to give us ſome Help and Advantage to conceive ſomewhat of him, though his Nature and Eſſence are in themſelves Incomprehenſible to us, and ſhall be ſo for ever, even in Heaven itſelf. Now this *Name of God* may well be diſtinguiſhed into Two Sorts, his *Titles*, and his *Attributes*.

Firſt, His *Titles* are his *Name*, and ſo he is in *Scripture* frequently called *Jehovah*, *God*, *Lord*, *Creator*, and the like; and moſt of theſe his *Titles* are Relative, reſpecting us; ſo his Name of Creator denotes his Infinite Power, giving Being to all Things. *Lord* and *King* ſignifie his Dominion and Authority, in diſpoſing and governing all that he hath made. *Father*, ſignifies his Care and Goodneſs in providing for his Creatures. *Redeemer*, his Mercy and Grace in delivering them from Temporal Evils and Calamities, or eſpecially from Eternal Death and Deſtruction.

Now theſe *Relative Titles*, though they properly belong unto God, yet are they not abſolutely Eſſential to him, but connote a Reſpect unto the Creatures. And therefore, though before the Creation of the World God was for ever the ſame infinitely Bleſſed Being that he now is, and by the Creation of it no Acceſſion was made to his infinitely perfect Nature; (*for in him there is no Variableneſs, nor ſhadow of Turning; but he is Yeſterday, and to Day, and the ſame for Ever*;) yet could he not be called by the Name of Creator, or Lord, or Redeemer, or Father, (unleſs in reſpect of his Eternal Son:) But all theſe Titles reſult from the Relations wherein we ſtand unto God, of Creatures, Subjects, and Children. Theſe Names therefore had their beginning, ſome in the beginning of Time, and ſome ſince, and yet they do very properly ſignifie unto us that God who is without Beginning or End.

Secondly, As his *Titles*, ſo his *Attributes*, are his *Name*; and theſe are of Two Sorts, either *Incommunicable* or *Communicable*.

Firſt, The *Incommunicable Attributes of God:* And theſe are thoſe which are ſo proper to the *Divine Eſſence*, that there is ſcarce the leaſt Footſteps or Reſemblance of them to be found in any of the Creatures; and ſuch are his *Eternity*, which denotes a Duration, as well without Beginning as without End: For though there are ſome Creatures whoſe Beings ſhall never have a Period ſet to them, as *Angels* and *Men*, yet there is no Creature that never no beginning of its Exiſtence. And ſo *God's Infiniteneſs* and *Immenſity* filling all Places, and exceeding all, which was moſt excellently ſet forth in that moſt ſignificant, yet unintelligible, *Paradox* of the *Heathen Philoſopher*, That God was a Circle, whoſe Centre was everywhere, but its Circumference nowhere: His *Simplicity* alſo, excluding all Compoſition and Mixture, which no Creature doth; for take the more Simple of them, as *Angels*, and the *ſeparate Souls* of Men, yet they are at leaſt compounded in their Eſſences, and Powers, and Acts; for the Power of Underſtanding is not the Soul, nor the Act of Underſtanding the Power; therefore in theſe there is one Thing and another. But it is not ſo in God; but whatſoever is in God is God himſelf, being one moſt Pure and Simple Act. Hence follows his *Immutability* and *Unchangeableneſs*, there being nothing in God which was not from all Eternity. And in the ſame Rank are his *Omnipotency* and *All-ſufficiency*, his *Omniſcience* and *Independency*, and the like, which are Incommunicable Attributes, and cannot without Blaſphemy be aſcribed unto any of the Creatures.

Secondly, There are other Attributes of God that are *Communicable*, and are ſo called becauſe they may in ſome Analogy and Reſemblance be found in the Creatures alſo; ſo to be Holy, Juſt, Merciful, True, Powerful, and the like, are the Names of God, and yet may be aſcribed to the Creatures. So in that moſt Triumphant Declaration of his Name to *Moſes*, *Exod.* 34. 5, 6, 7. we find that the moſt of the Letters that compoſe it may be found in ſome Degrees even among Men, the Lord proclaimed his Name, *The Lord God, Merciful and Gracious, Long-ſuffering, and Abundant in Goodneſs and Truth, forgiving Iniquity, Tranſgreſſion and Sin.* Now this Name of God, Merciful and Gracious, Long-ſuffering, and Abundant in Goodneſs, which he ſeems ſo much to delight and glory in, and which he adorns with ſuch Fair Flouriſhes, he himſelf would have us to own and imitate, *Luke 6. 36. Be ye Merciful, as your Father is Merciful.* To aſpire to a Reſemblance with God in his Incommunicable Attributes and Name, is a moſt Horrid and Blaſphemous Preſumption; a Pride that caſt the Devils from Heaven to Hell: But to aſpire to a Reſemblance unto God in his

communicable Name, is the Tendency of Grace, and the Effect of the Spirit of God, conforming us in ſome Meaſure to his Purity, and making us Partakers in this Senſe of the *Divine Nature*. And therefore it is preſs'd upon us, *Lev.* 29. 2. *You ſhall be Holy, for I the Lord your God am Holy.* And, *Mat.* 5. 48. *Be ye therefore Perfect, as your Father which is in Heaven is Perfect.*

Now theſe *Communicable Attributes* of God, though they may in ſome Reſpects be found in the Creatures, yet then are they properly the Names of God, when they are applied to him free from all thoſe Imperfections with which they are neceſſarily attended in the Creatures. Abſtract them from all Imperfections, and we may apply them to God as his Name. Now theſe Imperfections are of Two Sorts, either Privative, or Negative. A Creature is then ſaid to be Privatively imperfect when he falls ſhort of what he ought to be; and ſo are the beſt of Men imperfect in this Life; Merciful they are, but ſtill retain a Mixture of Cruelty; Patient they are, but ſtill they have Impatience mix'd with it; Holy they are, but yet not Spotleſs, as the Law requires them to be: And therefore in aſcribing Holineſs, Mercy, and Patience, unto God, we muſt be ſure to ſeparate from them all ſuch Imperfections as are found in us, through the Mixture of the contrary Corruptions with thoſe Graces; otherwiſe they will be ſo far from being the Name of God, that they will prove Blaſphemous Derogatives from him; neither is this enough, but we muſt remove all Negative Imperfections alſo. Now a Creature is ſaid to be Negatively imperfect, when though it hath all the Perfections that is due unto it, or required from it, yet it hath not all Perfection that is poſſible or imaginable. Thus the *Holy Angels*, and the *Spirits of Juſt Men*, in Heaven, although they are made perfect ſo as to exclude all Privative Imperfection, their Holineſs and their Graces there being as perfect as they ſhould be, and as God requires from them, yet have they a Negative Imperfection; that is, there is ſome Perfection of thoſe Graces, and of that Holineſs, further poſſible, which they have not, nor is it within the Sphere of their Natures to attain unto; in which Senſe it is ſaid, *Job* 4. 8. *He chargeth his Angels with Folly*; that is, not as if they wanted any Wiſdom or Righteouſneſs that was due unto their Natures, but they had not all that Wiſdom that was poſſible, and ſo were at leaſt Negatively imperfect.

In all Perfections of the Creatures, whether *Angels* or *Men*, be they never ſo great or excellent, there are Three Imperfections that will neceſſarily attend them.

Firſt, That they have them not *originally* from themſelves, but derivatively from another, who is the Author and Embelliſher of their Natures.

Secondly, That they have them not *unchangeably*, but may not only increaſe but decreaſe, yea, or utterly loſe, them.

Thirdly, That they have them not *infinitely*, but in a ſtinted and limited Meaſure.

Now in all the communicable Attributes of the Divine Nature, remove from them theſe Three Negative Imperfections, and then apply them to God, and they become his proper Name. God is *Holy*, *Wiſe*, *Powerful*, *Juſt*, *Merciful*, *True*, &c. and ſo are likewiſe ſome of his moſt Excellent Creatures, whom he hath made like unto himſelf; but then the difference between God and them conſiſts in this, that his Wiſdom and the reſt of his Attributes are originally from him, theirs derivatively from him; his infinite and boundleſs, theirs limited and ſtinted; his invariable and unchangeable, theirs ſubject to mutations, and decays, and total abolition. So that in theſe Three Reſpects even the *Communicable* Attributes of God are themſelves *Incommunicable*; and ſo they are his Name, whereby he is known and differenced from all other Beings whatſoever.

But may it not be here ſaid to me as it was to *Manoah*, Judg. 13. 18. *Why askeſt thou after my Name ſeeing it is Secret and Wonderful?* Indeed we can no more find out the Name of God to Perfection, than we can his Nature and Eſſence, for both are Infinite and Unſearchable. And there are Two Expreſſions in *Scripture* that make this Knowledge impoſſible, the one of them quite contrary to the other: One is, *that God dwelleth in that Light to which no Man can approach*, 1 Tim. 6. 16. *Scrutator Majeſtatis opprimetur à Gloriâ:* He that will too buſily pry into Majeſty ſhall be oppreſſed and dazled with Glory. And the other is, *that he that dwells in thick Darkneſs*, 2 Chron. 6. 1. both implying the ſame Impoſſibility of *ſearching out the Almighty to Perfection*, as *Job* ſpeaks, *Chap.* 11. 7.

But though this comprehenſive Knowledge be impoſſible, yet God hath given us Hints and Traces of himſelf, by which we may diſcover enough for our Adoration, though

though not perhaps for our Satisfaction. And there are Two Ways whereby God hath made known himself and his Name unto us, and they are by his Works, and by his Word.

First, We may spell out God's Name by his Works; and to this End serve those Two great Capital Letters of *Heaven* and *Earth*, the *Air* and *Sea*; yea, there is no one Creature, how vile and contemptible soever it be, but it reads us Lectures of the Power, Wisdom, and Goodness, of the great Creator; in which Sense the Apostle tells us, *Rom.* 1. 20. *The invisible Things of him, from the Creation of the World, are clearly seen, by the Things that are made, even his Eternal Power and Godhead.*

Secondly, More expressly and distinctly by his Word, for the *Scriptures* are *Nomenclatura Dei.* By these we come to a more clear and evident Knowledge of these Attributes of God, which the Works of Nature held forth to us in a more obscure and confused manner. And by this likewise we attain to the Knowledge of those Perfections of God which the Works of *Creation* and *Providence* could never have instructed us in; as of a *Trinity* in *Unity*, of the *Eternal Generation* and *Temporal Incarnation* of the Son of God, of the whole Mystery of Religion, and the Tenure of the Covenant of Grace, which are Things that could never have been known but by Divine Revelation.

Indeed we may from the Works of God alone gather Knowledge enough of him to make us inexcusable if we Worship him not as God, for so did the *Heathens*, as the Apostle speaks in the forecited Place, *Rom.* 1. 20. but it is only from the Word that we know so much of God as to make us Eternally Blessed and Happy. Here he hath displayed his Name, the Lord God, Gracious and Merciful, pardoning Iniquity, Transgression, and Sin. Here alone hath he made known himself to be our *Father* in Jesus Christ, and appointed the Spiritual Worship of himself, that might prepare us for the Eternal Enjoyment of him in Glory.

So that now we see what is meant by the Name of God, his Titles as *King*, *Lord*, *Creator*, *Father*, *Redeemer*, and the like; and his Attributes both Communicable, as *Justice*, *Holiness*, *Wisdom*, *Mercy* and *Truth*, &c. and Incommunicable, as *Infinite*, *Eternal*, *Unchangeable*, *Omnipotent*, *Independent*, and such like; and that both this Name, both of Titles and Attributes, are made known to us, either by the Works of God, or by his Word.

Let us in the next Place enquire what it is to Hallow this Name of God. To Hallow is nothing else but to Sanctifie or make Holy; so that *Hallowed be thy Name* is no other than let thy Name be made Holy. But here may be a Question,

How can Creatures be said to make God Holy, whereas it is God that makes them Holy?

I Answer, there is a Threefold Way of Hallowing or Sanctifying a Thing or Person; One by *Dedication*, a Second by *Infusion*, and a Third by *Declaration.*

First, A Thing may be Hallowed, or made Holy, by *Dedication*, setting them apart for Holy Uses and Services; so the Firstborn are said to be Sanctified to the Lord, *Exod.* 13. 2. and that because among Men the Firstborn were to be Priests unto the Lord, and among Beasts they were to be Sacrificed. And thus *Aaron*, and his Sons, and the whole Tribe of *Levi*, who God took in Exchange for the Firstborn, are said to be Consecrated and Sanctified, *Exod.* 28. 41. and many more Instances might be given to the same Purpose, were it needful. And thus at least we are said to be Sanctified by Baptism, *Ephes.* 5. 26. That is, we are by that Holy Ordinance set apart and Consecrated to the Service of God. Thus one Creature may Sanctifie and make another Holy; namely, by *Dedication*, or *Separation* to some Sacred Use and Service: And so the Ministers of Christ do Sanctifie and Hallow the *Elements* in the *Holy Communion*, setting them apart from Common and Ordinary Use to that Blessed Mystery.

Secondly, There is a Sanctification or Hallowing by *Infusing* or *Implanting* the real Principles and Habits of Holiness into that which is Hallowed. And thus God Sanctifies his *Elect*, by *Infusing* of his Grace into them, and making them Holy in some Measure and Similitude like himself. So our Saviour prays, *John* 17. 17. *Sanctifie them through thy Truth, thy Word is Truth.* And the Apostle, 1 *Thes.* 5. 23. prays, *The very God of Peace sanctifie you wholly.* In neither of these Two Senses is God's Name to be Sanctified or Hallowed by us, for thus to Pray were to Blaspheme.

Thirdly, There is a Sanctifying by *Declaration*, when we Acknowledge and Reverence that as Holy that is indeed so.

And thus only it is that Creatures may Sanctifie the Name of God the Creator.

So we have it uſed, *Iſa.* 29. 23. *They ſhall Sanctifie my Name, and Sanctifie the Holy One of* Jacob, *and ſhall Fear the God of* Iſrael. Now thus to Sanctifie the Name of God is the very ſame with that other Expreſſion that commonly occurrs in *Scripture*, of glorifying God. We can add nothing to his Infinite Perfections, nor to the Luſtre and Brightneſs of his Crown; yet then are we ſaid to Sanctifie and Glorifie God when in our moſt Reverend Thoughts we Obſerve and Admire his Holineſs, and the Bright Coruſcations of his Attributes, and when we endeavour by all Holy Ways to declare them unto others, that they may Obſerve and Admire them with us, and give unto God that Holy Veneration which is due unto him.

Thus we ſee what the Name of God is, and what it is to Sanctifie or Hallow this Name.

Thirdly, Let us now conſider what is contained in this Petition, *Hallowed be thy Name.* And here,

Firſt, In that Chriſt hath taught us to make this the firſt Petition in our Prayer to God, we may learn that the Glory of God is to be preferred by us before all other Things whatſoever. And indeed that which God hath made the laſt and utmoſt of all his Ends, and hath appointed to be the higheſt and utmoſt of ours, ſhould be the firſt of all our Thoughts and Endeavours, and preferred before whatſoever elſe is deareſt unto us; yea, before our very Lives themſelves. This was our Saviour's Practice, *John* 12. 27, 28. *Father, ſave me from this Hour; but for this Cauſe came I unto this Hour: Father, glorifie thy Name.* As if he had ſaid, Though Life be naturally dear, and the Cup which I am to drink very bitter, and the Wrath that I am to undergo heavy and infinite, yet all theſe Things are not ſo conſiderable to me as thy Glory; and therefore though it be by *Agonies*, by *Death*, by the *Croſs*, yet, *Father, Glorifie thy Name.* The ſame Mind ſhould dwell in us likewiſe, and we ſhould hereby be inſtructed to Deſire and Pray for other Things with Limitations and Reſtrictions, but for the Glory of God Abſolutely and Simply. *Father, Glorifie thy Name*; and if in the Counſel of thy Will, and the Courſe of thy Providence, it cannot be otherwiſe than by my Suffering or Sorrow, yea, or Death itſelf; yet, *Father*, even in this Glorifie thy Name; and out of my very Ruins erect thou a *Trophy* and *Monument* to thy Praiſe: Be thou Hallowed and Sanctified, altho' at my Coſt, and with the Loſs of all.

Secondly, In that this Petition is placed in the Beginning of the *Lord's Prayer*, it intimates to us that in the very Beginning and Entrance of our Prayers we ought to beg Aſſiſtance from God, ſo to perform Holy Duties that God may be Glorified, and his Name Sanctified, by us in it. It is a good and needful Requeſt to beg of God the Aid and Help of his Spirit to enable us to Hallow his Name in the ſucceeding Requeſts we are to make.

Thirdly, Obſerve, that when we preſent this Petition before God we beg Three Things of him.

Firſt, Such Grace for our ſelves as may enable us to Sanctifie and Glorifie him.

Secondly, Graces likewiſe for others to enable them thereunto.

Thirdly, That God would by his Almighty Providence direct and over-rule all Things, both Good and Evil, to the Advancement of his own Glory.

Firſt, We beg of God that he would beſtow upon us ſuch Graces as are requiſite to Glorifie him in the World. We beg Knowledge and Underſtanding of Him, of his Nature, of his Will, and of his Works; for we cannot Glorifie that God whom we are ignorant of. We beg likewiſe Patience and Contentment in all Eſtates, Thankfulneſs for every Providence, Graces that do highly tend to the promoting of God's Honour and Glory. We beg Faith likewiſe, whereby we give the higheſt and greateſt Glory to God that Mortal Men are able to aſcribe; for to truſt upon his Word, and to build upon his Promiſes, is to Honour his Truth and Faithfulneſs. And therefore we have that Expreſſion, *Rom.* 4. 20. *That* Abraham *was ſtrong in Faith, giving Glory to God.* We beg alſo that our Speech may be Savoury, and ſuch as *may miniſter Grace to the Hearers.* And laſtly, a humble, blameleſs, and exemplary, Life; for by our good Works we are to Glorifie our *Heavenly Father.*

I cannot ſtand to inſiſt upon theſe Things particularly, becauſe my Deſign is only to give you briefly and ſummarily an Account of what is contained in this moſt Excellent Prayer, that you may underſtand what you Pray for when you preſent theſe Petitions before God.

Secondly, We herein beg of God that he would ſo over-rule all Things whatſo-

ever

ever that his Glory may be ſecured, nay, promoted, by them; and therefore whatſoever falls out we ought to ſay, *Hallowed be thy Name* by it. Hereby we Pray that the Gifts and Eminent Graces of God's Children may redound unto his Glory, that they may not be puffed up with them, nor aſcribe the Credit of them to themſelves. That the Peace and Proſperity of the Church of Chriſt may turn to the Glory of God, that outward Mercies may not make them careleſs and forgetful of his Service and Honour. That the Sins and Failings of God's People may eventually turn to the Glory of God, which ſeem directly to blot and ſtain it: And that by their Repentance and Confeſſions they may give Glory to him whom they have offended, and Satisfaction to them whom they have ſcandalized, that all the Afflictions and Troubles of his People may in the End tend unto his Glory as well as their Good, by declaring his Power in ſupporting them, and his Goodneſs and Mercy in delivering them. That all the Devices and Conſpiracies, the Rage and Fury, of the Enemies of his Church, may, contrary to their Intentions, be overſwayed to advance his Honour, and that the Wrath of Man may Praiſe him by ſhewing forth his Power, Wiſdom, and Goodneſs, either in reſtraining or overturning it. And finally, that all Creatures both in Heaven and in Earth, yea, all the Works of God's Hand, ſhould Glorifie God in the ſeveral Stations in which he hath ſet them: Some by being the Manifeſtations of his Attributes, and ſome the Manifeſters of them. Brutes and Senſleſs Creatures paſſively declaring the Glory of their great Creator; and Rational and Intelligent Creatures ſhewing it forth actively, and all concurring in this great Work, for which all were made, even the Glory and Praiſe of God.

Thus we ſee what a large and copious Requeſt we preſent before God when we pray that his Name ſhould be *Hallowed*; which that it may be, let us our ſelves endeavour to be Holy, for it is impoſſible that an unholy Heart or Life ſhould Sanctifie a Holy God. Whilſt we perſevere in our wicked Converſations we do but mock God and our Selves when we deſire to Sanctifie that Name of his which we daily Prophane and Pollute; nay, indeed we do but Pray for our own Deſtruction, even that God would Sanctifie his Name, part whereof is his juſt and dreadful Severity upon all thoſe, and conſequently upon our ſelves, who Defile and Prophane it. And thus I have finiſhed the Firſt Petition, *Hallowed be thy Name.*

The Second Petition follows, *Thy Kingdom come.*

This now very aptly ſucceeds upon the former, becauſe this is the beſt Way and Means to *Hallow God's Name*, by enlarging his Kingdom, and bringing in many to ſubmit to his Scepter and Government. For *Praiſe waiteth for God in Sion*, Pſalm 65. 1. *And his Name is great in* Iſrael, *Pſalm* 76. 1.

Now here for our clearer proceeding we muſt diſtinguiſh of God's Kingdom, and then ſhew you how this Kingdom comes. And laſtly, what we pray for in preſenting this Petition to God, *Thy Kingdom come.*

Firſt, We muſt diſtinguiſh of God's Kingdom. Now the Kingdom of God is Twofold, either Univerſal, or more Particular and Peculiar: The one is his Kingdom of Power, the other is his Kingdom of Grace.

Firſt, His *Univerſal Kingdom*, which extends over all Things in Heaven and Earth, yea, and Hell itſelf. And ſo he is the Sole *Monarch* of the whole World, and all the *Princes* and *Potentates* of the Earth are but his *Vice-Roys* and *Vicegerents*, that Govern under, and ſhould Govern for, him: For he is that *Bleſſed and Only Potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*, as the Apoſtle Stiles him, 1 *Tim.* 6. 15. and *his Kingdom ruleth over all*, Pſalm 103. 19. It is true, in this *Univerſal Kingdom* there are many Rebels that would not have him to Reign over them. Many that daily riſe up in Arms break his Laws, defie his Juſtice, and reject his Mercy. Many, that were their Power equal to their Malice, would Dethrone and Depoſe him from his Sovereignty. Whole Legions of Infernal Spirits are continually muſtering up all their Forces, and drawing wretched ſinful Men into the Conſpiracy; and their Quarrel is for no leſs than *Dominion* and *Empire*; who ſhall be King, God or Satan: Yet all their Attempts are but vain and fruſtrate, and in ſpite of all their impotent Rage God's Kingdom ſhall ſtand; and as it was from Everlaſting, ſo ſhall it be to Everlaſting, *for thine is the Kingdom and Power, for ever and ever.* And therefore the moſt wicked of all God's Creatures are ſtill her Subjects; not ſubject indeed to his Laws, for ſo they break his Bonds aſunder, and caſt away his Cords from them; but they are ſubject to his Power and Providence, and that in Three Reſpects. As it grants *Permiſſion*, as it impoſeth *Reſtraints*, and as it inflicts *Puniſhments.*

Firſt,

First, All are God's Subjects in that they can do nothing without his *Permission*. Neither the *Devil*, that Arch-Creature, nor the worst of his Instruments, can so much as touch an Hair of our Head, unless leave be granted them. Yea, we find that a whole *Legion* of *Devils*, after they were dispossessed of their usurped Abode, durst not so much as house themselves in a Herd of Swine without first craving leave of our Saviour, *Mark* 5. 12. And all the Villanies and Outrages that have ever been committed in the World have had their Pass from God's Permission, without which the Lusts of Men, as furious and eager as they are, must needs have miscarrying Wombs and dry Breasts. Nor is it any Taint at all to the Pure Holiness of God that he doth thus permit the Wickedness of Men, which if he pleased he might prevent. For though we are obliged to keep others from Sin when it lyes in our Power to do it, yet no such Obligation lyes upon God; though he can keep the wickedest Wretch on Earth from ever sinning any more, yet he permits wisely, for the greater Advancement of his own Glory, and the Exercise of his Peoples Graces, and at the last he punishes justly.

Secondly, His Kingdom is over all, in that he can *bend* in and restrain his Rebellious Subjects as he pleaseth. Sometimes he doth it by cutting short their Power of doing Mischief. He Chains up those Madmen, and takes from them those Swords, Arrows, and Firebrands, which otherwise they might hurl abroad, both to their own and others Hurt. Sometimes he raiseth up an opposite Power against them that they cannot break through to the Commission of their Sins: So the *Jews* would often have taken Christ and put him to Death, but they feared the People, whom his Miracles and Cures had obliged unto him. Sometimes Providence casts in some Seasonable Diversion; and thus he over-ruled *Joseph*'s *Brethren*, restraining them from killing him, by the Providential passing by of Merchants that Way. And sometimes by removing the *Objects* against which they intended to Sin. So *Herod* intended to put *Peter* to Death, but that very Night God sent his *Angel* to work his escape, and prevented that Wickedness. Many other Ways there may be of his exercising his Sovereignty and Dominion over his most Rebellious Creatures, who though they are Slaves to their Lusts, yet God holds their Chain in his own Hand, slackning it by his Permission, and sometimes straitning it by his powerful Restraints. And therefore we find in *Scripture* that God hath a certain Measure for Mens Sins, beyond which they shall not exceed. *Zach.* 5. there is mention made of an *Ephah* of *Wickedness*. And this signifies to us, that though wicked Men break the Bounds of his Laws, yet they cannot break the Bounds of his Providence. God hath set them their Measure, which they can neither fill without his Permission, nor exceed because of his Restraint.

Thirdly, God declares his Kingdom to be over all, by inflicting deserved Punishments on the most Stubborn and Rebellious Sinners: Though they transgress his Laws, and provoke his Holiness, yet they shall never outbrave his Justice; but he will certainly humble them, if not to Repentance, yet to Hell and Perdition, *Luke* 19. 17. *Those mine Enemies that would not that I should Reign over them bring them hither, and slay them before me.* And therefore we see how God hath erected *Trophies* and *Monuments* to the Praise of his Dread Power and Severe Justice out of the Ruins of the most Proud and Insolent Sinners. *Pharaoh*, who was both the great Type and Instrument of the Devil, how did God break that stubborn Wretch with Plague upon Plague, and one Misery after another? For to this very Purpose God set him up that he might shew his Signs and Wonders upon him. And thus God deals with many others in this Life by some Signal and Remarkable Punishments, making them Examples to deter others from the like Crimes.

But thus he deals with all his Rebels in *Hell*, for even that is one, and a large, Part of his *Kingdom*: It is his Prison, wherein he hath shut up all his Malefactors whom his grim Serjeant, Death, hath Arrested. It is the great Slaughter-house of Souls, and the Shop of Justice; *Devils* are there his Executioners, and Fire, and Rack, and Torments, the due Guerdon of those impenitent Rebels, who shaking off his Yoke, and casting off his Cords, from them, are crush'd for ever under the insupportable Load of his Wrath, and bound in Chains of massy Darkness, reserved for the Judgment of the Great Day.

Thus we see God's *Universal Kingdom* consists of Three great Provinces, *Heaven*, *Earth*, and *Hell*. In Heaven only Grace and Mercy Reigns; on Earth both Mercy and Justice, in the various Dispensations of them towards the Sons of Men; in Hell pure and unmixed Justice triumphs in the Eternal Damnation of his Apostate Creatures: This is God's *Universal Kingdom*. But,

Secondly,

Secondly, Beſides this, God hath a peculiar *Kingdom*, and that is his *Kingdom of Grace*, which though it be not ſo large and extenſive as the former, yet it is far more excellent, and the Royalty of it is God's ſingular Delight. Now this *Kingdom of Grace* is his Church, and may be conſidered Two Ways.

Firſt, In its Growth and Progreſs.

Secondly, In its Perfection and Conſummation.

In the former Reſpect it is the *Church Militant* here upon Earth, and in the latter it is the *Church Triumphant* in Heaven, for both make up but one Kingdom under divers Reſpects.

Firſt, Let us a little conſider God's Kingdom here upon Earth, or the *Church Militant*, and that is Twofold, Viſible and Inviſible.

The *Viſible Kingdom* of God upon Earth are a Company of People openly profeſſing the Fundamentals of Religion, and thoſe Truths neceſſary to Salvation which God hath made known unto the World, and joining together in the External Communion of Ordinances.

The *Inviſible Kingdom* are a Company of ttue Believers, who have Internal and Invifible Communion with God by his Spirit and their Faith. The *Viſible Church* is of a much larger Extent than the *Inviſible*, for it comprehends Hypocrites and Formaliſts, and all thoſe who have given up their Names to Chriſt, and liſted themſelves under his Banner, and make an outward Profeſſion of the Truth, although by their Lives and Practices they contradict and deny what they own and profeſs with their Lips: Theſe belong to the Kingdom of God's Grace, as to the External Diſpenſation and Regiment of it, becauſe they profeſs Obedience to his Laws, and live under the Means of Grace, by which many of them through the efficacious Concurrence of the Spirit of God are tranſlated into the *Inviſible Kingdom* of his Dear Son.

Now this *Viſible Kingdom* of God upon Earth is but an imperfect State and Condition; for though all that are Members of it are ſelected and taken out of the World, yet there is a great deal of Mixture and Droſs, and many Things that do offend. For,

Firſt, There is in it a Mixture of Wicked Perſons with thoſe that are really Holy. Many are of this Kingdom only, becauſe their Conſciences are convinced of the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion, although their Lives are not ſubject to the Power of it; and theſe are taken out of the World only as they are brought into the Pale of the Church, and profeſs the Name of Chriſt and his *Religion*, as diſtinct from all other *Religions* in the World. And therefore we find the Church, or the Kingdom of Heaven, in *Scripture* frequently compared to a *Net* caſt into the *Sea*, gathering every kind of *Fiſh*, both good and bad, *Matth.* 13. 47. Both Sorts are embraced in the Boſom of this Net, and no perfect Separation can be made until it be drawn to Shore at the Day of Judgment; and then the Good will be gathered into Veſſels, and the Bad caſt away, as it is there expreſſed. Again, it is compared to a *Floor*, wherein is both *Chaff* and *Wheat*, *Luke* 3. 17. and theſe will be mix'd together until the laſt diſcriminating Day, and *then ſhall the Wheat be gathered into the Garner, and the Chaff burnt up with unquenchable Fire.* Again, it is compared to a *Field*, wherein there grows *Tares* as well as *Corn*, *Matth.* 13. 24. which muſt grow together until the *Harveſt*, and then ſhall the *Tares* be bound in Bundles to be burnt, and the profitable *Grain* be gathered into the *Barn.* This hath ſtill been, and will be, the mix'd Condition of God's Church on Earth, wherein, through Hypocriſie and groſs Diſſimulation, many that are Enemies to the Croſs of Chriſt will yet go under that Cognizance, and keep up a Form of Godlineſs, tho' they deny and hate the Power of it.

Secondly, There is even in the *Inviſible Church* here on Earth a great Mixture too; thoſe who have a Real and Vital Union to Chriſt, and maintain a Spiritual Communion with him, yet even they have a ſad Mixture of Evil with all their Good, of Sin with all their Grace and Holineſs, ſo that the *Church* is ſtill imperfect, not only from a Mixture of Perſons, but from a Mixture in Perſons: As we know but in part, ſo we love but in part; we fear, we obey, God but in part. And with our Profeſſion of Faith we had need alſo to prefer that Humble Petition, *Mark* 9. 24. *Lord, I Believe, help thou my Unbelief.*

Secondly, The Kingdom of God may be conſidered in its Perfection and Conſummation, and ſo it is Triumphant in Heaven. And this conſiſts of ſuch Glorious *Angels* as never Fell, and of ſuch *Glorified Saints* who are raiſed from their Fall, and

and restored to a far better Condition than what they lost. This is the most Glorious Part of God's Kingdom; here is his Throne especially established, and here it is that he displays himself in the Splendor of his Majesty; being surrounded by innumerable Hosts of Holy Angels, and the Spirits of Just Men made Perfect, who continually Worship before him with a most prostrate Veneration, and give *Honour, and Glory, and Praise, to him that sits upon the Throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.*

Now this *Kingdom* is altogether free from those former Imperfections and Mixtures. There is no Mixture of Good and Bad together; neither is there any Mixture of Bad in the Good, but all are Holy, and all as compleatly Holy as Creatures can be; for *into the* New Jerusalem *shall no unclean Thing ever enter.* There are neither Temptations to Try us, nor Sins to Defile us, nor Sorrows to Afflict us, but perfect Joy, and perfect Purity; where all Tears shall be wiped from our Eyes, and all Sin, the Cause of those Tears, rooted out of our Hearts. And yet if Heaven itself may be liable to any Defects, or capable of any Additions, there seems at present to be wanting in it these Two Things.

First, The *Kingdom of Glory* is not yet full, nor shall it be till the whole Number of the *Elect* shall be called, and the whole Number of the called glorified. Many as yet are conflicting here below, and fitting themselves for their Eternal Reward; many yet lye sleeping in their Causes unborn, whom God hath *Foreknown* and *Predestinated* unto Eternal Life, all of whom he will in his due Time bring unto the Possession of his Heavenly Kingdom, to compleat the Number of his Glorious Subjects. And therefore it is said concerning the Saints that are already in Heaven, that *White Robes were given to every one of them*; and it was said unto them, that *they should rest yet for a little Season, until their Fellow Servants also and their Brethren, that should be Killed as they were, should be fulfilled*, Rev. 6. 11.

Secondly, Those glorified Saints that are now in Heaven, though their Joys be perfect, yet their Persons are not; but one part of them, their Bodies, continue still under the Arrest of Death, and the Power of the Grave; but yet they sleep in Hope, and through that *Mystical Union* that there is between Jesus Christ and every scattered Dust of a Believer, they shall obtain a Glorious and Joyful Resurrection; and then shall this Heavenly Kingdom be every Way perfect, perfect in the full Number of its Subjects, and every Subject perfect in his entire and compleat Reward: His Soul made for ever Blessed in the *Beatifical Vision* of God, and his Body made unconceivably Glorious by the redundancy of that Glory that fills his Soul, and both shall remain for ever with the Lord.

And thus you see what the *Kingdom of God* is, both *Universal* and *Peculiar*, the *Kingdom* of his *Power*, and the *Kingdom* of his *Grace*; and that as it is *Militant* here on Earth, both *Visible* and *Invisible*, and as it is *Triumphant* in Heaven.

The next Thing in order is, to shew how this *Kingdom* of *God* is said to come. This Word, *Come*, implies that we pray for a *Kingdom* that is yet in its Progress, and hath not yet attained the highest Pitch of that Perfection which is expected and desired; for that which is yet to come, is not as yet arrived to that State in which it is to be: And therefore we do not so properly pray that the *Universal Kingdom* of *God* should come; for his Dominion over the Creatures is actually the same, and shall be so for ever: But more especially we pray that the *Peculiar Kingdom* of *God* should come, and that as to both Parts of it, *Militant* and *Triumphant*. Now this *Peculiar Kingdom* is said to come in Three Respects.

First, In respect of the Means of Grace and Salvation; for where these are rightly dispensed, (I mean the Holy Word and Sacraments,) there is the Kingdom of God begun and erected; and therefore we find it called *the Word of the Kingdom*, Mat. 13. 19.

Secondly, In respect of the Efficacy of those Means; when all Ready and Cordial Obedience is yielded to the Laws of God, then doth this *Kingdom come*, and the Glory of it is advanced and increased.

Thirdly, In respect of Perfection, and so it comes when the Graces of the Saints are strengthened and increased; when the Souls of the Godly departing this Life are received into Heaven; and when the whole Number of them shall have their perfect Consummation and Bliss in the Glorification both of Soul and Body, after the general Resurrection. And thus we have seen how the *Kingdom* of *God* may *come*.

In the next Place we must enquire what it is we Pray for when we say, *Thy Kingdom come.*

I anſwer, there are Various Things lye couch'd under this Petition; as,

Firſt, We pray that God would be pleas'd to plant his Church where it is not, according to his Promiſe, *giving all the Nations of the World to his Son for his Inheritance, and the utmoſt Parts of the Earth for his Poſſeſſion.* That the Dark Places and Corners of the Earth that are yet the Habitations of Cruelty may be illuſtrated with the Glorious Light of the Goſpel ſhining into them; that God would reveal his Son to thoſe Poor Wretched People that ſit in Darkneſs, and in the *Region* of the *Shadow* of *Death*, and would reſcue them from their Blind Superſtitions and Idolatries, and from the Power of the Devil, who ſtrongly works in the Children of Diſobedience, and would tranſlate them into the Kingdom of his Dear Son; eſpecially that he would remove the Veil from the Heart of the *Jew*, upon whom a Sad Judicial Hardneſs hath long lain, that they at length may be brought into the Unity and Fulneſs of Chriſt's Body. We pray that all the World, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, may be gather'd into one Sheepfold under Chriſt Jeſus the great Paſtor and Shepherd of Souls; ſo that as God is one, ſo his Name and Service may be one, throughout all the Earth. And thus we pray that Chriſt's *Kingdom may come* in reſpect of the Means of Grace and Salvation.

Secondly, This Petition, *Thy Kingdom come*, intimates our Earneſt Deſire that the Church of Chriſt, where they are planted, may be encreaſed in the Members of the Faithful. That thoſe who are as yet Enemies to the Name and Profeſſion of Chriſt may be brought into the Viſible Church; and that thoſe in it, who are yet Strangers to a Powerful Work of Grace, may by the Effectual Operation of the *Holy Ghoſt* be brought in to be Members of the *Inviſible Church.* And thus we pray that God's *Kingdom may come* in reſpect of the Efficacy of the Means of Grace.

Thirdly, We pray that all the Church of Chriſt throughout the World may be kept from Ruin, that they may not be over-run with Superſtition or Idolatry; that God would not in his Wrath remove his Candleſtick from them, as he hath, in his Righteous Judgment, done from other Churches which were once Glorious and Splendid. We pray likewiſe that God would make up all Breaches, and compoſe all Differences, and ſilence all Controverſies, and cut off all thoſe who trouble the Peace, and rend the Unity, of the Church, breaking it into Factions and Schiſms, which are the moſt Fatal Symptoms and Portenders of God's withdrawing himſelf, and carrying away his Goſpel, and giving of it to another People, who will better bring forth the Fruits of it, which are Peace, Meekneſs, and Love. And if in any Thing Chriſtians be diverſly minded, that God would be pleaſed to reveal it unto them; and that *whereunto they have attained, they may walk by the ſame Rule, and mind the ſame things.* And thus we pray that *Chriſt's Kingdom may come* in reſpect of its Perfection and Entireneſs.

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ment, that may not be rooted out by the Violence of Men, nor abandoned through the Judgment of God. And to a Perfection of Purity and Holineſs by the powerful Diſpenſation of Goſpel-Ordinances, attended by the Efficacious Concurrence of the *Holy Spirit*. But,

Secondly, This *Petition* likewiſe reſpects the *Church Triumphant* in Heaven: Nor is this praying for the Dead a Thing juſtly condemned of Superſtition and Folly, for we pray not for them to alter their State, which is impious and ridiculous, and a foppiſh Conſequent upon the Figment of *Purgatory*, but we pray for the *Church Triumphant* only in general, that thoſe Things which are as yet defective in it may be ſupplied: For certainly whereſoever there is any kind of Imperfection we have ground to pray for the Removal of it, eſpecially when God hath encouraged us to it by Promiſe that he will remove it: And therefore,

Firſt, We may well pray that the whole Body Myſtical of Jeſus Chriſt, and every Member of it, may be brought to the full Fruition of Heaven and Happineſs, that daily more may be admitted into the Heavenly Fellowſhip, till their Numbers as well as their Joys be Conſummate. And,

Secondly, We may pray that the Bodies of all the Saints that have ſlept in their Beds of Earth from the beginning of the World may be raiſed again out of the Duſt, and united to their Souls, and for ever made Glorious in the Kingdom of Heaven; for both theſe Things are abſolutely promiſed, the one, *Rom.* 8. 29, 30. that thoſe whom God hath *Called*, and *Juſtified*, he will likewiſe *Glorifie*. And the other is, 1 *Theſſ.* 4. 16. *The Dead in Chriſt ſhall ariſe*. And certainly whatſoever may be the Object of our Faith, Hope may be the Subject of our Prayers. And this every true Chriſtian longs and breathes after, that theſe Days of Sin and Miſery may be ſhortned, that Chriſt would come in his Glory, that his Mediatory Kingdom being fulfilled, it might be delivered up unto the Father; and that we all might be one, as the Father is in him, and he in the Father. *Even ſo come, Lord Jeſus, come quickly*. And thus I have finiſhed the Second Petition, *Thy Kingdom come*.

The Third follows, *Thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven*. This now follows upon the former in a moſt rational and admirable Method; for as before we pray that the *Kingdom of God might come*, as the beſt adapted Means to *Hallow his Name*; ſo now we pray that his Will may be done by us, as the cleareſt Declaration that we are the Subjects of his Kingdom. Now here are conſiderable,

Firſt, The Petition itſelf, *Thy Will be done in Earth*.

Secondly, the Meaſure and Proportion of it, *As it is in Heaven*.

I ſhall begin with the *Petition*, in which every Word carries great Weight and Moment, and therefore in the Explication of it I ſhall ſhew you,

Firſt, What this Will of God is.

Secondly, how his Will may be ſaid to be done.

Thirdly, What Force this Particle, *thy*, *thy Will*, carries in it, and what it denotes.

Fourthly, What is meant by God's Will being done in Earth. And all theſe with all Perſpicuity and Brevity.

Firſt, What this Will of God is. Now the Will of God is commonly and very well diſtinguiſhed into the Will of his Purpoſe, and into the Will of his Precepts, his Decrees, or his Commands. The former reſpects what ſhall be done by him, the latter what ought to be done by us: Both theſe in *Scripture* are frequently called the Will of God.

Firſt, God's Purpoſe is his Will; yea, it is more properly his Will than his Precepts are; for by this God doth abſolutely determine what ſhall be, and what ſhall not be; and all Things in the World take their Place, and are ranged in their ſeveral Stations; and the whole Series of Cauſes and Effects are governed by the Ordination and Appointment of this his Sovereign Will. And therefore it is ſaid, *Eph.* 1. 11. That *God worketh all Things according to the Counſel of his own Will*. And *Pſal.* 135. 6. *Whatſoever the Lord pleaſed that he did in Heaven, in Earth, in the Sea, and in all deep Places*. This is God's Will of Purpoſe, whereby he guides and governs all Events whatſoever, ſo that there is not the moſt inconſiderable Occurrence that happens, not the leaſt flight of a *Sparrow*, nor the falling off of an *Hair*, nor the motion of an *Atome*, in the Air, or a *Duſt*, or a *Sand*, on the Earth, but as it is effected by his Power and Providence, ſo it was determined by his Will and Counſel.

Secondly,

Secondly, The Precepts and Commands are likewiſe the VVill of God, but they are improperly ſo called, becauſe theſe concern not, neither do they determine the Event of Things, but only our Duty; not what ſhall be, but what ought to be; and it is called, *Rom.* 12. 2. *The good, and acceptable, and perfect, Will of God.* This is all contained in the *Holy Scriptures*, which are a perfect Syſtem of Precepts given us for the Government of our Lives here, and for the attaining of Eternal Life hereafter; and therefore it is likewiſe called his Revealed VVill; whereas the other, namely, the VVill of Purpoſe, is God's Secret VVill, until it be manifeſted unto us by the Events and Effects of it.

Now concerning this Diſtinction of God's VVill of Purpoſe and Precept we may note, that though there be a great deal of Difference, yet there is no Contrariety or Oppoſition, between them.

Firſt, They differ the one from the other, not in reſpect of God, (for his Will is one infinitely pure and uncompounded Act,) but only in reſpect of the *Object*; for there are many Things which God wills by his Will of Purpoſe, which he hath not willed by his Will of Precept. His Precepts are all holy, and command nothing but what is holy and acceptable: *This is the Will of God*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *even your Sanctification*, 1 *Theſſ.* 4. 3. It is the higheſt Degree of Blaſphemy to impute unto God that he hath commanded us any Thing but what is Holy, Juſt, and Good: This were to make him the Author of Sin, who hath declared himſelf the Puniſher of it. But his *Will* of *Purpoſe* is not reſtrained within Bounds and Limits, but extendeth itſelf to all Events whatſoever, whether Good or Evil.

And as Evils are of Two Sorts, either the Evil of Puniſhment, or the Evil of Sin, ſo is God's *Will* of *Purpoſe* Twofold, *effective* of the one, and *permiſſive* of the other, but in both moſt certain and infallible.

1. God's *Will* of *Purpoſe* doth effect and bring to paſs the Evil of Puniſhment: Amos 3. 6. *Shall there be any Evil in the City and the Lord hath not done it?* For he doth both in Heaven and in Earth whatſoever pleaſeth him. VVere it not the VVill of God the VVorld had never groaned under ſo many Miſeries and Calamities as have in all Ages befallen it. Now God never enjoins us this as our Duty, altho' he lays them upon us as our Burden.

2. God's *Will* of *Purpoſe* permits the Evil of Sin for Wiſe and Gracious Ends, that he may bring Good out of Evil; even thoſe very Sins and VVickedneſs which his *Will* of *Precept* forbids, his *Will* of *Purpoſe* permits; for if God did not will to permit them there would be no ſuch Thing as Sin in the VVorld.

Secondly, Hence ariſeth another very Remarkable Difference, that we may effectually reſiſt God's VVill of Precept, ſo as to hinder the Accompliſhment of it; but whatſoever we do ſo it is our Sin, and will, without Repentance, be our Condemnation. So *Stephen* accuſeth the *Jews*, Acts 7. 51. *You do always reſiſt the Holy Ghoſt*; that is, by your Practices you do always go contrary to the Commands of God, revealed by his Spirit in his VVord. And were it not for this reſiſting of the VVill of God we ſhould be perfectly Holy and Blameleſs.

But we cannot reſiſt the *Will* of *God's Purpoſe*, ſo as to hinder the Execution of it; although ſometimes to endeavour it may be ſo far from Sin, as to be our neceſſary and indiſpenſable Duty: For though it may be the VVill of God to bring us into Poverty, or into Priſon, or to lay ſore Diſeaſes upon us, yet it is not only lawful for us, but we are obliged, as far as lyes in us, to hinder thoſe Evils of Puniſhment from befalling us, and to preſerve our Eſtates, our Liberty, our Health, and our outward Comforts, by all lawful and allowed VVays and Means: Much more, if God ſhould VVill to permit a Sin in others, or in our ſelves, are we bound to hinder the Commiſſion of it; for, for us to be willing to permit, becauſe God is, though it be a Conformity of our VVills to *God's Will* of *Purpoſe*, yet this is not our Rule to walk by: And it is a wretched Rebellion againſt his *Will* of *Precept*, which alone we are to reſpect in all our Actions, and endeavour to conform our ſelves unto. Doubtleſs it was *God's Will of Purpoſe*, that Chriſt, the Lord of Life and Glory, ſhould be Crucified; but yet the *Jews* conforming themſelves according to this VVill, were guilty of the moſt horrid VVickedneſs that ever was committed in the VVorld; for both theſe we have confirmed to us, *Acts* 2. 23. *Him being delivered by the determinate Counſel and Foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked Hands have crucified and ſlain.* Altho' it was by the determinate Counſel and VVill of God that Chriſt ſhould be taken and ſlain, yet nevertheleſs they were wicked Hands that were imbrued in that Precious and Ineſtimable Blood. And thus I have ſhown how the *Will* of God's *Purpoſe* and *Precept* do differ. But yet,

Secondly, Although there be this great Difference, yet is there no Contrariety of Repugnancy, but a Perfect Harmony and Uniformity between them. Some have thought that if God wills such a Thing should be done; as for Instance, the Crucifying of our Lord and Saviour by his *Will* of *Purpose*, and yet wills that it should not be done by his *Will* of *Precept*, that these Two Wills must needs contradict one another; and this Argument some do make no small Use of to explode the Distinction of the Will of God.

But the *Solution* is most easie; for when Wills are contrary to each other there must be a Willing and a Nilling of the same Thing: But it is not so here, for the Object of God's *Will* of *Purpose* is Event, but of his *Will* of *Precept* Duty. Now it is far enough from having any Shadow of a Contradiction for God to will or permit that to be which he hath willed or commanded us not to do. Indeed to will such an Event to be, and not to be, that such a Thing shall be my Duty, and shall not be my Duty, are Contradictions, and not to be imputed unto God: But to will that such a Thing shall eventually be, and yet to will that it shall be my Duty to endeavour to hinder it, is so far from being a Contradiction, that it is most apparent and evident, and falls out most frequently in our Ordinary Converse in the World. So in the forementioned Famous Instance of the Death of Christ, God willed by his *Will* of *Purpose* that it should so come to pass in all the Circumstances of it as it was perpetrated; but then he willed by his VVill of *Precept* that it should be their Duty not to do it. Now certainly there is no Contradiction or Absurdity that Duty and Event may be quite contrary one to the other, unless we could take away all Sin, and authorize all the greatest Villanies that ever were committed under the Sun. And thus much for the First Head.

And having thus seen what the VVill of God is, the next General is to enquire what VVill it is we pray may be done when we say, *Thy Will be done.* And here,

First, It is clear that we especially and absolutely pray that the *Will* of God's *Precept* may be done, and that not only by us, but by all Men; for this VVill of God is the Rule of our Obedience, and according to it we ought to conform all our Actions. And because we are not sufficient of our selves so much as to think any Thing of our selves, much less to perform all those Various and VVeighty Duties of Holiness which God hath enjoin'd us in his VVord, therefore our Saviour hath taught us to beg of God Grace and Assistance to enable us to fulfil his VVill, giving us not only Commands of Obedience, but Promises for our Relief and Encouragement, instructing us in the VVord to crave Supplies of Grace from him who hath requir'd Duty from us. And indeed there is a great deal of Reason we should pray that his VVill of *Precept* should be done on Earth if we consider,

First, The great Reluctancy and Opposition of Corrupt Nature against it. *The Law is Spiritual, but we are Carnal, and Sold under Sin*, Rom. 7. 4. and in the best of Men there is a *Law in their Members warring against the Law of their Minds*, that when they would do Good, Evil is present with them; and therefore we have need to pray that God would encline our Hearts to his Commandments, and then strengthen us to obey them, that as our Will to Good is the Effect of his Grace, so the Effect of our Wills may be the Performance of his Will.

Secondly, God's Glory is deeply concern'd in the doing of his Will; for it is the Glory of a King to have his Laws obey'd, and so it is God's. When we profess our selves to be his Subjects, and pray that his *Kingdom may come*, it is but fit and rational that we should pray likewise, *Thy Will be done*, without which this his Kingdom of Grace would be but meerly Titular; for his Word is the Scepter and Law of his Kingdom, and if we yield not Obedience to it, we do tacitly condemn it, and the Lawmaker also, of Injustice, and thereby reflect a most Intolerable Disparagement upon God, preferring the VVill of Satan, and of our own Lusts, before his most Holy and Righteous Will: But when we endeavour to yield Obedience to his Commands, and pray that we may be able to do it with more Diligence and Constancy, this as it pleaseth, so it glorifieth, God; for by so doing we acknowledge both his Sovereignty and his Equity; his Sovereignty in that he may require of us what he pleaseth, and his Equity in that he requireth of us nothing but what is most just and fit: And therefore our Saviour tells us, *John* 15. 8. *Herein is my Father glorified, that you bring forth much Fruit.*

Thirdly, Our own Interest is deeply concerned in it; for through Obedience, and doing the Will of God, it is that we come to inherit the Promises, *Rev.* 22. 14. *Blessed are they that do his Commandments, that they may have a Right to the Tree of Life, and may enter in through the Gates into the City.* And therefore to pray

pray that God's Will may be done by us, is but to pray that we our ſelves may be fitted and prepared for Eternal Life and Glory, unto which we can no otherwiſe attain but by Holineſs and Obedience. O think but to what an Excellency doth Grace advance the Soul even in this Life, and make *Chriſtians* as much above other Men, as other Men are above Beaſts? That when they are employed about the Foul and Naſty Offices of Sin, hurried by their Vile Paſſions into Vile and Baſe Actions, raking in the Mire and Filth of all Manner of Uncleanneſs, and defiling their Souls with thoſe Sins which will hereafter damn them, thy Work ſhould be all Spiritual, conſiſting of the ſame Pure Employments that the Holy *Angels* and *Glorified Saints* in Heaven ſpend their Eternity in. Conſider what an High Honour and Priviledge it is that you ſhould be admitted to attend immediately upon the Service of the *King* of *Kings*. You are called to wait about his Throne, his Throne of Grace, to which you have always free Acceſs to converſe and commune with God, by maintaining Fellowſhip with him in the Performance of Holy Duties; which is a Dignity ſo high, that Humane Nature is capable but of one Preferment more, and that is of being removed from one Throne to the other, from attending on the Throne of Grace, to attend on the Throne of Glory. And then think, O Soul, if it be poſſible to think what *neither Eye hath ſeen, nor Ear hath heard, neither hath it, nor can it, enter into the Heart of Man to conceive?* Think how tranſcendently Bleſſed thy Eſtate ſhall be when the Will of thy God, which was here thy Duty, ſhall there be thy Nature; when thy Obligation to do it ſhall be turned into a Happy Neceſſity of doing it; when all thy Thoughts and Affections ſhall be center'd in God for ever, and not the leaſt Motion of thy Soul ſhall ſo much as twinkle or waver from the Eternal Contemplation and Fruition of the Infinite Deity. And therefore this our Eternal Happineſs being wrapp'd up in doing the Will of God, it highly concerns us to pray that it may be done, and to endeavour to do it on Earth, ſo as that at length we may attain to the Perfection of doing it in Heaven. And this is the *Firſt* Thing that in this Petition we eſpecially and abſolutely pray for, *viz.* that God's *Will* of *Precept* may be done by us on Earth.

Secondly, It is more doubtful whether we are ſimply to pray that God's *Will* of *Purpoſe* ſhould be done. And that,

Firſt, Becauſe the *Will* of *God's Purpoſe* is ſecret and unknown, and therefore cannot ſo immediately concern us in Point of Duty, *For Secret Things belong to God, but Revealed Things belong to us, and to our Children*, Deut. 29. 29.

Secondly, Becauſe this Will of God ſhall, within the Periods ſet by his Eternal Decrees, have its moſt Perfect and Full Accompliſhment; for though his *Revealed Will* may be reſiſted and hindered, yet neither *Men* nor *Devils* can hinder his *Secret Will*, and the Purpoſes of his Counſels; theſe ſhall take Place, maugèr all their Spite and Oppoſitions; and therefore it ſeems not altogether ſo Proper Matter for our Prayers.

Again, *Thirdly*, Many Things come to paſs by the *Will* of *God's Purpoſe* which we ought not to pray for, yea, which we ought to pray againſt; as not to inſtance in *God's Will* of permitting the Sins and Wickedneſſes of Men, which beyond all Exceptions we ought to deprecate. Let us but conſider, Common Charity obligeth us not to pray for any Evil of Suffering to befal either our Selves or others, and yet we know that it is oftentimes the *Will* of *God's Purpoſe* to bring great and ſore Judgments upon Kingdoms, and upon Families and Perſons: And if we may indefinitely pray that this Will ſhould be done, this would be nothing elſe but to pray for the Death and Ruin of many Thouſands, whom yet the *Revealed Will* of God commands us to pray for, and to deſire all Good and Proſperity to them. But yet notwithſtanding all this we may doubtleſs pray that the *Will* of *God's Purpoſe* may be done ſo far as it brings to paſs thoſe Things which we are oblig'd to pray for by the *Will* of his *Precept*. We may pray that God's Will may be fulfilled in giving Peace, and Proſperity, and Good Things, both Temporal and Spiritual, unto others, and to our ſelves; but ſimply and abſolutely to pray that this Will ſhould be done in whatſoever it reſpects, would be as often a Curſe as a Prayer, ſince (as I told you before) there is no Evil comes to paſs, whether of Sin or Puniſhment, but it is by God's Will permitting the one, and effecting the other.

But you will ſay, do we not find frequent Examples in *Scripture* of Holy Men who have prayed that God's Will might be done even in the bringing to paſs that which was Evil? Thus *Eli*, when *Samuel* had denounced Fearful Judgments both againſt himſelf, and againſt his Houſe, *It is the Lord*, ſays he, *let him do what*

ſeems

ſeems Good unto him, 1 *Sam.* 3. 18. And ſo *David*, when Perſecuted by the unnatural Rebellion of his Son *Abſalom*, *If he ſay thus, Behold I have no Delight in him, let him do as ſeems good unto him*, 2 Sam. 15. 26. And thus the *Diſciples*, when upon *Agabus*'s Prophecy what Afflictions ſhould happen unto St. *Paul* at *Jeruſalem*, they would have perſwaded him from going thither, but could not prevail, conclude all with this, *The Will of the Lord be done*, Acts 21. 14. And thus likewiſe our Great *Example*, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, when he had prayed that the Bitter Cup of his Paſſion might paſs away from him, he ſeems to correct himſelf, and make another Prayer, *Not my Will, but thine, be done*, Luke 22. 42. although he knew this VVill of God could not be done without his own moſt extreme Sufferings, nor without the horrid Sin and VVickedneſs of his Murderers.

But to all theſe Inſtances I *Anſwer*, That they are not ſo much Prayers as Declarations of a ready Submiſſion and Obedience to the VVill of God. For by this Expreſſion, *The Will of the Lord be done*, we do not deſire that thoſe Things ſhould come to paſs which will be grievous and afflicting to us; but only teſtifie our ready Subjection to the Sovereign VVill of God, and a patient Reſignation of our Selves, and of all our Concerns, unto his Diſpoſal. VVhen we pray we ought to beg of God that he would be pleaſed to avert from us thoſe Plagues and Judgments which our Sins juſtly expoſe us unto. But if it ſhall ſeem good to him to inflict any of them upon us, *the Will of the Lord be done:* That is, we deſire with Patience to ſubmit unto his Providence, and contentedly to bear thoſe Burthens which he ſhall impoſe upon us.

The Sum therefore of all is this, when we pray, *Thy Will be done*; if it be the *Will* of God's *Precept*, we pray abſolutely that it may be done by us, as being obliged thereunto by his expreſs VVord and Command. And if it be the *Will* of God's *Purpoſe*, intending any Temporal or Spiritual Good unto us, we pray that his VVill may be done upon us. But if it be the *Will* of his *Purpoſe* to inflict any Evil, then our ſaying, *Thy Will be done*, is not ſo much a Prayer, as a Teſtimony of our Submiſſion to his VVill, without murmuring or repining at his Providence. Thus have we ſeen what this VVill of God is that we pray may be done in this Petition, *Thy Will be done*.

Thirdly, The next Thing to be taken notice of is the Particle, *Thy*, *Thy Will be done*, and this carries in it both an Emphaſis and an Excluſion.

Firſt, *Thy Will*, emphatically to ſignifie unto us, that God's VVill ought to be preferred above and before all others. Not to regard the Fancies and Humours of Men when the VVill of God is clear before us; nor to be careful to pleaſe them, but our Lord Chriſt; and if they will quarrel with us upon any ſuch Account, we know whither to appeal for our Juſtification, and for our Safety: For our Juſtification to their Conſciences, *Whether we ought to obey Men rather than God, judge ye*, Acts 4. 19. And for our Protection and Safety to God's Power and Providence, with thoſe Three Heroick Perſons, *Dan.* 3. 16, 17. *We are not careful, O King, to anſwer thee in this Matter. If it be ſo, our God whom we ſerve is able to deliver us from the burning Fiery Furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine Hand.* And there is great Reaſon for this Preference of God's VVill before all others.

Firſt, Becauſe God's VVill is moſt Sovereign. He is the Supream Lord of the whole VVorld; the greateſt of Men are but his Subjects and Vaſſals. Now it is infinitely more Reaſon that we ſhould conform our ſelves to the VVill of him who is both our Lord and theirs, than to the VVill of our Fellow-Servants: And that we ſhould ſeek to pleaſe him who is able to *deſtroy both our Souls and theirs*, than that we ſhould pleaſe them, who when their Rage reacheth higheſt, can *deſtroy only this Body, and vile Carcaſe*.

Secondly, Becauſe God's Will is the moſt Holy and Perfect; and there is nothing that he hath commanded us to do but it hath a Native Goodneſs and Excellency in it, and therefore it is called, *The Good, the Acceptable and Perfect Will of God*, Rom. 12. 2. To be governed by our own or other Mens Wills is uſually to be led by Paſſion, and blind, headlong, Affections; but to give up our ſelves wholly to the Will of God, is to be governed by the higheſt Reaſon in the World: For his Will cannot but be good, ſince it is the Meaſure and Rule of Goodneſs itſelf; for therefore Things are ſaid to be good becauſe God wills them. And whatſoever he requires of us is pure and equitable, and moſt agreeable to the Dictates of right and illuminated Reaſon: So that we act moſt like Men when we act moſt like Chriſtians, and ſhew our ſelves moſt Rational when we ſhew our ſelves moſt Religious. And therefore we have a great deal of Reaſon to ſay, *Thy Will be done*. *Secondly*,

Secondly, As this Particle, *Thy*, may be taken emphatically, *Thy Will* before all others, ſo likewiſe it may be taken excluſively, *Thy Will*, and not our own, be done, to teach us that hard Leſſon of Self-denial. Indeed, when we conſider the Rebellions of our corrupt Appetites and Deſires, and all thoſe Tumults and Uproars they raiſe in our Souls againſt the Holy and Perfect Will of God, the perverſe Diſputings of our Reaſon againſt his Authority, and thoſe ſtrong Propenſions that are in us towards that which is diſpleaſing to him, and deſtructive to our ſelves, we ſhall find abundant Need with our greateſt Fervency to pray, *Thy Will*, and not our own, *be done*. And thus I have finiſhed the Three Firſt Enquiries, what this VVill of God is, how it may be ſaid to be done, and what is imported in this Particle, *Thy*. The *Fourth* and laſt Thing to be enquired into is, what is meant by God's VVill being *done on Earth*.

And here briefly to reſolve this, that the VVill of God ſhould be done on Earth, ſignifies, that it be done by Men living on the Earth, the Place here being put for the Perſons in it. And although there be ſeveral other Creatures beſides Man, who do all of them ſerve him, and fulfil his VVill according to the Rank and Station which they all hold. And therefore we have it expreſs'd, *Pſal.* 148. 8. *Fire and Hail, Snow and Vapour, ſtormy Wind fulfilling his Word.* Yet this his *Will* and *Word* is only the Ordinance of their Creation. And the *Will* of his *Purpoſe*, to the effecting of which they are often employed as Inſtruments. It is not the *Will* of God's *Precept* obliging them to Duty; for this can be fulfilled by none but by Rational and Intelligent Creatures. This Petition therefore eſpecially, if not only, reſpects us Men whom God hath made Lords of this Earth, putting all other Creatures in Subjection under us. Now here we pray,

Firſt, That all Men in the VVorld renouncing the VVill of Satan, and their own corrupt VVills, may readily ſubject themſelves unto the VVill of God. For this Expreſſion, *on Earth*, ſuffers us not to limit our Prayers to this or that particular Place or Region, but whereſoever God hath ſpread abroad all Nations upon the Face of the Earth, we are to deſire of God for them Grace to enable them to do his VVill, *Pſal.* 67. 2. *Let thy Ways be known upon Earth, and thy ſaving Health unto all Nations.*

Secondly, VVe pray that we may employ and improve the few and ſhort Days of this Mortal Life to the beſt Advantage. For this is that Day wherein we may work the VVorks of God; and if we neglect to do the VVill of God while we are here on Earth, it will be too late for ever; for there is *no Work, nor Operation, nor Device, in the Grave, whither we are going.*

And certainly, if ever we would do the VVill of God in Heaven, we muſt accuſtom our ſelves to do it here on Earth. Here we are as Apprentices that muſt learn the Trade of Holineſs, that when our Time is out we may be fit to be made Free *Denizens* of the *New Jeruſalem*. Here we are to tune our Voices to the Praiſes of God before we come to join with the Heavenly Choir. Here we are to learn what we muſt there for ever practice. And thus I have done with the *Petition* itſelf, *Thy Will be done in Earth.*

The next Thing obſervable is the Proportion of it, *As it is in Heaven.*

But you will ſay, Is it not utterly impoſſible while we are here on Earth, and clogg'd with Earthly Bodies, and encompaſſed about with manifold Infirmities, is it not impoſſible ever to attain unto a Celeſtial and Heavenly Perfection in our Obedience?

I Anſwer, true, it is ſo, but yet this Prayer is not in vain, for it teacheth and engageth us to aim at and endeavour after the perfect Holineſs of *Angels*, and the *Spirits of Juſt Men made Perfect.* We are commanded to be *Holy, as God is Holy*, and *to be Perfect, as our Heavenly Father is Perfect*, whoſe Perfection is impoſſible for us to equalize: Yet theſe exceſſive Commands have their Uſe, to raiſe up our Endeavours to a higher Strain and Pitch than if we were commanded ſomewhat within our own Power. As he that aims at a *Star* is likely to ſhoot much higher than he that aims at a *Turf*.

Thus though it be a Thing altogether impoſſible for us in this Life to attain to an Angelical Perfection in our Obedience, yet the Command that obligeth us to it, and our Prayers for it, are not in vain, becauſe by our utmoſt Endeavours after further Meaſures and Degrees of Holineſs we may very much aſſimilate our Obedience to that Obedience that is yielded to God's Will in Heaven itſelf; and therefore this Particle, *As*, is rather a Note of Similitude than of Equality. But though our Obedience on Earth cannot be equal to the Obedience that is yielded to God in Heaven,

yet

seems Good unto him, 1 *Sam.* 3. 18. And so *David*, when Persecuted by the unnatural Rebellion of his Son *Absalom*, *If he say thus, Behold I have no Delight in him, let him do as seems good unto him*, 2 Sam. 15. 26. And thus the *Disciples*, when upon *Agabus*'s Prophecy what Afflictions should happen unto St. *Paul* at *Jerusalem*, they would have perswaded him from going thither, but could not prevail, conclude all with this, *The Will of the Lord be done*, Acts 21. 14. And thus likewise our Great *Example*, the Lord Jesus Christ himself, when he had prayed that the Bitter Cup of his Passion might pass away from him, he seems to correct himself, and make another Prayer, *Not my Will, but thine, be done*, Luke 22. 42. although he knew this VVill of God could not be done without his own most extreme Sufferings, nor without the horrid Sin and VVickedness of his Murderers.

But to all these Instances I *Answer*, That they are not so much Prayers as Declarations of a ready Submission and Obedience to the VVill of God. For by this Expression, *The Will of the Lord be done*, we do not desire that those Things should come to pass which will be grievous and afflicting to us; but only testifie our ready Subjection to the Sovereign VVill of God, and a patient Resignation of our Selves, and of all our Concerns, unto his Disposal. VVhen we pray we ought to beg of God that he would be pleased to avert from us those Plagues and Judgments which our Sins justly expose us unto. But if it shall seem good to him to inflict any of them upon us, *the Will of the Lord be done:* That is, we desire with Patience to submit unto his Providence, and contentedly to bear those Burthens which he shall impose upon us.

The Sum therefore of all is this, when we pray, *Thy Will be done*; if it be the *Will* of God's *Precept*, we pray absolutely that it may be done by us, as being obliged thereunto by his express VVord and Command. And if it be the *Will* of God's *Purpose*, intending any Temporal or Spiritual Good unto us, we pray that his VVill may be done upon us. But if it be the *Will* of his *Purpose* to inflict any Evil, then our saying, *Thy Will be done*, is not so much a Prayer, as a Testimony of our Submission to his VVill, without murmuring or repining at his Providence. Thus have we seen what this VVill of God is that we pray may be done in this Petition, *Thy Will be done*.

Thirdly, The next Thing to be taken notice of is the Particle, *Thy*, *Thy Will be done*, and this carries in it both an Emphasis and an Exclusion.

First, *Thy Will*, emphatically to signifie unto us, that God's VVill ought to be preferred above and before all others. Not to regard the Fancies and Humours of Men when the VVill of God is clear before us; nor to be careful to please them, but our Lord Christ; and if they will quarrel with us upon any such Account, we know whither to appeal for our Justification, and for our Safety: For our Justification to their Consciences, *Whether we ought to obey Men rather than God, judge ye*, Acts 4. 19. And for our Protection and Safety to God's Power and Providence, with those Three Heroick Persons, *Dan.* 3. 16, 17. *We are not careful, O King, to answer thee in this Matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning Fiery Furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine Hand.* And there is great Reason for this Preference of God's VVill before all others.

First, Because God's VVill is most Sovereign. He is the Supream Lord of the whole VVorld; the greatest of Men are but his Subjects and Vassals. Now it is infinitely more Reason that we should conform our selves to the VVill of him who is both our Lord and theirs, than to the VVill of our Fellow Servants: And that we should seek to please him who is able to *destroy both our Souls and theirs*, than that we should please them, who when their Rage reacheth highest, can *destroy only this Body, and vile Carcase*.

Secondly, Because God's Will is the most Holy and Perfect; and there is nothing that he hath commanded us to do but it hath a Native Goodness and Excellency in it, and therefore it is called, *The Good, the Acceptable and Perfect Will of God*, Rom. 12. 2. To be governed by our own or other Mens Wills is usually to be led by Passion, and blind, headlong, Affections; but to give up our selves wholly to the Will of God, is to be governed by the highest Reason in the World: For his Will cannot but be good, since it is the Measure and Rule of Goodness itself; for therefore Things are said to be good because God wills them. And whatsoever he requires of us is pure and equitable, and most agreeable to the Dictates of right and illuminated Reason: So that we act most like Men when we act most like Christians, and shew our selves most Rational when we shew our selves most Religious. And therefore we have a great deal of Reason to say, *Thy Will be done*. *Secondly*,

Secondly, As this Particle, *Thy*, may be taken emphatically, *Thy Will* before all others, ſo likewiſe it may be taken excluſively, *Thy Will*, and not our own, be done, to teach us that hard Leſſon of Self-denial. Indeed, when we conſider the Rebellions of our corrupt Appetites and Deſires, and all thoſe Tumults and Uproars they raiſe in our Souls againſt the Holy and Perfect Will of God, the perverſe Diſputings of our Reaſon againſt his Authority, and thoſe ſtrong Propenſions that are in us towards that which is diſpleaſing to him, and deſtructive to our ſelves, we ſhall find abundant Need with our greateſt Fervency to pray, *Thy Will*, and not our own, *be done*. And thus I have finiſhed the Three Firſt Enquiries, what this VVill of God is, how it may be ſaid to be done, and what is imported in this Particle, *Thy*. The *Fourth* and laſt Thing to be enquired into is, what is meant by God's VVill being *done on Earth*.

And here briefly to reſolve this, that the VVill of God ſhould be done on Earth, ſignifies, that it be done by Men living on the Earth, the Place here being put for the Perſons in it. And although there be ſeveral other Creatures beſides Man, who do all of them ſerve him, and fulfil his VVill according to the Rank and Station which they all hold. And therefore we have it expreſs'd, *Pſal.* 148. 8. *Fire and Hail, Snow and Vapour, ſtormy Wind fulfilling his Word.* Yet this his *Will* and *Word* is only the Ordinance of their Creation. And the *Will* of his *Purpoſe*, to the effecting of which they are often employed as Inſtruments. It is not the *Will* of God's *Precept* obliging them to Duty; for this can be fulfilled by none but by Rational and Intelligent Creatures. This Petition therefore eſpecially, if not only, reſpects us Men whom God hath made Lords of this Earth, putting all other Creatures in Subjection under us. Now here we pray,

Firſt, That all Men in the VVorld renouncing the VVill of Satan, and their own corrupt VVills, may readily ſubject themſelves unto the VVill of God. For this Expreſſion, *on Earth*, ſuffers us not to limit our Prayers to this or that particular Place or Region, but whereſoever God hath ſpread abroad all Nations upon the Face of the Earth, we are to deſire of God for them Grace to enable them to do his VVill, *Pſal.* 67. 2. *Let thy Ways be known upon Earth, and thy ſaving Health unto all Nations.*

Secondly, VVe pray that we may employ and improve the few and ſhort Days of this Mortal Life to the beſt Advantage. For this is that Day wherein we may work the VVorks of God; and if we neglect to do the VVill of God while we are here on Earth, it will be too late for ever; for there is *no Work, nor Operation, nor Device, in the Grave, whither we are going.*

And certainly, if ever we would do the VVill of God in Heaven, we muſt accuſtom our ſelves to do it here on Earth. Here we are as Apprentices that muſt learn the Trade of Holineſs, that when our Time is out we may be fit to be made Free *Denizens* of the *New Jeruſalem.* Here we are to tune our Voices to the Praiſes of God before we come to join with the Heavenly Choir. Here we are to learn what we muſt there for ever practice. And thus I have done with the *Petition* itſelf, *Thy Will be done in Earth.*

The next Thing obſervable is the Proportion of it, *As it is in Heaven.*

But you will ſay, Is it not utterly impoſſible while we are here on Earth, and clogg'd with Earthly Bodies, and encompaſſed about with manifold Infirmities, is it not impoſſible ever to attain unto a Celeſtial and Heavenly Perfection in our Obedience?

I Anſwer, true, it is ſo, but yet this Prayer is not in vain, for it teacheth and engageth us to aim at and endeavour after the perfect Holineſs of *Angels*, and the *Spirits of Juſt Men made Perfect.* We are commanded to be *Holy, as God is Holy*, and *to be Perfect, as our Heavenly Father is Perfect*, whoſe Perfection is impoſſible for us to equalize: Yet theſe exceſſive Commands have their Uſe, to raiſe up our Endeavours to a higher Strain and Pitch than if we were commanded ſomewhat within our own Power. As he that aims at a *Star* is likely to ſhoot much higher than he that aims at a *Turf.*

Thus though it be a Thing altogether impoſſible for us in this Life to attain to an Angelical Perfection in our Obedience, yet the Command that obligeth us to it, and our Prayers for it, are not in vain, becauſe by our utmoſt Endeavours after further Meaſures and Degrees of Holineſs we may very much aſſimilate our Obedience to that Obedience that is yielded to God's Will in Heaven itſelf; and therefore this Particle, *As*, is rather a Note of Similitude than of Equality. But though our Obedience on Earth cannot be equal to the Obedience that is yielded to God in Heaven,

yet

yet we pray that it may bear as much Similitude, Proportion and Conformity, unto it, is as poſſible for us to attain unto while we are here in the Body.

And therefore that we may the more fully underſtand what it is we pray for when we preſent this Petition to God, *Thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven*, we ſhall briefly enquire, how the *Holy Angels* and *Bleſſed Spirits* do the Will of God in *Heaven*. And,

Firſt, Their Ordinance is abſolutely perfect, and that both with a Perfection of Parts and Degrees. They do all that God enjoins them, not failing in the leaſt Tittle of Obſervance, and therefore they are ſaid *To follow the Lamb whereſoever he goes*, Rev. 14. 14. Hence it is aſcribed to them as their proper and peculiar Character, Pſal. 103. 20. *Bleſs the Lord, ye his Angels that excel in Strength, that do his Commandments, hearken to the Voice of his Word.* And again, they do the whole Will of God with all their Might, with all their Mind, with the greateſt Intention that is poſſible, even to an *Angelical Nature*; never are they remiſs in their Service, or ſlack in their Attendance, but are continually Bleſſing and Praiſing of |God, ſtanding ready to receive and execute his Commands and Commiſſions.

Now when we pray that we may do the *Will of God on Earth, as it is done in Heaven*, we pray for this Heavenly Temper, that we may bear an Univerſal Reſpect unto all God's Commandments: No more ſticking or pauſing at any Thing that God requires of us, than an *Angel* or a *Glorified Saint* would do: But unfolding all our Intereſt and Concerns in God's Glory, might reſpect nor value nothing but what tends to the Promotion of that. This is to do God's Will as the *Angels* do it in Heaven.

Secondly, Their Obedience is chearful; not extorted from them by violent Conſtraints of Fear, or of Suffering, but it is their Eternal Delight, and their Service is their Felicity. And thus ſhould we pray, and endeavour to do the *Will* of God with Alacrity and Chearfulneſs; not being haled to it as our Task, but eſteeming the Commands of God to be as the *Angels* do, our Glory, and our great Reward. But alas, how infinitely ſhort do we fall of our Pattern? We think the *Sabbath* long, and *Ordinances* long and tedious, and are ſecretly glad when they are over: And what ſhould ſuch as we are do in Heaven, where there is a *Sabbath* as long as Eternity, and nothing but Holineſs there? And therefore we had need pray earneſtly that God would now fit and prepare us for the Work of Heaven while we are here on Earth, for elſe Heaven will not be Heaven, or a Place of Happineſs unto us.

Thirdly, The Will of God is done in Heaven with Zeal and Ardency, and therefore it is ſaid, *Pſal.* 104. 4. *That God maketh his Angels and Meſſengers a Flame of Fire.* And have not we abundance of Need to pray for Conformity with them in this reſpect alſo? We do the Will of God ſo coldly and indifferently that we our ſelves ſcarce take notice of what we are doing. We often bring Sacrifices to God; and either bring no Fire with us, but are frozen and dull, or elſe offer them up with ſtrange Wild-fire; and uſually are heated more with Paſſion and irregular Affections than with holy and pious Zeal. And,

Fourthly, The Will of God is done in Heaven with Celerity and ready Diſpatch; they are quick in executing the Commands of the Great God, and their Lord, and therefore are ſaid to have *Wings, and to fly*, *Iſa.* 6. 2. And this Expreſſion of Wings, and the flying of *Cherubims* and *Angels*, is frequently mentioned in *Scripture*, only to intimate to us the Expedition they uſe in the Service of God. But alas, how dull and ſlow are we? How long do we conſult with Fleſh and Blood, and are diſputing the Will of our Sovereign Lord, when we ſhould be obeying it? VVhen we are clearly convinced that ſuch a Duty is neceſſary to be done, how many Delays, and Excuſes, and Procraſtinations, do we make, being willing to ſtay the Leiſure of every vile Luſt, and vain Impertinency, thinking it then time enough to ſerve God when we have nothing elſe to do. Certainly this is not to do the *Will of God on Earth, as it is done in Heaven*, where, upon the firſt Intimations of God's VVill, they take VVings, and execute it ſpeedily.

Fifthly, The VVill of God is done in Heaven with all poſſible Proſtration, Reverence and Humility: And therefore it is ſaid, *Rev.* 4. 10. that *the Four and Twenty Elders fell down before him that ſat upon the Throne, and worſhip him that liveth for ever and ever, and caſt their Crowns before the Throne.* Crowns are themſelves Enſigns of Majeſty; but here they caſt their very Crowns, all their Dignity and Glory, at the Feet of God, and make their chiefeſt Excellency itſelf do Homage to him that is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. And ſo ſhould we in all our ſerving of God do it with

with Reverence and Godly Fear, preſerving upon our Hearts an awful Senſe and Regard of the dreadful Majeſty before whom we appear.

Sixthly, The Will of God is done in Heaven with Conſtancy and Perſeverance. *They ſerve God Day and Night*, Rev. 7. 15. and are never weary of his Work, no more than they are of their own Happineſs, for his Service is their Happineſs, and their Obedience their Glory. And thus ſhould we pray and endeavour that we might do the Will of God conſtantly and perſeveringly, for it is Perſeverance that crowns all other Graces, and God hath promiſed to crown our Perſeverance with Glory and Eternal Life. And thus we ſee briefly in theſe Six Particulars how the Will of God is done in Heaven.

To conclude this, Is there no other nor lower Pattern ſet us than the perfect Obedience of *Angels* and *Glorified Spirits*? Let us not then content ourſelves with a Comparative Obedience, and by meaſuring our ſelves with thoſe that are worſe think highly of our own Perfections: Let us not applaud our ſelves with the boaſting Phariſee, with a, *Lord, I thank thee, I am not as other Men are, Extortioners, Unjuſt, Adulterers.* What is this to the Pattern that God hath ſet us for our Imitation? Perhaps thou doſt but all this while compare thy ſelf with thoſe that are in *Hell*, and doſt God's Will not much better than ſuch have done, if this be all that thou canſt plead for thy ſelf: Whereas God hath ſet thee *Examples* for thy Imitation in Heaven, doſt thou endeavour to do his Will as *Seraphims* and *Cherubims*, and the whole Hoſt of Bleſſed *Spirits*? Thou liveſt it may be not ſo like a Devil as others do, but doſt thou live like an Angel? Doſt thou ſerve God with the ſame proportionable *Zeal*, *Ardency*, *Delight*, and *Conſtancy*, as thoſe *Holy Spirits* do, who always ſtand in the Preſence of God, ready preſs'd to do his Will? If not, neither endeavoureſt after ſo high a Degree of Obedience and Purity, know that thy Imitation of any lower *Example* than that of Heaven can never ſuffice to bring thee to Heaven. And thus I have finiſhed the Three firſt Petitions of this Excellent Prayer, namely, thoſe that relate unto God, for the Petitions contained herein, as I ſaid in the Beginning, were ſuch as immediately concerned God's Glory, or ſuch as immediately concerned our Good. The firſt I have already conſidered.

I now come to treat of thoſe Petitions which immediately concern our own Good; and that is either our Temporal or our Spiritual Good: Our Temporal Good, in praying for our daily Bread: Our Spiritual Good, in the Two laſt Petitions, wherein we pray for the Forgiveneſs of our Sins paſt, and for Deliverance from Sin for time to come.

I begin with the Firſt of theſe, our Requeſts or Petitions for Temporal Bleſſings contained in the Fourth Petition, *Give us this Day our daily Bread*; and here I ſhall conſider,

Firſt, The Order, and then the Petition itſelf.

Firſt, The Order, and that is Remarkable upon Two Accounts.

Firſt, Whereas this Petition is placed in the midſt, and encompaſſed about with others that relate unto Spiritual Bleſſings; ſo that after we have prayed for the Glory of God, our Saviour teacheth us to make Mention of our Temporal Wants, and ſo to paſs on again to beg Spiritual Mercies for our Souls. This may inſtruct us in the Government of our Lives to uſe worldly Comforts as here we pray for them. Spiritual and Heavenly Things are our greateſt Concernments, and ſhould be our greateſt Care; with theſe we ſhould begin, and with theſe we ſhould end; only God allows us the World as an *Inn*; we may call in at it, and refreſh our ſelves with the Comforts and Accommodations that we find, but we muſt not dwell nor ſet up our Reſt there. We are all Strangers and Pilgrims upon Earth; Heaven is our Country, and thither we are Travelling, only in our Journey we may call and bait at the World, and take what we find provided for us with Sobriety and Thankfulneſs: And therefore this Bread that we here pray for is elſewhere called the Staff of Bread, *Pſal.* 105. 16. *He brake the Staff of Bread*, *Ezek.* 5. 6. *I will break your Staff of Bread.* And all this is to put us in mind that we are to ask for, and to uſe theſe Earthly Enjoyments only as Travellers, that make uſe of a Staff for their Help and Support whilſt they are in their Paſſage Home. And we are hereby alſo taught to crave no more than will ſuffice for our convenient Supplies, otherwiſe we make our Staff our Burden, and our Support itſelf a Load and Preſſure.

Secondly, It is obſervable, that though we are commanded *to ſeek firſt the Kingdom of God, and its Righteouſneſs*, with a Promiſe that all other Earthly Things

ſhall be added to us; yet here our Saviour places the Petition for Temporal Bleſſings before the Two Petitions we preſent to God for Spiritual Bleſſings; and this Order hath ſeemed ſo ſtrange and incongruous to ſome, that hereupon alone they have been moved to affirm that this Bread which we here ask is not any Temporal Good Thing, but the Bread of Life, even Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, as ſhall be ſhown more by and by.

Now this Order doth not intimate to us that Earthly Bleſſings are better and more conſiderable than Heavenly, or that they ſhould have the Preference in our Eſteem or Deſires, (I hope there are none of us ſo brutiſh, nor ſo far degenerated into Beaſts, as to account the poor Enjoyments of this Life more valuable than the Pardon of Sin, and thoſe Spiritual Mercies that are in a Tendency to Eternal Life and Happineſs.) But,

Firſt, Our Saviour uſeth this Method in his Prayer, in Conformity to the Method of Divine Providence towards us, which firſt gives us Life, and the Neceſſities of it, and then orders us Spiritual and Heavenly Bleſſings, as an Acceſſion, and happy Addition, to thoſe natural Good Things he beſtows upon us.

Secondly, Becauſe we are uſually more ſenſible of our Temporal than of our Spiritual Wants, our Saviour therefore doth by degrees raiſe up our Deſires by the one to the other; for ſeeing we are commanded to pray for the Supply even of our Temporal Neceſſities, which are but trivial in regard of the Neceſſities of our Souls, we cannot but be convinced that we ought to be much more earneſt and importunate with God for Spiritual Mercies than for Temporal, by how much more our Spiritual Wants are more important, and of vaſter conſequence, than our Temporal. When therefore thou comeſt to this Petition, think with thy ſelf, *O Chriſtian*, if I muſt pray fervently and affectionately for my daily Bread, which can only nouriſh my vile Carcaſe for a few ſhort Years, a Carcaſe that muſt, notwithſtanding all theſe Recruits, ſhortly moulder into Duſt, and itſelf become Meat for Worms, how much more importunate ought I to be for the Pardon of my Sins, and thoſe Spiritual Mercies and Bleſſings, without which my Precious and Immortal Soul muſt eternally periſh? Since Chriſt hath commanded us not to labour, and by Conſequence not to pray, *for that Meat which periſheth*, with any comparative Induſtry and Earneſtneſs to our labouring and praying *for that which endureth to Eternal Life*. And thus much concerning the Order of this Petition.

In the Petition itſelf we have,

Firſt, The Matter of it, or that which we pray for, *Give us Bread.*

Secondly, The Kind or Quality of it, called here *daily Bread.*

Thirdly, Our Right and Property in it, *Our daily Bread.*

Fourthly, The Limitation of it in reſpect of Time, *Give it us this Day.* Of all theſe briefly.

Firſt, The Matter of this Petition, or that which we pray for, and that is Bread, *Give us our Bread.* By Bread here is meant all Temporal and Earthly Bleſſings, that contribute either to our Being, or to our Well-being, in this Life. And becauſe we have need of very many Things for our preſent Subſiſtence, as Food, Raiment, Habitation, and each of theſe comprehended many other Neceſſaries in them, all which would have been too long particularly to enumerate in this Compendious Prayer, therefore our Saviour hath ſumm'd them up in the Word Bread; figuratively denoting all kinds of Proviſions neceſſary for this Natural Life, whereof Bread is the moſt uſual, and the moſt uſeful. And therefore as when God ſpeaks of a Famine, he calls it *a Famine of Bread*, *Amos.* 8. 11. Not as if a Scarcity of Bread were the only Dearth intended by it, but that there ſhould be likewiſe a want of all Things requiſite to the Suſtentation of Life. So here, when Chriſt teacheth us to pray for our *Daily Bread*, this Phraſe extendeth to all Things conducible to maintain Health, or to recover it, to preſerve Life, or to prolong it.

Some indeed think this too mean and ſordid a Requeſt to be preferred to God, and would not have any of the low Conveniences of this preſent Life to have any Place in a Prayer, all whoſe other Parts are ſo Spiritual and Heavenly, and the whole ſo ſhort and compendious; where the Petitions are ſo few, they will not believe any of them ſhould be ſpent ſo trivially, as to beg that which, though they might not attain, yet they might be eternally Bleſſed and Happy, and therefore they interpret this Word Bread in a Spiritual Senſe, and take it for the Food of the Soul, whereby it is nouriſhed unto Eternal Life; and eſpecially for our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who is called

Bread of Life, John 6. 35. and *Living Bread which came down from Heaven*, Verſe 51. But here ſeemeth no Place for any ſuch Myſtical Interpretation, the Word *Bread* being put without any Addition, or like Circumſtance, that might refer it to Chriſt, or to Spiritual Things, and therefore ought to be underſtood according to the Words literally, and in their ordinary Signification, although indeed it be here uſed by Way of *Synecdoche*, one Part of Temporal Good Things being put for the whole Acceſſion of them. Now from this we are taught theſe Three Things.

Firſt, That Temporal Mercies and Bleſſings may lawfully be prayed for. And altho' we ought not to be moſt earneſt and importunate, nor to enlarge and expatiate moſt upon theſe Requeſts, but more earneſtly to covet the beſt Gifts, yet neither is unworthy of a Chriſtian, whoſe Affections and Converſation is in Heaven, to beg at God's Hands thoſe Mercies that he knows needful for the Support and Comfort of this Preſent Life; yea, we read of nothing more frequent than the Saints praying either for the Removal of ſome Temporal Evil or Puniſhment, or the Receiving of ſome Temporal Bleſſing or Favour. If I ſhould quote the *Scriptures* I might tranſcribe a great Part of the *Bible*; nay, ſo far were they from looking upon it as below them, that we find *Jacob* putting it into his *Indentures* when he bound himſelf to God, and made it as it were the Condition of his Obligation to God's Service, *Gen.* 28. 20. *Then* Jacob *vowed a Vow, ſaying, if God will be with me, and keep me in this Way that I go, and will give me Bread to eat, and Raiment to put on, ſo that I come again to my Father's Houſe in Peace, then ſhall the Lord be my God.* And indeed there is a great deal of Reaſon and Ground to pray for theſe Things, for they are both needful for us, and God hath promiſed to give them to us.

Firſt, They are needful for us as the Means that God hath appointed for the Preſervation of our Temporal Life and Being, on which we have ſo many Opportunities to ſerve and glorifie him, and ſo many Advantages to ſecure Heaven and Glory to our Souls: And therefore as we tender either the obtaining of Heaven, or the Additional Degrees of Glory and Happineſs there, ſo we ſtand obliged to pray that God would afford us thoſe Neceſſaries that may conduce to the prolonging of our Natural Life, till having finiſhed our Work we are made fit to receive our Wages and Reward. *Your Heavenly Father knoweth that you have need of all theſe Things*, ſays our Saviour, *Matth.* 6. 32. And therefore though *Miracles* be a Kind of a *Non obſtante* to the Law of Nature, and a Suſpenſion of the Ordinary Courſe of Providence, yet we often find God working a *Miracle* to ſupply theſe Wants of his People, whereas it had been alike eaſie by another *Miracle* to have cauſed them not to want; for it had been no more difficult for God to have kept *Elijah* from hungering than it was to make the *Ravens* his *Purveyors*, or to make a *Barrel* of *Meal* become a whole Harveſt, or to open a Spring and Fountain in the *Cruiſe of Oil*; but he chuſeth rather to ſupply theſe Wants than to ceaſe them, to keep us in a continual Dependance upon him, that the Senſe of our Neceſſities might engage us to have continual Recourſe unto God for Relief.

Secondly, As Temporal Good Things are needful for us, ſo God hath promiſed to give us: *Pſalm* 50. 15. *Call upon me in the Day of Trouble and I will deliver thee.* And, *My God*, ſays the Apoſtle, *ſhall ſupply all your Wants*, Phil. 4. 19. *The* Lord *will give Grace and Glory, and no good Thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly*, *Pſalm* 84. 13. Thus we ſee Temporal Good Things may be pray'd for, both becauſe they are needful for us, and becauſe God hath promiſed them to us: Yet,

Secondly, They muſt be prayed for only conditionally, for they are only conditionally promiſed. And theſe Conditions are Twofold, if they be conſiſtent with God's Pleaſure, and if they be conducible to our Good; for without the obſerving the one we ſhould not ſo much ſeem to petition as to invade, and without obſerving the other, we ſhould but beg a Curſe inſtead of a Bleſſing.

Thirdly, We may learn likewiſe that God is the Giver of every Temporal Mercy and Good Thing: Whatever thou enjoyeſt it is from his meer Free Bounty; he ſpreads thy Table, fills thy Cup, makes thy Bed, puts on thy Garments, is the God of thy Health and Strength, and loadeth thee daily with his Benefits. If thou haſt Riches *it is the Bleſſing of God that maketh Rich*, Prov. 10. 22. *It is God that giveth thee Power to get Wealth*, Deut. 8. 18. Haſt thou Credit and Reputation? It is God that *hideth thee from the Scourge of Tongues*, Job 5. 21. Haſt thou Friends? It is God that giveth thee Favour in their Sight. Haſt thou Gifts and Parts? *It is the Almighty God that giveth thee Underſtanding*, Job 32. 8. And haſt thou Joy and Comfort in all theſe? It is God, who not only filleth thy Mouth with Food, but thy Heart with Gladneſs. Now God is ſaid to *Give us our Daily Bread*, and all the Neceſſaries of Life, eſpecially Two Ways.

First, By producing them, and bringing them to us. He is the Great Lord and Proprietor both of Heaven and Earth. *The Earth is the Lord's, and the Fulness thereof*, and he gives it to whom he will; he maketh it bring forth abundantly all its Stores for the Use and Service of a Man; for be the Chain of Second Causes never so long yet the First Link of them is held in his Hand: And therefore we have it express'd, *Hos.* 2. 21, 22. *I will hear, saith the Lord, I will hear the Heavens, and they shall hear the Earth, and the Earth shall hear the Corn, and the Wine, and the Oil, and they shall hear* Jezreel.

Secondly, God gives them by Blessing them to us, without which Blessing our *Daily Bread* would no more nourish us than so much Chaff; for had we all the Abundance that the Earth could yield, and the Blessing of God withheld from it, the very Air would stifle us, and our very Food would famish us; for it is not so much by these Things that we live; not so much by our *Daily Bread*, as by every Word, that is, by *every Word* of Blessing upon them *which proceedeth out of the Mouth of God*, Deut. 8. 3. And concerning those to whom he denies this his Blessing he tells us, *Job* 20. 22. *In the Fulness of their Sufficiency they shall be in Streights.* And therefore when we pray that God would give us our *Daily Bread*, we pray not only that God would give us the Possession and Enjoyment of Earthly Comforts, but that he would put Vertue and Efficacy into them, by his Blessing upon them, to be subservient to our Relief and Support, without which the Staff of Bread would break under us, and the Stay of Water roul away from us. And thus much for the First Thing, *Give us Bread.*

Secondly, Let us consider the Specification of this Blessing, or the Kind and Quality of it, our *Daily Bread.* This Word ἄρτον is variously render'd; I shall not trouble you with the Particular Notions of it; let it suffice that here by the Word *Bread* is meant our Ordinary and Usual Bread, or whatsoever is Necessary for our Subsistence in the World from Day to Day; and it is the same with what is expressed in that Excellent Prayer of *Agur*, Prov. 30. 8. *Give me neither Poverty nor Riches, feed me with Food convenient for me:* So do we pray here that he would bestow upon us daily that which is sufficient for the Day; and by this we are taught to moderate our Desires, and to beg of God no more than is needful for us; we beg not Delicacies, we beg *Daily Bread*; not Superfluities, nor Goods laid up for many Years.

But now because the Measures of Necessities are divers, and that may be but *Daily Bread* to one which to another is Superfluity, it will be requisite to shew you by what Necessities our Prayers are to be bounded.

I *answer*, First, We may pray for the Supply of all our Natural Necessities; and to this the Sovereign Principle of Self-preservation strongly obligeth us: And he that prays not, nor endeavours, for this is a Self-murderer in withholding from himself what is simply and absolutely necessary for the Maintainance of his Life.

Secondly, Besides Things that are naturally necessary, there are Things that are civilly necessary, which are not so absolutely imperious as the other, yet these also oblige us to pray for Supplies and Relief. I account those Things civilly necessary, which tho' they are not simply necessary to the Preservation of our Life, yet are necessary to the State and Condition in which Divine Providence hath set us: As for Men of High Birth, of Publick Note, or Publick Employment, more is necessary for them than for others, whom God hath placed to take up a Narrower Room in the World; for *Cedars* require more Sap than *Shrubs:* And for such as these to pray against Poverty, is possibly to pray for much more than would make Private Persons Rich. We are allowed to pray for such a Competent Measure of Earthly Blessings as is suitable to our Station, and commensurate to our Charge and Burthens, and according to the Judgment of Christian Prudence, apparently needful for those whom we are bound to provide for, that they may live honestly and decently. All these are Necessaries that we are to pray for in this Petition, *Give us our Daily Bread.*

But we must take heed that neither Covetousness nor Ambition impose upon us, and make us measure Necessaries by our Inordinate Desires, rather than by our Real Wants. For whatsoever is more than enough for our Present State and Comfortable Subsistence is not our *Daily Bread*, but the Bread of the Poor, out of whose Mouths we snatch it. And whatsoever we lay up with great Designs of enlarging our selves, or our Posterity, beyond our Lawful Measure, are but Treasures of Wickedness, whose Rust will witness against us at the last Day. And thus much for the Second Observable.

Thirdly, In the Words of this Petition are designed our Right and Propriety to this Daily Bread, *Give us our Daily Bread.*

Now

Now Right to a Temporal Enjoyment is Threefold, either Natural, or Spiritual, or Civil. Natural by Creation, Spiritual by Regeneration, and Civil by Humane and Legal Conſtitution.

Firſt, As for the Natural Right by Creation that was once found in *Adam*, who was made the viſible Lord of the Univerſe, and all Things put under his Feet. We may read his *Patent* and *Charter*, Gen. 1. 28. *And God ſaid unto him, Be fruitful, and multiply, and repleniſh the Earth, and ſubdue it, and have dominion over the Fowl of the Air, and over every Living Thing that moveth upon the Earth.* But this Right we have loſt, and can call nothing ours upon this Account. Only as *Princes* allow *Traitors* and *Malefactors* Proviſion in their Priſon till they come to Execution, ſo God allows many Wicked Men many Earthly Enjoyments out of the meer Bounty of Priſon-Proviſion, to keep them alive till they are brought forth to their Execution. This Natural Right therefore being loſt, there ſucceeds in the room of it,

Secondly, A *Spiritual Right* to Earthly Comforts; and this belongs unto all thoſe who themſelves do belong to Chriſt; for he is made the Heir of all Things. And all Things both in Heaven and Earth are conſigned over unto him by a Deed of Gift from God his Father, and they being united unto Chriſt, and his Spiritual Offspring, are Heirs with Chriſt, and Co-heirs of all that ample Dominion which Chriſt himſelf poſſeſſeth. And upon this Ground the *Apoſtle* tells the *Corinthians*, in 1 *Cor.* 3. 22, 23. *All Things are yours, the World, Things preſent, and Things to come, all are yours*; and he ſubjoins this Reaſon for it, *for ye are Chriſt's.* But yet this *Spiritual Right* is not to be extended to an Uſurpation upon the Temporal Enjoyments of others. For Grace and Holineſs being a Thing wholly inward and inviſible cannot confer any outward Title. For this,

Thirdly, Is given by another Right, which is Civil, according to the Conſtitution of Humane Laws, and the Proceſs in Courts of Humane Judicature; for Law is the only Diſtributer of *meum* and *tuum.* And we can call nothing ours which is not ſo, or ought not to be ſo, by the Sentence of the Law under which we live; and he that detaineth any Thing which the Sentence of the Law adjudgeth to another is guilty of Theft and Robbery.

Now when we pray for our *Daily Bread*, we pray,

Firſt, That God would give us the good Things of this Life to be obtained by us in a Lawful, Regular, Manner.

Secondly, That he would bleſs and increaſe thoſe good Things that are rightfully our own.

Thirdly, That he would beſtow upon us a Spiritual Right in whatſoever we enjoy through Jeſus Chriſt, who is the Heir and Poſſeſſor of all Things. And,

Fourthly, We pray that we may not deſire nor covet that which is another's: For we are taught to pray only for that which we may juſtly call ours, to which we have as well a Civil as a Spiritual Right and Title. And thus much for the Third Particular.

Fourthly, We have in the VVords the Limitation of the Petition in reſpect of Time, *Give us this Day our Daily Bread.* And indeed there is great Reaſon why we ſhould pray for it *this Day*, for we every Day ſtand in need of Relief and Supplies from God. Our VVants and our Troubles grow up thick about us; and unleſs God made daily Proviſions for us we ſhall be over-run by them. Food nouriſhes but a Day, and that which we receive this Day will not ſuffice us to Morrow. There is a continual Spring and Fountain of Neceſſities within us, and therefore we muſt have continual Recourſe unto God by Prayer that he would *daily* ſatisfie and ſupply our VVants as they daily riſe up about us.

Again, by teaching us to pray for our Temporal Comforts *this Day*, our Saviour tacitly intimates to us that we ſhould be content with our *daily* Allowance. It is enough if we have our *Dimenſum*, our appointed Food, for the Day; to Morrow is in God's Hand, and the Care of it is his, and not ours, and therefore he bids us *take no Thought for to Morrow*; that is, with no tormenting, carking, and deſponding, Thoughts, *Matth.* 6. 34. And indeed if we are provided for this Day we may well reſt content and ſatisfied in the Providence of God, ſince he hath engaged his VVord of Promiſe, *That he will never leave us, nor forſake us.*

Now in this Part of the Petition there are ſundry Things we pray for. As,

Firſt, VVe pray for Life itſelf that it may be prolonged whilſt God hath any Service for us to do in the VVorld.

To this very End we pray for *Daily Bread*, that Life may be maintained and preſerved by it.

Secondly,

Secondly, Health and Strength of Body, which is indeed the greateſt of Temporal Bleſſings, and the Salt to all the reſt, without which they are Unſavoury and Taſteleſs.

Thirdly, All the Means that God's Providence hath appointed to preſerve Life and Health, and to recover Health when it is decay'd and impair'd.

Fourthly, Succeſs in our Lawful Calling and Endeavours for the procuring any Conveniencies and Comforts of Life. For in this Prayer we beg a Bleſſing upon our Callings and Induſtry, that God would proſper us in them, and by them increaſe our Temporal Enjoyments, ſo far forth as is needful to his own Glory and our Good.

Fifthly, We beg a Bleſſing from Heaven upon whatſoever we enjoy, that it may indeed prove good and comfortable to us; without which all that we poſſeſs may prove a great heap of Things, but none of them will be Comforts or Enjoyments.

And thus I have finiſhed the Firſt of thoſe Petitions that immediately concern our ſelves, wherein we beg of God the Supply of all our Temporal Wants. The Two which remain reſpect Spiritual Bleſſings, of which the former (which is the Fifth Petition in order of this moſt Excellent Prayer) is for the Pardon of Sin, *Forgive us our Debts, as we forgive our Debtors.* Of which I now come to Treat.

And here before we come to the Petition itſelf let us briefly take notice of the Connexion and Dependance that it hath upon what went before.

Having prayed for *our Daily Bread*, we are next taught to pray for Pardon. And this Method is indeed moſt Wiſe, and moſt Rational. For,

Firſt, The Guilt of Sin many times withholds from us thoſe Earthly Comforts we ſtand in need of. We have forfeited all into the Hands of God's Juſtice, and he is pleaſed to make us know our Obnoxiouſneſs to his Power and Wrath, by denying or taking from us thoſe Temporal good Things as a due, tho' the leaſt Puniſhment of our Deſerts, *Iſa.* 59. 2. *Your Iniquities have ſeparated between you and your God, and your Sins have hid his Face from you, that he will not hear you.* And therefore when we have prayed for *our Daily Bread*, we are to pray likewiſe for the *Pardon of our Sins*; that the Partition between God and us may be removed, and his Bleſſing being no longer obſtructed by our Guilt, may deſcend down freely and plentifully upon us.

Secondly, Without *Pardon of Sin* all our Temporal Enjoyments are but Snares and Curſes unto us. Though God doth ſometimes beſtow abundance of this World's good Things upon impenitent and unpardoned Sinners, yet they have not ſo many Enjoyments as Curſes: Their Bread is kneaded up with a Curſe, and their Wine tempered and mingled with a Curſe; there is Poyſon in their Meat, and Death in their Phyſick; their Table is their Snare, their Eſtate their Fetters, and whatſoever ſhould have been for their Welfare proves only a Gin and a Trap unto them; for the Wrath of God is one direful Ingredient among all that they poſſeſs. And therefore if we would have *our Daily Bread* given us, or Comfort and Bleſſing with it, we ought earneſtly to beg the *Pardon of our Sins*, which are like the Worm in *Jonah*'s *Gourd*, which will wither and devour all our Enjoyments. And thus much for the Method and Order.

In the Words themſelves we have,

Firſt the Petition, *Forgive us our Debts.*

Secondly, The Condition, or Proportion, or Plea and Argument, (call it which you will,) for the obtaining of this Forgiveneſs, *As we forgive our Debtors.*

In the Petition we may obſerve, that the ſame which our *Evangeliſt* calls *Debts* is by St. *Luke* 11. 4. called Sins, *Forgive us our Sins.* We ſtand indebted to God both as we are his Creatures, and as we are Offenders: By the one we owe him the *Debt of Obedience*, and by the other the *Debt of Puniſhment.*

Firſt, As we are Creatures we owe the *Debt of Obedience:* And to the Payment of this *Debt* we ſtand bound, both to the abſolute Sovereignty of God, who is the Supream Lord of all his Creatures, and therefore may oblige them to what he pleaſeth, and likewiſe by his manifold Favours and Mercies conferred upon us. From him we have received our Beings, and all our Comforts; he maintains us at his own Coſt and Charge, he enlargeth us when we are in Streights, relieves us when we are in Wants, counſels us when we are in Doubts, comforts us when we are in Sorrows, delivers us in our Dangers; and beſides the manifold Temporal Mercies we daily receive from him, gives us the Means, the Hopes and Promiſes, of obtaining far better Things at his Hands, even Eternal Life and Glory: And therefore certainly upon theſe Accounts we owe him all poſſible Service and Obedience. And indeed it is but Reaſon we ſhould employ all for him, from whom we receive all, and give up our ſelves to his

Service,

Service, who are what we are by his Bounty, and hope to be infinitely better than now we are through his Mercy.

Now this *Debt of Obedience* is irremiſſible, and we are eternally and indiſpenſably bound unto it: For it is altogether inconſiſtent with the Notion and Being of a Creature to be diſcharged from its Obligation to the Laws and Commands of its Creator; for this would exempt it from the Dominion of God, and make it Abſolute and Independent; that is, it would make the Creature to be no longer a *Creature*, but a *Deity*. We do not therefore pray that God would forgive us this *Debt*; no, he cannot ſo far deny himſelf, and it is our Happineſs and Glory to pay it: To this his Sovereignty obligeth our Subject Condition, and his Mercy and Goodneſs our Ingenuity.

Secondly, As we are Tranſgreſſors, ſo we owe God a *Debt of Puniſhment*, to be ſuffered by us to make God ſome Reparation to his Honour, and Satisfaction to his Juſtice, for our tranſgreſſing his Law, which ſentenceth all Offenders to Eternal Death and Damnation.

This *Debt* now is that which we pray God would forgive us; a *Debt*, which if we pay we are eternally ruined and undone; and there is no Way poſſible to eſcape the Payment of it, but by the Free Grace and Mercy of God remitting of it unto us: And thus Sin is called a *Debt*, not indeed properly, as if we owed it, but by a *Metonymy*, as it is the Meritorious Cauſe of his Puniſhment, the ſuffering of which we owe to Divine Juſtice.

Hence by the Way we may obſerve that every Sin makes us liable to Eternal Death; for Death and Damnation is the *Debt*, which we muſt pay to the Juſtice of God, and Sin is that which expoſeth us unto it, by the Sentence of the Law which we have tranſgreſſed. For as againſt other *Debtors* is brought forth ſome Bond or Obligation to exact Payment from them, ſo againſt us is produced the Handwriting of the Law; and we not having performed the Condition of the Bond, ſtand liable to the Forfeiture and Penalty, which is no leſs than Curſes, and Woes, and Torments, and Everlaſting Death. *Curſed is every one that continues not in all Things written in the Book of the Law to do them*, Gal. 3. 10. And *the Wages of Sin is Death*, Rom. 6. 23. And *the Soul that ſinneth it ſhall Die*, Ezek. 18. 4. Now here to excite thee to a Fervency in praying for the Forgiveneſs of thy *Debts*, conſider,

Firſt, The infinite Multitudes of thy *Debts*. God's Book is full of them, and there they ſtand on Account againſt us under every one of our Names. We were Born *Debtors* to God, our Original Sin and Guilt obligeth us to Puniſhment; and although we did not perſonally Contract the *Debt*, yet as being the wretched Heirs and Executors of *fallen Adam*, the *Debt* is legally devolved upon us, and become ours. And ever ſince we came into the VVorld we have run upon the Score with God, our *Debts* are more than our Moments have been; for whatſoever we have thought or done hath been Sin, either in the Matter, or at leaſt in the Circumſtances, of it. God ſets all our Sins down in Order in his *Debt-Book*; ſome as *Talents*, and ſome as *Pence*. Our flagitious Crimes and heinous Impieties, our preſumptuous Sins, committed againſt Light, Knowledge, Conſcience, Convictions, Mercies, and Judgments, each of theſe God ſets down as a *Talent*: And how many Thouſands of theſe may we have been guilty of? Our Sins of Ignorance, Surreption, and daily Infirmity, are much more innumerable; and though they may be but as *Pence*, in Compariſon with the other, yet the unaccountable Numbers of them will make the *Debt* deſperate, and the Payment impoſſible. And yet notwithſtanding our *Debts* are ſo many, and very many of them ſuch great Sums too, yet we daily run our ſelves farther in Arrears, not conſidering that a Day of Accounts will come, when both our Talents and our Pence ſhall be punctually reckoned up againſt us, not omitting the leaſt *Item*; when every vain Thought, and fooliſh Paſſion, that hath fluſhed up in us, with every idle and ſuperfluous VVord that we have unadviſedly ſpoken, as well as the more groſs and ſcandalous Paſſages of our ſinful Lives, ſhall be then audited; all which will make the Total Sum infinite, and us deſperate.

Secondly, That God, who is thy *Creditor*, is Strict and Impartial; his Patience hath truſted and forborn thee long; but his Juſtice will at laſt demand the *Debt* ſeverely, and every Particular ſhall be charged upon thee, even to the utmoſt Farthing; for he hath Booked down all in his Remembrance, and will bring all to thine: And therefore we have it expreſſed concerning the laſt Judgment, that *the Books were opened, and the Dead were judged out of thoſe Things which were written in the Books, according to their Works*, Rev. 20. 12. What now are theſe Books but the Two great Volumes

Volumes of God's Remembrance, and our own Conſciences? Theſe are Two *Tallies* evenly ſtruck, that ſhall juſtly repreſent the ſame Sum and *Debt*, and God's Strict Juſtice will not then abate thee any Thing of its utmoſt Due; for he will by no Means acquit the Guilty. Indeed we are apt to think that becauſe God ſo long forbears us he will never call us to make up and adjuſt Accounts with him. Our Preſent Impunity tempts us to queſtion his Omniſcience, and to ſuſpect his Threatnings; and becauſe he winks at us we are ready to conclude that he is Blind; we are of that Wretched Temper deſcribed, *Pſalm* 50. 21. *Becauſe God keeps Silence we think he is altogether ſuch a one as our ſelves*; as careleſs in requiring his *Debts* as we are in contracting them; but he will reprove us, and ſet them in order before our Faces, to our Everlaſting Shame and Confuſion.

Thirdly, That the leaſt of all theſe thy Debts make thee liable to be caſt into the Priſon of Hell, and to be adjudged to Eternal Death and Puniſhments: Not only thy Impudent and Scandalous Sins, which make thee deteſted of Men, as well as hated of God, but the leaſt Shadow of a Thought, that gives but an Umbrage of Vanity to thy Mind, the leaſt Motion and Heaving of thy Heart towards a Sinful Object, the Exhaling but of one Sinful Deſire, the Wavering of thy Fancy, a Glance of thine Eye, is a *Debt* contracted with the Infinite Juſtice of God, and a *Debt* that, without Forgiveneſs, muſt be paid in the Infernal Priſon of Hell: So ſays our Saviour, *Matth.* 5. 26. *Verily thou ſhalt not come out thence till thou haſt paid the utmoſt Farthing.*

Beware therefore then that you do not entertain any Slight Thoughts of Sin, nor think with the *Papiſts* that there are ſome Sorts of Sins that do not deſerve Death, which they call *Venial* Sins, in Oppoſition to other more Groſs and Heinous Sins, which they allow to be *Mortal.* Believe it, the leaſt Prick at the Heart is *deadly*, and ſo is the leaſt Sin to the Soul. And indeed it is a Contradiction to call any Sin *Venial* in their Senſe who hold it is not worthy of Damnation; for if it be a Sin it is worthy of Damnation, for *the Wages of Sin is Death*; if it be not how is it *Venial*? There is but one Mortal Sin, ſimply and abſolutely ſuch, as God hath revealed in his Word, that it ſhall never be pardon'd neither in this World, nor in that which is to come, and that is the Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, which St. *John* therefore calls a *Sin unto Death*, 1 John 5. 16. And ſo far are they, who are guilty of it, excluded from God's Mercy, that they are excluded from the Charity of our Prayers; for we are not ſo much as to pray for ſuch, as it is there expreſſed.

Again, all the Sins of Finally Impenitent and Unbelieving Wretches are eventually Mortal, and ſhall certainly be puniſhed at laſt with Eternal Death and Damnation; *For the Wrath of God abideth on him that believeth not*, John 3. 16. And God will *render Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguiſh, upon every Soul of Man that doth Evil*, Rom. 2. 9. All Sins whatſoever are Mortal meritoriouſly, both in the Penitent, and in the Impenitent; the Law hath condemned all alike, though all Sins are not alike heinous, nor ſhall be equally puniſhed; but with ſome it ſhall be far more intolerable than with others, yet all are alike Mortal, and deſerve Death, and the ſame *Hell*, though not the ſame Place, nor the ſame Degree of Torments in *Hell*; for thoſe Sins which are accounted moſt Trivial and Venial are in themſelves Violations of the Holy Law of God; and the Penalty that his Laws threaten is no leſs than Death. The Law is accurate, and reacheth to the leaſt Things, yea, to the leaſt Circumſtances of thoſe Things, and every Tranſgreſſion againſt it ſhall receive its due Recompence of Reward: Nay, had we no other Guilt left upon our Souls, from the Firſt Moment of our Lives to this Preſent Day, but only the Guilt of the leaſt Sin that the Holy Law condemns, be it only the wrenching aſide of a Thought or Deſire, only a By and Siniſter End in the Performance of Holy Duties, nay, let it be but the Firſt Rudiment and Imperfect Draught of a Thought not yet finiſhed, without a full Satisfaction and Expiation, this ſmall *Debt* would caſt us into Priſon, this little Sin would ſink us irrecoverably into *Hell*, and lay us under the Revenges of the Almighty God for ever.

Oh then, with what Horror and Amazement may Sinners reflect upon their paſt Sins? With what Dread and Trembling may they expect their future State, ſince as many Thouſands Sins as they have committed, of all Sizes and Aggravations, ſo many *Deaths* and *Hells* heaped up one upon another have they deſerved, and without Intervention of a full Payment and Satisfaction muſt they be adjudged to undergo? For though the leaſt Degree of Divine Wrath be a *Tormenting Hell*, yet God will enflame his Wrath to as many Degrees of Acrimony and Sharpneſs as they have committed Sins,

Sins, till their Puniſhment be equal to their Offences, and become infinitely intolerable.

Fourthly, Conſider thou canſt never pay God, nor diſcharge the leaſt of thy Debts for ever. For,

Firſt, Thou canſt not poſſibly do it by any Duties or Services in this Life: For whatſoever thou doſt is either required, or not required; if it be not required it will be ſo far from being a Satisfaction for thy Sins, that it will be an Addition to them, and a Piece of Will-worſhip, which will meet with that ſad Greeting at the laſt Day, *who hath required theſe Things at your Hands?* If it be required it is no more than thou oweſt to God before, and if thou hadſt never ſinned, wert obliged to pay it. To think to ſatisfie ſo thy Sins by thy Duties, is but to rob one Attribute of God to pay another; for whatſoever Obedience thou canſt perform thou oweſt it to the Sovereignty and Holineſs of God, and his Juſtice will never accept of that which belongs to his Authority. Beſides, it is abſurd to think to pay one Duty by another, to diſcharge the *Debt* of Sin by paying the *Debt* of Duty.

Secondly, Thou canſt not pay off thy *Debts* by any Sufferings hereafter. It is true, Sinners ſhall lye eternally in Priſon, and be eternally ſatisfying the offended Juſtice of God; but in all that Eternity there ſhall never be that Moment wherein they may ſay, as Chriſt did in his making Satisfaction, *it is finiſhed*, the Debt is paid, and Juſtice hath received as much as was due from me. No, that Satisfaction muſt be eternally making, and therefore the Puniſhment muſt be eternally laſting: For every Sin, even the leaſt Sin, is committed againſt an Infinite God, and therefore the Puniſhment of it muſt be Infinite: For Offences take their Meaſures, as well from the Dignity of the Perſon againſt whom they are committed, as from the Heinouſneſs of the Fact in itſelf conſidered. As a Reviling Word againſt the *King* is Treaſonable, againſt our Equals but Actionable; and therefore by the ſame Proportion, the ſame Offence againſt the Infinite Majeſty of the Great God muſt needs carry Infinite Guilt in it, that is, expoſeth to infinite Puniſhment.

Now then, O Sinner, think with thy ſelf what Satisfaction thou canſt make to God that can bear a Proportion to thy infinite Offences. Thou canſt not at once undergo an infinite Meaſure of Puniſhment, for thy Nature is but finite. Couldſt thou do this then indeed there were Hope, yea, Certainty, of Relief for thee, for Divine Juſtice will not exact more than its due. But becauſe this is impoſſible, thy Woes and Torments in Hell muſt be Eternal, that they may be ſome Way infinite, as the Juſtice is which thou haſt offended; infinite, if not in Degrees, yet in Duration and Continuance.

And O what dreadful Deſpair will this cauſe in thee, when thou ſhalt have been in Hell under moſt acute and inſufferable Torments Millions of Years of Years, and yet the Payment of all that Sum of Plagues and Woes ſhall not be of Value enough to ſatisfie for the leaſt of thy Sins, nor to croſs out of God's Book the leaſt and ſmalleſt of thy *Debts*, but thy Account ſhall ſtill be as great and as full as it was at thy firſt plunging into *Hell*, and ſtill an Eternity of Torments remains to be paid by thee!

And now wretched Creatures that we are, whither ſhall we turn our ſelves? What Hope, what Relief, can we find? Shall we flatter our ſelves that God will not require our Sins at our Hands? No, they are *Debts*, and therefore he may, and he is, a Juſt God, Juſt to himſelf, and to the Intereſt of his own Glory, and therefore he will: God hath beforehand told us at what Rate we muſt expect to take up our Sins, and what we muſt pay for them at the laſt. He hath told us as plainly as the Mouth of Truth can utter it, that the *Wages of Sin is Death*, and the Ways Sinners chuſe lead down to the Chambers of *Hell* and *Deſtruction*. Our own Miſery is our own Choice. He hath in his Word ſet Life and Death before us, and declared to us the Means how we might eſcape the one, and obtain the other. He hath repreſented to us the Unconceivableneſs of both: And if we will be ſo obſtinate as after theſe manifeſt Repreſentations to chuſe Hell and Death, it is but Reaſon and Juſtice that we ſhould have our own Choice; for it is our Choice interpretatively when we chuſe thoſe Ways and Actions that expoſe to them.

And thus much concerning the Acknowledgment we make in this Petition, *our Debts*. *Debts* vaſt and infinite, which the Juſtice of God will ſtrictly require of Sinners in their Eternal Condemnation. *Debts*, the leaſt of which makes us liable to be caſt into Priſon, into Hell, and for the leaſt of which we can never ſatisfie.

But what, is there no Hope? Is there no Poſſibility to croſs the Book, to cancel the Obligation whereby we ſtand Bound to the revenging Juſtice of God, and everlaſting Sufferings?

Truly none by our own Perſonal Satisfaction; but yet there is abundant Hope, yea, full Aſſurance, of it, through the Free Mercy of our God. And therefore as our Saviour hath taught us to acknowledge our *Debts*, ſo he hath likewiſe taught us to pray, *Father, forgive us our Debts.*

And now that I have ſhewed you our Miſery by reaſon of our *Debts*, and you have ſeen the Black Side of the Cloud which interpoſeth between God and us; ſo give me leave to repreſent to you our Hopes and Conſolation in God's Free Grace, and the Divine Mercy, in diſſolving this Black Cloud, that it may never more appear. And here let us,

Firſt, Conſider what the Pardon of Sin is. And this we cannot better diſcover than by looking into the Nature of Sin. Sin therefore, as St. *John* deſcribes it, 1 *John* 3. 4. *is a Tranſgreſſion of the Law of God.* And to the validity of our Laws it is neceſſary that there be a Penalty annexed, either literally expreſs'd, or tacitly implied. The Guilt that we contract by Tranſgreſſing the Law is nothing elſe but our liableneſs to undergo this Penalty. And this Guilt is Twofold, the Intrinſical and Formal, and that is, the Deſert of Puniſhment, which Sin always neceſſarily carries in it, as it is a Violation of a Holy and Righteous Commandment.

The other is Extrinſical and Adventitious, and conſiſts in the Appointment and Deſignation of the Sinner unto Puniſhment. This now doth not formally flow from Sin, but from the Will of God, conſtituting and willing to puniſh Sin with Death.

Now Pardon is nothing elſe but the Removal of the Guilt of Sin. But now the Queſtion is which Guilt it removeth. I Anſwer,

Firſt, It doth not remove the Intrinſical Guilt of Sin, or the Deſert of Puniſhment. For the Sins of thoſe who are Juſtified and Pardoned do yet in their own Nature deſerve Death and Eternal Damnation. As a Pardon vouchſafed to a *Traitor* doth not cauſe his Actions not to have been Treaſonable, and Worthy of Death; for this doth neceſſarily follow immediately upon the Tranſgreſſing of the Law to which the Penalty is annexed. So neither is it in the Power of Pardoning Grace to make that our Sins ſhould not deſerve Death, according to their own Demerit, for that were a Contradiction, ſince this Demerit is neceſſary and eſſential unto Sin as ſuch.

Secondly, Therefore *Pardon* of *Sin* removes that Guilt which conſiſts in the adventitious Appointment or Ordination of the Sinner unto Puniſhment, flowing from the Will of God, who hath in his Law threatned to inflict Eternal Death as the Reward and Wages of Sin. Now this Deſignation of the Sinner unto Puniſhment is Twofold, either *Perſonal* or *Myſtical.* One of theſe Two Ways God will certainly puniſh every Soul that ſins, either by appointing the Sinner *Perſonally* to undergo the Puniſhment of his Iniquities; and thus he deals with Unbelievers, whom he will puniſh in their own Perſons for their Tranſgreſſions: Or elſe he appoints them to undergo the Puniſhment of their Sins *Myſtically*, as being by Faith made one with the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who himſelf hath borne our Sins in his own Body on the Tree. Now Pardon of Sin doth not remove the *Myſtical* Appointment of a Believer unto Puniſhment, for he hath ſuffered it, for Chriſt hath ſuffered it, and Chriſt and he are one *Myſtical* Perſon by Faith. God never Pardons but he likewiſe puniſhes the very Sin that he Pardons; he puniſheth it in our Surety and Undertaker when he forgives it to a Believer. *Pardon of Sin* therefore removes only that Guilt which conſiſts in our own Perſonal Appointment and Deſignation to Puniſhment, tho' the Sin doth always in itſelf neceſſarily deſerve Death, though that Death hath been inflicted upon Chriſt, and therefore upon Believers in him, as Members of him.

But yet notwithſtanding that God thus takes Vengeance on our Sins, he doth Graciouſly Pardon them when he releaſeth our Perſonal Obligation unto Puniſhment; and reckons that we have ſuffered the Penalty in Chriſt ſuffering it, and therefore ought to be diſcharged from any farther liableneſs unto it.

This now is that *Pardon of Sin* which we pray for when we ſay, *Forgive us our Debts.* And for the more full Explication of it I ſhall lay down theſe following Poſitions.

Firſt, The Pardoning Grace of God in Reſpect of us is altogether Free and Undeſerved. We can of ourſelves ſcarce ſo much as ask Forgiveneſs; but even this comes from the Grace of God, therefore much leſs can we do any Thing to merit it. Far be it from us to affirm, as the *Papiſts* do, that Good Works proceeding from Grace are Meritorious of Pardon and Salvation. Alas, what are our Prayers, our Sighs, our Tears, yea, our very Blood, ſhould we ſpend it for Chriſt? They are but poor imperfect Things, and are ſo far from having in them any infinite worth

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and Value to Counterbalance our Sins, that the Defects of them add to the number of our other Tranſgreſſions, they cannot all of them make one Blot in the Book of God's Remembrance, but may well make more Items there againſt us. Had it been poſſible for Men to have quitted Scores with Divine Juſtice by what they could do or ſuffer, Heaven would not have been ſo needleſly laviſh as to ſend Chriſt into the World to lead an afflicted Life, and to die an accurſed Death, only for our Redemption and Salvation.

Secondly, The Pardoning Grace of God is not free in Reſpect of Chriſt, but it coſt him the Price of Blood. It is the Blood of the Lamb *Slain from the Foundation of the World* that croſſeth of the Debt-book; *Without ſhedding Blood there is no Remiſſion*, ſays the *Apoſtle*, Heb. 9. 22. *And this is my Blood which was ſhed for the Remiſſion of Sins*, Matth. 26. 28. And although poſſibly God might according to his abſolute Sovereignty have freely remitted all the Sins of the World, without any kind of Satisfaction, only by a Free and Gracious Act of Mercy, yet conſidering that he had otherwiſe declared in his unalterable Word of Truth, that there muſt be a Recompence made him for all our Offences, it had been a Wrong to his *Veracity*, if not to his *Juſtice*, to have granted the Pardon of any one Sin without the Intervention of a full Price and Satisfaction; no Satisfaction could be made correſpondent to the Wrong done to an Infinite God, but by an Infinite Perſon, who was God himſelf; for had the Perſon been Finite the Sufferings muſt have been Eternal, otherwiſe they could not have been proportionable to the Offence, which requires an infinite Satisfaction; but if the Sufferings had been Eternal Satisfaction could never have been made, but would for ever have been making unto the Juſtice of God, and conſequently our Sins could never have been Pardoned. And therefore God appointed to this Work of reconciling himſelf to fallen Man his only Begotten Son, God Co-equal and Co-eternal with himſelf, and every Way Infinite as himſelf, that he might be able to bear the whole Wrath of God at once, and at one Bitter Draught drink off the whole Cup of Fury which we ſhould have been draining by little Drops to all Eternity: So that Juſtice being ſatisfied in the Sufferings of Chriſt, for the Sins of thoſe whoſe Perſons, and whoſe Guilt, be ſuſtained upon the Croſs, Mercy hath now a Way opened to Glorifie its Riches in their Pardon and Salvation.

Thus in theſe Two Poſitions it appears, that though the remitting of our Sins be an Act of God's Free Grace and Mercy in reſpect of us, yet it is the Effect of Purchaſe in reſpect of Chriſt; God pardons Sins to them who committed them upon their Faith and Repentance, but he pardons not thoſe very Sins to Chriſt to whom they were imputed, but exacted Satisfaction from him to the very utmoſt Rigour of Juſtice. Hence it follows,

Thirdly, That the Pardon of Sin is not only an Act of meer Free Grace and Mercy, but according to the Terms of the Covenant of Grace it is alſo an Act of Juſtice in God. Indeed both Mercy and Juſtice are concurrent in it; for ſince by the Union of Faith we are made one *Myſtical* Body with Chriſt, it could not conſiſt with the Equity of God to puniſh the Sins of Believers in their own Perſons; for this would be no other than to puniſh them twice for the ſame Offence, once in their Surety, and again in themſelves.

Now what abundant Cauſe of Comfort may this be to all True Believers, that God's Juſtice as well as Mercy ſhall acquit them; that that Attribute of God, at the Apprehenſion of which they were wont to tremble, ſhould interpoſe on their Behalf, and plead for them. Yet through the All-ſufficient Expiation and Atonement that Chriſt hath made for our Sins this Myſtery is effected, and Juſtice itſelf brought over from being a formidable Adverſary to be of our Party, and to plead for us. Therefore the Apoſtle tells us, 1 John 1. 9. *That God is Faithful and Juſt to forgive us our Sins.* And St. *Paul*, 2 Theſſ. 1. 6, 7. *It is a Righteous Thing with God to recompence Tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled reſt with us, when the Lord Jeſus Chriſt ſhall be revealed from Heaven with his Mighty Angels.*

Fourthly, When God pardons he doth no longer account of us as Sinners. Indeed after Pardon we ſtill retain ſinful and corrupt Natures; and there is that Original Pollution in us that can never be totally diſlodged in this Life; but yet when God pardons he looks not upon us not as Sinners, but as Juſt. The *Malefactor* that is legally diſcharged, either by ſatisfying the Law, or by his Prince's Grace and Favour towards him, is no more reputed a *Malefactor*, but as Juſt and Righteous as if he never had offended. So is it with us, we are both Ways diſcharged of

our Guilt, both by ſatisfying the Penalty of the Law in Chriſt our Surety, and by the Free Grace and Mercy of God, who hath Sealed to us a Gracious Act of Pardon, and therefore we are Juſt in the Sight of God as if we had never ſinned.

Fifthly, Pardon of Sin is one great Part of our Juſtification. Juſtification conſiſts of theſe Two Parts, Remiſſion and Acceptance; we have them both joined together, Eph. 1. 6, 7. *He hath made us accepted in the Beloved, in whom we have Redemption through his Blood, even the Forgiveneſs of Sins.* Remiſſion of Sins takes away our liableneſs to Death, Acceptation of our Perſons gives us a Title unto Life. Now to be free from our Obnoxiouſneſs to Death, and inſtated in a Right to Eternal Life, theſe Two conſtitute a perfect Juſtification: For to be accepted of God in Chriſt is no other than for God, through the Righteouſneſs and Obedience of Chriſt imputed to us, to own and acknowledge us to have a Right to Heaven; and therefore we have mention of Pardon and an Inheritance together in Saint *Paul*'s Commiſſion to his Miniſtry, *Acts* 26. 18. *That they may receive Forgiveneſs of Sins, and an Inheritance among them that are ſanctified.*

It is not therefore, *O Soul*, a bare negative Righteouſneſs that God intends thee in the Pardon of thy Sins, it is not meerly to remove the Curſe and Wrath thy Sins have deſerved, (though that alone can never ſufficiently be admired,) but the ſame Hand that plucks thee out of Hell by Pardon, lifts thee up to Heaven by what he gives thee, together with thy Pardon, even a Right and Title to a Bleſſed and Glorious Inheritance. Thy Pardon thou haſt from the Paſſive Obedience of Chriſt in his Sufferings; a Right to Heaven thou haſt through the Active Obedience of Chriſt, in fulfilling all Righteouſneſs; and through both haſt thou obtained a compleat Juſtification; God looking upon thee as Innocent through the Satisfaction of his Son, and as Worthy through his Obedience, both which are made thine by Faith.

Now this Pardon of Sin is in *Scripture* ſet forth by very ſweet and full Expreſſions. It is called *a blotting out of Tranſgreſſion*, a *Metaphor* taken from a Creditor's croſſing the Debt-book, ſignifying thereby a Diſcharge of the Debt. And leſt we might poſſibly fear God will implead us for them without Book, the *Prophet* adds *forgetting* unto *blotting out*, Iſa. 43. 25. *I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy Tranſgreſſions for my Names ſake, and I will not remember thy Sins.* It is called a covering of our Sins, *Pſal.* 32. 1. *Bleſſed is the Man whoſe Tranſgreſſions are forgiven, and whoſe Sin is covered.* Yea, we have a further Ground of Comfort, for it is not only a covering of our Sins, but it is a covering of God's Face from them. *Pſal.* 51. 9. *Hide thy Face from my Sins, and blot out all mine Iniquities.* It is a caſting of them behind God's Back, as a Thing that he will never more regard. *Iſa.* 38. 17. *Thou haſt caſt all my Sins behind thy Back.* And leſt we ſhould ſuſpect he ſhould turn again to behold them, it is called, *a caſting of them into the Bottom of the Sea*, Mic. 7. 19. as we do with Things we would have irrecoverably loſt and gone. *It is a ſcattering them as a thick Cloud*, Iſa. 44. 22. When the Vapours of it are ſo diſſipated, that there ſhall not remain the leaſt Spot to obſtruct the ſhining of God's Face and Favour upon our Souls; yea, and ſo perfect an Abolition ſhall be made of all our Iniquities, that though Divine Juſtice ſhould enter into a ſtrict Search and Scrutiny after them they ſhall not be found againſt us. So the Prophet *Jeremiah* tell us, *Jer.* 50. 20. *In that Day ſhall the Iniquity of* Iſrael *be ſought for, and there ſhall be none; and the Sins of* Judah, *and they ſhall not be found.* How hath God heaped up Expreſſions of his Grace and Mercy one upon another? And ſtudied Words as it were to aſſure us of the Validity of our Pardon, giving to us abounding Conſolations as our Sins have been abounding. And thus much ſhall ſuffice to ſhew the Nature of Pardoning Grace and Mercy, as expreſſed in theſe Words, *Forgive us our Debts.*

Secondly, Let us conſider unto whom this Petition for Pardon is directed, and that is, as all the reſt are, to our Father, whoſe Laws we have violated, whoſe Juſtice we have offended, whoſe Diſpleaſure we have incurred, and to whoſe Vengeance we have made ourſelves liable and obnoxious, to him we ſue for Pardon and Remiſſion.

Hence we may collect this Note, *That it is the High Prerogative of God alone to forgive Sins.*

God aſſumes this particularly to himſelf, and ſeems to Triumph in the Glory of this Attribute. *I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy Tranſgreſſions.* And therefore when Chriſt cured the *Paralytick*, the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* ſtorm'd at him for a *Blaſphemer* for ſaying, *Be of good cheer, thy Sins are forgiven thee: Thou Blaſphe-*

meſt,

meſt, ſay they, *for who can forgive Sins but God alone?* Mark 2. 7. And this Charge of *Blaſphemy* which they laid againſt Chriſt, had he not been the True God, had been unanſwerable: And therefore our Saviour denies not their Principle, which is moſt certain and infallible; but to convince them that they themſelves were Blaſphemers in applying it to him, proves his *Deity* by a *Miracle*, and demonſtrates his Authority to forgive Sins by his Power in healing Diſeaſes.

But you will ſay, if it be the incommunicable Prerogative of God only to forgive Sins, how is it that we find this Priviledge and Power aſcrib'd unto Men alſo? *John* 20. 23. *Whoſe ſoever Sins ye remit, they are remitted.* It ſeems therefore that the *Apoſtles* and Miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt, their Succeſſors, ſtand inveſted by Chriſt with a Power to forgive Sins.

I *Anſwer*, Remiſſion of Sins is Twofold, either Authoritatively and Judicially; or, Secondly, Miniſterial and Declarative: The former belongs only to God, who by the meer Authority of his Grace and Mercy doth freely and fully acquit us of our Guilt, without requiring any Thing at our Hands by Way of Recompence or Puniſhment. Now for any Creature, either in Heaven or Earth, to aſſume this to himſelf, is a moſt Inſolent and *Blaſphemous Pride*; which while the *Pope* of *Rome* doth, he hath given us the ſtrongeſt Argument that can be to aſſert and prove him to be the *Antichriſt*, and that Son of *Perdition*; for among the many Characters that are given of *Antichriſt*, all of which do more than ſufficiently belong unto him, this is one, *that he exalteth himſelf above all that is called God*, 2 Theſſ. 2. 4.

Not only above Titular Gods, as *Kings* and *Magiſtrates* are, (for it is notoriouſly known what Power he arrogates unto himſelf in diſpoſing Crowns, and transferring States, making *Princes* themſelves far more inferior to him than their Subjects are to them;) but alſo above the only Living and True God, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in pretending to a Judicial Authority to forgive Sins and Offences committed againſt God: For it is clear and evident, whoſoever can Pardon the Offences of one Perſon againſt another muſt himſelf be Superior to both, and have Authority and Juriſdiction over both; but chiefly over the Perſon offended, to make him ceaſe the Proſecution of his Right, and ſit down by the Wrong received; for if a *Prince* ſhould Pardon the Injury that one *Subject* doth the other, he muſt command the Perſon grieved not to moleſt or proſecute him that hath done the Wrong, and ſo diſable him from taking Revenge. Now what a wretched and damnable Inſolence is it for any vile, ſinful, Man to pretend to ſuch a Power of forgiving Sins committed againſt God, as if by his Authority he could command God to ſurceaſe his Suit, and to require no farther Recompence, but to reſt himſelf contented that it is the *Pope*'s Will and Pleaſure to have it ſo? What is this but to exalt himſelf above all that is called God, not only on Earth, but in Heaven itſelf? A moſt horrid Blaſphemy, and ſo proper a Character of *Antichriſt* that there needs no other to deſcribe him by.

Secondly, There is a Miniſterial Declarative Remiſſion of Sins; and this is either Internal in the Court of Conſcience, or External in the Court of the Church of Chriſt here upon Earth. The former Remiſſion is the Office or Miniſtry of the *Holy Ghoſt*, ſealing of us up unto the *Day* of *Redemption*, by his ſilent and moſt comfortable Teſtimony, witneſſing unto us that our Sins are pardoned, and our Perſons accepted. The External Declaration of Remiſſion of Sins is an open Publication to all Humble Penitent Sinners the Abſolution and Pardon of their Offences, according to the Tenor of God's Faithful Promiſes. And in this Senſe alone the Miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt have Power to pardon and remit Sins, *whoſe Sins ye remit, they are remitted*; that is, whoſe Sins you declare that God hath remitted, they are remitted; not abſolutely, but conditionally, in caſe Men come up to the Performance of thoſe Conditions upon which God hath promiſed Pardon and Forgiveneſs, which are Faith and Repentance. And therefore in our *Publick Prayers*, where the whole Congregation hath made an humble Confeſſion of their Sins, the Miniſter, according to his Office and Power given him by Chriſt, declares to them, *That God Pardons and Abſolves all them that truly Repent, and unfeignedly Believe his Holy Goſpel:* Or if on any other Occaſion the Miniſter ſay, *I Abſolve thee from thy Sins*, yet the meaning is the ſame; he Abſolves him Officially, not Judiciouſly; he Abſolves by declaring him Abſolved and Pardoned upon his ſincere Faith and Repentance, which if People did but better underſtand they would not be ſo forward to carp at, leſt they carp at the very Goſpel itſelf.

Nor doth this at all intrench upon God's Prerogative, for the Miniſter, only

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as the Officer and Messenger of God, declares that it is he alone who Pardons and Absolves Penitent Sinners. A Practice as far from bordering upon the intolerable Arrogance of *Antichrist*, as it is on the other Side from yielding enough to the express Authority of Christ, to adjudge it vain and fruitless: As it is the *Prince* that Pardons, the *Herald* only proclaims it; so here, it is God only who pardons Sinners, the Minister's Part is in a Solemn and Official Manner to Pronounce and Proclaim this Pardon to all that shall accept it upon the Terms on which it is offered by God; and this may suffice in Answer to that *Objection*.

But then again it may be *Objected*, How is it God alone who forgives Sins, whereas we likewise are bound to forgive those that trespass against us?

To this I Answer, Every Trespass against Man is also an Offence against God, for so Merciful is our God unto us that he hath taken his Creatures under the Protection of his Law, and fenced us round with the Authority of his Commands, so that no Injury can reach us, but it must commit a Trespass upon the Divine Law, and break through those Bounds that God hath set about every Man's Propriety and Right to defend it against unjust Invaders; but yet if any shall dare to violate this, we must forgive them so far forth as it is a Wrong to us, (as I shall shew more largely hereafter;) but we cannot pretend to forgive the Wrong that they have done to God in wronging us; but this must be left between him and their own Souls, to his Mercy and their Repentance.

If then it be the Prerogative of God alone to pardon Sin, hence we may for our abundant Comfort be informed,

First, That our Pardon is Free and Gratuitous; for whatsoever God doth he doth it freely, for his own sake, without respect to any former Deserts, or Expectations of any future Recompence. It is infinitely below the Sovereignty of his Grace to admit of any other Motive for his Mercy, but his Mercy; and therefore he hath told us, *I will be Gracious to whom I will be Gracious, and I will shew Mercy to whom I will shew Mercy*, Exod. 33. 19. Since it is a God that Pardons, it is infinitely unworthy of his Glory and Majesty to Sell his Pardons and Indulgencies, and to make his Mercy Merchandize.

But yet this Pardoning Grace of God, though it be free in respect of Purchase, yet is it limited to Conditions in respect of Application, which Conditions are Faith and Repentance. *Whosoever Believes in him shall obtain Remission of Sins*, Acts 10. 43. *Repent*, says the Apostle, *that your Sins may be blotted out when the Times of Refreshing shall come*, Acts 3. 19. Think not therefore, *O Soul*, when thy Conscience is oppress'd with the Guilt of Sin, think not what Expiation thou must make, what Ransom thou must pay, to God? Say not, *Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, or bow my self before the High God? Shall I come before him with Burnt-Offerings, with Calves of a Year Old? Will the Lord be pleased with Thousands of Rams, or with Ten Thousand Rivers of Oil? Shall I give my First-born for my Transgression, the Fruit of my Body for the Sin of my Soul?* As the *Prophet* speaks, *Micah* 6. 6, 7. What shall I do, or what shall I offer, to make Amends and Recompence for my Offences? This is to be injurious to the Free Grace of God, which requires no Satisfaction from thee, only thy present Acceptance and future Reformation: This is that indeed which God requires from thee; but to think to Purchase his Favour, and to Buy his Mercy, is infinitely to disparage it; and they only judge rightly of it who judge it invaluable.

Secondly, It is God that Pardons, therefore our Pardon is full and compleat. Indeed those Acts that God works within us are in this Life imperfect. The Illumination of our Minds, the Sanctification of our Hearts, are God's Works within us, and these are defective; not as they come from God, but as they are received in us: As we know but in Part, so we are sanctified but in Part. But those Acts of God that he doth not work in us, but only terminate upon us, of which we are the *Objects*, but not the *Subjects*, they are all as perfect here as they shall be to all Eternity: Thus God Justifies, Adopts, and Pardons, fully and compleatly, for these are Acts of God residing in his own Breast, where they meet with no Opposition or Allay; nor do they increase by any small Degrees as our Sanctification doth, but are at once as perfect as ever they shall be: I do not mean, (though some have so thought and taught,) that God doth at once Pardon all the Sins of a True Believer, as well those which for the future he shall commit, as those which he hath already committed, which is an absurd and dangerous Tenet, as if Sin could

could be pardoned before it were, or Guilt removed before it be contracted; but only whatsoever Sins God pardons he doth it not gradually. Nothing of Guilt is left upon the Soul when God pardons it, though still there be something of Filth left in it when God sanctifies it. And therefore as it is the great Grief of God's Children that their inherent Holiness is so imperfect, affronted by Temptations, foiled by Corruptions, oppressed and almost stifled to Death by a Body of Sin that lyes heavy upon it, yet this on the other Hand may be their exceeding great Comfort and Rejoicing, that God's Pardoning Grace is not as his Sanctifying Grace is, nor granted to them by the same Stint and Measure. A Sin truly repented of is not pardoned to us by halves, half the Guilt remitted, and half retained, (as the *Papists* fancy to establish their *Purgatory:*) No, O Sinner, there is not any Guilt left for thee to satisfie for, not any Reserve of Punishment for thee to undergo, but all thy Sins are so pardoned that they are in God's Account as if they had never been committed against him. And therefore be thy Comforts never so strong and flowing, and thy Sense of God's pardoning Grace never so clear, yet know that thy Pardon is still infinitely more perfect than thy Joy in it can be satisfactory: For Assurance, and the Sense of Pardon, is a Work of God's Spirit wrought in us, and is commonly mixed with some Hesitation, and Misgiving Doubts; but our Pardon is an Act of God in himself, where it meets with nothing contrary, and therefore with no Abatement, but is as perfect and absolute as ever it shall be in Heaven itself.

Thirdly, Is it God that Pardons? Then for thy Comfort know that he can as easily forgive great and many Sins as few and small; for the Greatness and Multitudes of thy Sins can make no odds in Infinite Grace and Mercy, only repent and believe. God proclaims his Name, *Exod.* 34. 7. *The Lord God, Merciful and Gracious, Long-suffering, and abundant in Goodness and Truth, forgiving Iniquity, Transgression, and Sin*; that is, all Sorts and Sizes of Sins. The greatest Sins repented of are no more without the Extent of his Mercy, than the least unrepented of are without the Cognizance of his Justice. And that there is any one, (though but one,) Sin unpardonable, ariseth not so much from the Atrociousness of the Fact, as if it exceeded Mercy, but only from the Malignity of its Nature, hardning the Heart against God, and making it uncapable of Repentance, otherwise could they who commit this Sin repent, even they also should obtain Pardon. Say not therefore, *Mine Iniquity is greater than can be forgiven:* I have outsinn'd Mercy, and there is no Portion for me in God, his fiery Indignation will eternally devour me. This is to be injurious unto God, and to stint that Grace and Mercy which he hath made infinite: And thou may'st with as much Truth and Reason say that thou art greater than God, as that thy Sins are greater than his Mercy.

Yet here, before I leave this, let me caution you that you do not abuse this comfortable Doctrine of God's pardoning Sin, and turn that into *Presumption* that was intended only to arm you against *Despair*. Indeed both *Presumption* and *Despair* tend, in a diverse Manner, to encourage and harden Men in Sin: The *Despairing Sinner* argues, If I must not be saved, if my Sins be so many and great that there is no Pardon for them, to what Purpose then should I live strictly? To what Purpose should I cross and vex my self by an unprofitable Severity? It is too great Niceness to scruple farther sinning when I am already sure of *Damnation*; and therefore if I must go to *Hell* I will make my Way thither as pleasant as I can. This is a kind of *Despair* that produceth not Horrour, as it doth in some, but a most wretched Carelessness what becomes of them.

On the other hand, *Presumptuous Men* argue, God is able to pardon the Greatest and Vilest Sinners; they cannot Sin beyond the Reach and Extent of his Grace and Mercy; and therefore what need they yet trouble themselves to Repent and Reform, they will yet indulge themselves a little longer in their Sins; for it is as easie for God to pardon them at the last Moment of their Lives as upon many Years Preparation.

We see Iniquity every where most fearfully to abound in the World, and doubtless both *Despair* and *Presumption* have too great an Influence, both upon the Minds and Lives of Men, to make them Careless in their Eternal Concernments.

Enough have been spoken to the *Despairing*, which are but few; but to the *Presumptuous* let me add a Word. It is the most unworthy and disingenious Use they can make of the Mercy of God, to press it to serve against its Authority: *Shall we continue in Sin that Grace may abound? God forbid.* Shall we Sin licentiously because

cauſe God pardons freely? No, the Grace of God obligeth otherwiſe, the Love of Chriſt conſtraineth otherwiſe, the filial Diſpoſition of the New Creature enclineth otherwiſe, Gratitude and Retribution engage otherwiſe. But if theſe Motives be too refined and ingenious for thy ſordid and ſlaviſh Spirit; and if thou wilt ſtill go on in the *Preſumption of thy Heart, crying, Peace, Peace, to thy ſelf*, although thou continueſt *adding one Iniquity to another*; know, O Vile Wretch, *that the Lord will not ſpare thee, but the Anger of the Lord and his Jealouſie ſhall ſmoke againſt thee; and all the Curſes that are written in his Book ſhall come upon thee, and the Lord will blot out thy Name from under Heaven*, Deut. 29. 19.

And thus I have done with the general Conſideration of God's pardoning Sin, held forth to us in this *Petition, Forgive us our Debts or Treſpaſſes.*

Now in this *Petition* we pray not only for the Pardon of Sin, but likewiſe for all Things that are antecedently neceſſary to obtain it: As,

Firſt, We pray that God would diſcover to us the horrid, odious, Nature of Sin; that he would convince us of the woful, miſerable, Eſtate that we are in by Nature; and how much more wretched and miſerable we have made our ſelves by our ſinful Lives; that he would ſet Home the Terrors of Sin upon our Conſciences, to our Humiliation, and make us deſpair in our ſelves, that we might fly unto Chriſt, and lay hold on that Help and Refuge he hath ſet before us.

Secondly, We pray that God would humble us under the Sight and Senſe of our manifold Tranſgreſſions, that as our Sins have made us vile in God's Eye, ſo they may make us vile in our own, to loath our ſelves in Duſt and Aſhes for them.

Thirdly, We pray that God would give us his Spirit to enable us to confeſs our Sins cordially, and ſincerely to pour forth our Hearts before him, and to acknowledge our manifold Provocations with Shame and Godly Sorrow, upon which God promiſed to grant us Pardon and Forgiveneſs, *Prov.* 28. 13. *He that covereth his Sin ſhall not proſper, but he that confeſſeth and forſaketh them ſhall find Mercy.* And the Apoſtle tells us. *If we confeſs our Sins, God is Faithful and Juſt to forgive us our Sins, and to cleanſe us from all Unrighteouſneſs*, 1 John 1. 9.

Fourthly, We beg a more clear Underſtanding of the Sacrifice and Atonement made by Jeſus Chriſt, through which alone all Pardon is purchaſed and procured, to know both what it is, and why ordained; and likewiſe the Knowledge of God's Rich and Free Mercy, and the Conjunction of this Sacrifice and Mercy together, in the great Myſtery of the Freeneſs of Divine Grace, and the Satisfaction of Jeſus concurring to the Remiſſion of our Sins, and the Salvation of our Souls.

Fifthly, We pray that we may have a high Eſteem of Chriſt, and may Hunger and Thirſt more after him and his Righteouſneſs, through whom alone Pardon of our Sins is to be obtained.

Sixthly and laſtly, We pray that we may be brought over to cloſe with the Lord Jeſus Chriſt by a lively Faith; that his Righteouſneſs thereby may be made ours, and we by that Righteouſneſs may obtain Pardon of our Sins, and an Inheritance among them that are Sanctified. For though Pardon be procured by the Death of Chriſt, yet the Application of it to the Soul is only by Faith, uniting us unto him, and making us one with him. For all that Chriſt hath either done or ſuffered for the Redemption of the World would be altogether in vain, as to our particular Benefit and Advantage, were it not that Faith entitles us unto it, and makes that Satisfaction which he hath given to Divine Juſtice to be *Myſtically* our Act, as it was *Perſonally* his.

And thus I have conſidered the Petition itſelf, *Forgive us our Debts.*

I now proceed to the Condition or Plea annexed, *As we forgive our Debtors.* And here we have,

Firſt, The Act, *Forgive.*

Secondly, The Object, *Debtors.*

Thirdly, The Limitation of this Object, *our Debtors.*

Fourthly, The Proportion or Reſemblance in the Particle *as*, *As we forgive our Debtors.*

I ſhall begin with the Object, *Debtors.* As all Men ſtand indebted to God in a Twofold *Debt*, a *Debt* of Obedience, and a *Debt* of Puniſhment: So One Man may be a *Debtor* to another Two Ways, either by owing to him a *Debt* of Duty, or else a *Debt* of Satisfaction.

Firſt, Some Men ſtand indebted to others in a *Debt* of Duty. And indeed I might well have ſaid this *Debt* is Reciprocal between Man and Man. Thus *Children* owe to *Parents*

Parents Reverence and Obedience, and *Parents* their *Children* Proviſion and Education. *Subjects* owe their *Magiſtrates* Honour and Tribute, and *Magiſtrates* owe their *Subjects* Juſtice and Protection. *Servants* owe their *Maſters* Fear, Diligence and Faithfulneſs, and *Maſters* owe their *Servants* Maintenance and Encouragement; and generally all Men owe one another Love, Reſpect and Kindneſs.

Now theſe *Debts* cannot Balance one another, that as much as is left unpaid me by any Perſon, ſo much again I may refuſe to pay him. If a *Father* pay not his *Debt* to his *Child*, or a *Magiſtrate* to his *Subject*, or a *Maſter* to his *Servants*, they are not hereby acquitted of their Obligations, but ſtill Duty, Obedience and Faithfulneſs, is required from *Inferiors* to their *Superiors*: And ſo on the contrary, Love, Protection and Maintenance, is required from *Superiors* to their *Inferiors*, altho' peccant, as long as the Relation ſhall continue between them: And the Reaſon is, becauſe we are bound to theſe Duties; not only by the Obligations that mutual Offices lay upon us, but by God's expreſs Will and Command, and the Performance of the Relations that is betwixt us. And therefore tho' it be Lawful for Two Perſons that owe another an equal *Debt* of Money, or other ſuch like Things, to croſs out one *Debt* by the other, and ſo diſcount it between them, yet it is not ſo where the Duties that God requires are the *Debts* they owe to each other: For although others may fail in the Performance of what belongs to their part, yet thou oughteſt not to fail in thine; for thus to be even with Men is to run in *Debt* with God, and to make him thy *Creditor* who will certainly be thy *Revenger*.

And from hence it appears that this is the *Debt* that we are to forgive our *Debtors*, for we have no Power to releaſe them from their Obligation to Duty whilſt the Relation between us continues, no more than we have to reſcind the Laws of God, and of Nature.

Secondly, Some Men may ſtand indebted to others in a *Debt* of Satisfaction, as they owe them reparation on good Grounds for Wrongs and Injuries done againſt them; and this is the *Debt* which we are to forgive others.

Now as Wrongs and Injuries are of divers Sorts, ſo many divers Ways may others become *Debtors* to us.

And they are chiefly theſe *Six* that follow.

Firſt, By wronging us in our Perſons, either by unjuſt Violence, or by unjuſt Reſtraints. Thus the Perſecuting *Jews* were *Debtors* to the *Apoſtles* and *Diſciples* of Chriſt for often *Scourging* and *Impriſoning* them.

Secondly, By wronging us in our Place and Dignity, in the Office to which by God's Providence we are called. And ſo alſo thoſe that vilifie the Perſons, and detract from the Authority of thoſe that are ſet over them, become their *Debtors*. Thus *Aaron* and *Miriam* were *Debtors* unto *Moſes* for traducing the Authority that God had committed unto him, *Numb.* 12. 2.

Thirdly, By wronging us in our Friends and Relations; either by corrupting them; thus *Sechem* became a *Debtor* to *Jacob* and his *Sons* for violating his *Daughter* and their *Siſter*: Or elſe by deſtroying them; ſo *Herod* to the *Bethlemitiſh* Mothers by Murdering their Children.

Fourthly, By wronging us in our Right and Title, withholding from us what is our Due.

Fifthly, In our Poſſeſſions, when either by Force or Fraud they take from us what of Right belongs to us.

Sixthly, and Laſtly, in our Reputation and good Name, unjuſtly defaming us for thoſe Crimes which only their Malice hath invented and publiſhed againſt us.

To all theſe Wrongs we are ſubject, God permitting the Wickedneſs of Men a large Scope to vent itſelf, and affording us a large Field to exerciſe our Meekneſs and forgiving Temper in each of theſe.

But withal, if thoſe who in any of theſe, or any other, Particulars do Wrong their Brethren, are by the Sentence of our Saviour here pronounced *Debtors*, this ſhould Teach them to look upon themſelves as obliged to make Satisfaction according to the utmoſt of their Power and Ability.

Thou therefore who art Conſcious to thy ſelf of wronging any, either in their Perſons, or Dignities, or Relations, or Rights, or Poſſeſſions, or Reputations, tho' it be thy Duty to Confeſs it before God, and Humble thy ſelf to him for it, begging Mercy and Pardon at his Hands, yet this is not enough; for by one ſingle Offence thou haſt contracted a *double Debt*; thou ſtanded *indebted* to the

Juſtice of God for the Violation of his Law. But this is not all, but thou ſtandeſt in *Debt* unto Man likewiſe, by Injuries done againſt him, and both thy *Creditors* muſt be ſatisfied: God by the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt through thy Faith and Repentance, and Man by an Acknowledgment, Reparation and Reſtitution. The Apoſtle hath commanded us, *Rom.* 13. 8. *To owe no Man any Thing, but to Love one another.* And indeed Satisfaction for Wrongs is a neceſſary Part of Repentance; for he that truly Repents, doth really, and from his Heart, wiſh that the Wrong had never been done, and therefore will be ſure to do his utmoſt to annihilate the Fault, by giving the abuſed Party a Compenſation fully anſwerable to the Injury, and to the utmoſt of his Ability reſtore him into the ſame or a better Condition than that in which he was before he received the Wrong. Therefore,

Firſt, Art thou Conſcious to thy ſelf that thou haſt wronged any Man in his Credit and Reputation, either by raiſing or divulging Falſe and Slanderous Reports? Know that thou art his *Debtor*, and Juſtice obligeth thee to make him Satisfaction for that Injury, by wiping away thoſe Aſperſions, and licking away the Dirt with the ſame Tongue with which thou didſt beſpatter him; for if thou ſuffereſt the ſame Reports to run on which thou haſt ſet on Foot, all that ſhall relate them after thee multiply thy Guilt; and all the numerous Off-ſpring of Lies, which (through a certain Itch that Men have of ſpeaking Ill) will be ſoon propagated, ſhall all be charged upon thee; for of them all thou and the *Devil* art the Father.

Secondly, Art thou Conſcious thou haſt wronged thy Superiors, as *Magiſtrates*, *Miniſters*, *Parents*, or *Maſters*, in that Authority and Power that God hath given them over thee, by a Diſobedient Demeanour towards them? Know that thou art their *Debtor*, and it lyes upon thy Conſcience to give them due Satisfaction; which becauſe it cannot be done by recalling the Offences paſt, it muſt be done by an Humble Acknowledgment to them, deſiring their Pardon, and promiſing and endeavouring more ready Submiſſion for the future. So was the Caſe of *Aaron* and *Miriam* when they had affronted *Moſes*, and were convinced of the Wrong they had done him: *Aaron* makes his humble Acknowledgment, and begs Forgiveneſs, *Numb.* 12. 11. *Alas, my Lord, I beſeech thee lay not this Sin upon us, wherein we have done Fooliſhly, and wherein we have Sinned.* And ſo the *Prodigal* when he returned to his *Father* confeſſed his Diſobedience, *Luke* 15. 21. *Father, I have Sinned againſt Heaven and in thy Sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy Son.* Which tho' it be a *Parable*, yet teacheth us real and literal Duties in parallel Caſes.

Thirdly, Art thou Conſcious to thy ſelf that thou haſt wronged any one in their Right, either in withholding or taking from them what in Law and Equity belonged to them? Thou art their *Debtor*, and as ſuch art bound to make them Satisfaction, by making them a full and plenary Reſtitution; and that though the Thing wherein thou haſt wronged them be great or ſmall, more or leſs, yea, tho' it ſhould ſeemingly tend to the Loſs of thy Credit to acknowledge ſuch a Wrong, or viſibly tend to thy Impoveriſhing and Undoing to reſtore it. Nor is it enough when thy Conſcience checks thee for it, that thou confeſs the Sin to God, and prayeſt for Pardon at his Hands, but it behoveth thee to render unto Man what is his, and what thou unjuſtly keepeſt from him, whether it be his by thy Promiſe and Engagement, or by his former Title and Poſſeſſion. As thou loveſt thy Soul, and hopeſt for Pardon and Salvation, thou muſt make Reſtitution; and the Reaſon is, becauſe as long as thou detaineſt it ſo long thou continueſt in the Commiſſion of the ſame Sin; for an unjuſt Detainer and Poſſeſſion is a continued and prolonged Theft: And certainly our Repentance, be it what it will, can never be true and ſincere while we continue in the Sin we ſeem to repent of; and this Repentance not being true, Pardon ſhall never be granted thee, but as thou remaineſt a *Debtor* to Man, ſo thy *Debt* to God remains uncancell'd; and though Men may not Sue thee to recover their Right, becauſe this Sin ſometimes is ſo ſecretly carried on that it may not come to their Knowledge, yet Divine Juſtice will Sue thee for it, and Purſue thee to Eternal Condemnation.

But you may ſay, *What if thoſe whom we have wronged be ſince dead, how can any Reſtitution be made to them, or any Recompence reach them?*

I *Anſwer*, In this Caſe thou art bound to find out their Children or Relations, in whom they ſtill live, and to whom it is to be ſuppoſed that which thou haſt detained ſhould have deſcended, and to reſtore it unto them, with ample Satisfaction likewiſe for all the Prejudice they have ſuſtained in the mean Time for want of it.

But in Caſe none can be found to whom of Right it may belong, then God's Right

takes Place, as he is the *Univerſal Proprietor* of all Things; and thou oughteſt beſides what thou art obliged to give of thine own, to beſtow it in Works of *Charity* and *Piety*, which may promote his Glory, ſtill bewailing that thou haſt ſo long deferred the Reſtitution of it to the immediate Owners, till thou haſt made thy ſelf now incapable of doing it.

This perhaps will ſeem a very hard Leſſon to many; and doubtleſs it is ſo to a World ſo full of Rapine and Injuſtice: But I cannot, I dare not, make God's Commands lighter nor eaſier than he hath made them. And let this ſeem as hard as it will, yet this is the Rule of Chriſtianity, this is the inflexible Law of Juſtice, and without obſerving it you keep your ſelves from all hopes of obtaining Pardon by continuing in your Sin, which is utterly inconſiſtent with Repentance, and without Repentance there can be no Remiſſion nor Salvation.

And thus much for the Word *Debtors*, and what it intimates to us; namely, that we are bound to make Satisfaction for all the Wrongs and Injuries we have done to any others.

But then as there lyes this *Debt* on the part of the *Debtor*, ſo doth there likewiſe one great and important Duty on the part of the *Creditor*, and that is Forgiveneſs, *As we forgive our Debtors.* Now all Pardon and Forgiveneſs is a removing of the liableneſs unto Puniſhment under which we formerly lay: And therefore as when God pardons, he frees us from the Puniſhment due to our Offences; ſo when we pardon and forgive others, it muſt be for a meek forbearing to puniſh others who have offended us. And this conſiſts in Two Things.

Firſt, In the abſtaining from the outward Acts of private and perſonal Revenge, whether by Word, or by Deed, for both are expreſly forbidden us. If others have bent their Tongues againſt us, and *ſhot forth their Arrows, even cruel Words*, Chriſtianity obligeth us not to return them back again, much leſs (as is the common, but wicked, Practice of the moſt) with double Meaſure and Advantage: For if they have wronged us by their Actions, as well as by their Speeches, we may not aſſume to our ſelves a Liberty of Retribution, nor think that the Iniquity of their Proceeding will juſtifie the Equity of ours: For both of theſe ſee what the *Apoſtle* ſaith, 1 *Pet.* 3. 9. *Be Pitiful, be Courteous, not rendring Evil for Evil, nor Railing for Railing, but contrariwiſe Bleſſing, knowing that you are thereunto called that you ſhould inherit a Bleſſing.* And indeed there is nothing that the Goſpel and Laws of Chriſt do more inſtantly preſs upon us than that we would not requite Injuries with Injuries: This Prohibition is the proper Character of his *Doctrine*, and this the Practice of his *Diſciples*. Revenge is a wild, untam'd, Paſſion, that knows no Bounds nor Meaſures. And if we were permitted to carve it out for our ſelves we ſhould certainly exceed all Limits and Moderation: For Self-love, which is an immoderate Affection, would be made the whole Rule of our Vengeance: And becauſe we love our ſelves abundantly too well, we ſhould revenge every imaginary Wrong done us with too much Bitterneſs and Severity: And therefore God would not truſt the righting of our ſelves in our own Hands, knowing we would be too partial to our own Intereſt and Concerns, but hath aſſumed it to himſelf as the Prerogative of his own Crown, *Rom.* 12. 19. *Dearly Beloved, avenge not your ſelves, but rather give place unto Wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay ſaith the Lord.*

But you will ſay, *How then muſt we ſit down under every petulant Wrong that is done us, and by a ſtupid Patience invite Injuries, and tempt others to the Sport and Recreation of abuſing us; for every one will be ready to ſhoot his Arrows againſt a ſoft Butt, where they will ſtick; but who will care to ſhoot them againſt a Stone Wall, that will rebound them back in their Faces again?*

I Anſwer, It is indeed well worth the moſt ſerious and critical Conſideration rightly to ſtate how far we are bound to forgive Injuries and Wrongs, without requiring any Satisfaction for them. And becauſe the Reſolution of this ſeems to be of great Difficulty, as alſo of great Importance for the regulating of our Conſciences, I ſhall firſt lay down ſome Diſtinctions, and then ſome Concluſions drawn from them, for our more full Satisfaction in this Caſe.

Firſt, Thoſe Wrongs that are done thee, may either be forgiven by thee, or without doing any Wrong to others, or not.

Secondly, Thoſe Wrongs which thou may'ſt forgive without doing any Wrong to any other, are either Light and Tolerable Offences, or of great Concern and Conſequence. Now theſe Diſtinctions being premiſed, I ſay,

Firſt, In no Caſe whatſoever, be the Injury greater or leſs, is private Revenge to be allowed; but ſo far forth art thou bound to forgive it, as not to be both Judge and Executioner thy ſelf. This, I ſuppoſe, is clear and indubitable, that all Revenge is to be committed to the *Magiſtrate's Sword*, whom God hath armed with Authority and Commiſſion to be the *Avenger* to execute Wrath upon them that do Evil.

Secondly, Therefore if the Wrong thou haſt received be inſupportable, and tends either to the Ruin of thy Eſtate and neceſſary Subſiſtence, or to the irreparable Loſs of thy good Name, or it may be of thy Life, I know no Precept of Forgiveneſs, that doth in this Caſe forbid thee to ſeek Satisfaction; but it muſt be only in a publick and legal Way, otherwiſe in forgiving others we ſhould vaſtly injure our ſelves, and ſo pervert the Rule which commands us to love our Neighbours as our ſelves, and therefore our ſelves primarily as the Standard and Meaſure of our Love to them. Now if any one ſhould Attempt to take away that which is neceſſary to my Livelihood, or by falſe Accuſations ſhould go about to take away my Credit or my Life, certainly I owe ſo much Charity to my ſelf as to reſiſt him in it, and to require Satisfaction and Recompence for it; but ſtill this muſt be obſerved, that we ought not to right our ſelves according to our own private Diſcretion, but by the Sentence of the Law, and by the Authority of the Magiſtrate; for the Law is good, ſays the Apoſtle, if it be uſed lawfully. And therefore briefly in our ſeeking for our Right at Law there are theſe Three Things requiſite to make it a lawful and allowable Action.

Firſt, When that we Sue for is a Matter of Moment.

Secondly, When we have to do with Obſtinate and Stubborn Perſons, who will yield to nothing but what they are forc'd and compell'd to, and will not ſtand to the Award and Arbitration of private Chriſtians.

Thirdly, When we have beforehand uſed all likely and probable Means to prevail with thoſe who have done us wrong to make us neceſſary and fitting Satisfaction. Theſe Three Things muſt always concur to make our Suing even for publick Revenge a Thing lawful. And then in all ſuch Proceſſes we muſt be ſure to obſerve theſe Two Things.

Firſt, That we have Right on our Side, or at leaſt be verily perſwaded that we have it, and that the Perſon whom we proſecute doth us wrong. To ſeek for reaſonable Satisfaction in this Caſe is ſo far from being charged with Rancour and Malice, that it is rather an effect of Love to bring them to do us Right, whereby indeed they do greater Right to themſelves.

Secondly, We muſt be ſure to maintain Love to them, being willing and ready to do them any kind Offices whatſoever lyes in our Power. We muſt therefore ſeek our Right with much Meekneſs and Compaſſion. And when a Controverſie depends between us and any other, we ſhould not make it a Matter of Strife and Variance, but only put it to the Deciſion of the Law, to whom the Right belongs; and if it be found to belong to the other, and not to thy ſelf, thou oughteſt to be glad that Right is done, and to prefer the Intereſt of Juſtice before thine own, otherwiſe thou ſeekeſt Victory and not Equity. And this is the *Second Concluſion*, that for a great important Wrong thou mayeſt lawfully ſeek for Satisfaction.

Thirdly, If the Wrong done thee cannot be paſs'd by without the wronging of others thou mayeſt and oughteſt in this Caſe to require Satisfaction. As for inſtance, the Laws of the Land have ordained Death as the Puniſhment of *Robberies and Thefts* upon the Highway in the Day, and breaking open of Houſes in the Night; not ſo much for Revenge upon the Guilty, as for Example to others, and for Security to the Innocent. In this Caſe we ought not to paſs by any who have been deprehended thus unjuſtly invading our Poſſeſſions; eſpecially if we have juſt Cauſe to ſuſpect (as commonly it ſo happens) that our ſuffering them to eſcape will but embolden them to farther Outrages; for this were a Wrong done to the Nation and Community in which we live, and by ſuch an indiſcreet Pity and Compaſſion we bring upon our ſelves the Guilt of all the Crimes that they afterwards commit.

Fourthly, If the Wrongs that are done thee be tolerable, and thou mayeſt forgive them without wronging of others, the Laws of Chriſtianity obligeth thee ſo to do, without ſtanding upon any Satisfaction and Reparation for them. Our Saviour hath given us our Rule in this Caſe, *Matth.* 5. 40. *If any Man will Sue thee at Law, and take away thy Coat, let him have thy Cloak alſo:* Which teacheth us that about ſmall Matters, Things which we may eaſily be without, or eaſily procure, ſuch as a *Cloak*, or a *Coat*, we ſhould not be Contentious, but rather recede from our Right than

than vigorouſly purſue it with Strifes and Quarrels. And we ought to be ſo far from ſeeking Revenge for ſuch petty Injuries, as are not deſtructive nor greatly prejudicial to us, as to be willing rather to ſuffer a *Second*, than to revenge the *Firſt*.

For if all that can be called our Due and our Right muſt be exacted to the very utmoſt, what *Debt* is there that we are bound to forgive? Thoſe therefore are juſtly to be condemned that take every Advantage againſt their Neighbours; and although the Offence be but trivial, a paſſionate Word, or a ſudden and light Blow, that proceeded not from any propenſe and intended Malice, or the like, preſently purſue ſuch Advantages with rigour and extremity; and becauſe they may do it according to the Law of Man, regard not the Law of God, which commands us to forgive ſuch *Debtors*.

And this is the firſt Thing wherein Forgiveneſs doth conſiſt, in abſtaining from the outward Acts of *Revenge*, and exacting Satisfaction from thoſe who have wronged us, where we have ſeen how it is limited, and how to be obſerved.

Secondly, *Forgiving our Debtors* conſiſts in the inward Frame and Temper of our Hearts towards them, that we bear them no Malice, no Ill-will; but be as much in Charity with them as tho' they never had offended us. And this Forgiveneſs we are bound always to exerciſe, even in thoſe Caſes in which we may ſeek for Satisfaction; yea, altho' we could never proſecute them for Satisfaction, yet if we retain ſecret Grudgings and Animoſities in our Hearts againſt them, this is not an entire Forgiveneſs, and ſuch as will be acceptable to God; for he eſtimates the Heart, and not only the outward Actions, which may have many By-ends to ſway and direct them.

And thus I have, as briefly as I could, ſhewn you what *forgiving* of our *Debtors* is, and how far we are bound to do it.

And now, Chriſtians, I know you cannot but reflect ſeriouſly upon it, how hard and difficult a Duty this of Forgiveneſs is. It is that which the whole Intereſt of Fleſh and Blood, and all the Party that Paſſions and Affections can muſter up within us, will certainly rebel againſt this Doctrine. And alas, how ſeldom is it that Men can conquer themſelves ſo as to yield Obedience unto it really and cordially! Whence is it that all Places are ſo full of Railing and Reviling, Quarrels and Challenges, vexatious Contentions, and endleſs Suits, Warrants, Arreſts, Actions, and Impriſonments, and that upon ſlight Injuries and Provocations, but only that they have not learned this neceſſary Duty, *of forgiving one another?* Nay, many think it the Part of a high Spirit and generous Nature to make themſelves Terrible to thoſe whom they ſuppoſe have in the leaſt wronged and affronted them; and upon the leaſt Diſguſt fly out into all Extremities of Threatnings and Revenge; whereas in Truth this is but the Effect of a mean and ſordid Spirit. It is a Diſpoſition breathed into Mens Souls by the *Devil*, and demonſtrates, as a great deal of Pride, ſo a great deal of Vileneſs and Baſeneſs: The trueſt Gallantry and Generouſneſs is to imitate the Great God, in being Patient and Long-ſuffering, and ready to Pardon and Forgive. This is that heighth of Spirit, the true *Magnanimity and Greatneſs*; and if we would be perfect we muſt ſtoop; ſtoop did I ſay? Rather we muſt aſpire to this Heavenly Temper. And to excite unto this, conſider,

Firſt, That it is infinitely more honourable to forgive a Wrong than to revenge it: For,

Firſt, The one makes thee like to God, the other makes thee like the Devil: Yea, it is the chiefeſt Excellency by which God delights to be ſet forth. *I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy Tranſgreſſions*, Iſa. 43. 25. And *who is a God like unto thee, that pardons Iniquity?* Mic. 7. 18. Now how Glorious is it to imitate God in that which he himſelf counts his chiefeſt Glory? The Great Ones of the Earth imitate him in Power and Authority, and are ſome kind of glimmering Types of his Majeſty, who daunts and dazles all Approachers. But a poor, contemptible, Chriſtian, whoſe meanneſs lays him open and expoſed to all the Wrongs and Injuries of abuſive and inſulting Wretches, may repreſent a far greater Glory of God than that wherein *Princes* and *Monarchs* ſhine, even his Forbearance, Pity, Long-ſuffering, and Pardon: He may repreſent God ſitting upon his *Throne of Grace*, whereas the other repreſents him only ſitting upon his *Throne of Power*. Now God never Triumphs more in any Attribute than that of his Mercy: See with what fair Flouriſhes he writes his Name, Exod. 34. 6. *The Lord, the Lord God*; infinite in Power, that ſpreads forth the Heavens, and rangeth all the Hoſt of them; that hangs up the Earth in the midſt of the Air, and the whole World in the midſt of a vaſt and boundleſs Nothing; that pours

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out the great Deep, and meaſures it in the hollow of his Hand, that rides upon the Wings of the Wind, and makes the Clouds the Duſt of his Feet? No, but when he would diſplay himſelf in his greateſt Glory he doth it in a ſtill Voice, *The Lord God, Merciful and Gracious, Long-ſuffering, and abundant in Goodneſs and Truth, keeping Mercy for Thouſands, forgiving Iniquity, Tranſgreſſion and Sin.* Now, *O Chriſtian*, by forgiving thoſe who have wronged thee thou makeſt thy ſelf as a God unto them, and imitateſt him in that wherein he doth chiefly Glory.

Secondly, It is more honourable, becauſe to Pardon is always the Act of a Superior; it is a Prerogative of Royalty, and highly becomes the *Majeſty* of thoſe whom Chriſt hath made *Kings* as well as *Prieſts*; and certainly they cannot better declare themſelves ſuch than by iſſuing out Pardons. Think therefore with thy ſelf, *O Chriſtian*, when thou art wronged and affronted, think what an Advantage the Petulancies of froward Men do give thee to make thy ſelf their *Superior*; it is but pardoning them and thou aſcendeſt the Throne. And certainly they can never ſo much Triumph over thee by their Injuries, as thou may'ſt over them by Forgiveneſs. And ſo much for the Firſt Motive.

Secondly, Conſider how many Offences God hath forgiven thee, and this will be an effectual Motive to engage thee to forgive others. And here conſider who it is that hath forgiven thee, and what it is he hath forgiven thee.

Firſt, Conſider who it is that hath forgiven thee. And here conſider the infinite Diſtance that is between thee and him; he is the Sovereign Lord and Creator of all, in Compariſon with whom thou art nothing, yea, leſs than nothing. He ſtands in no need of thee, but whether thou live or die, periſh or art ſaved, he is the ſame God, for ever Bleſſed in himſelf. He is able to deſtroy thee every Moment, able to breathe thee back into thy Duſt, to look thee into Hell and Deſtruction. *They periſh at the rebuke of thy Countenance*, Pſalm 80. 16. And yet this High and Abſolute Lord at thy Entreaty freely forgives thee all thy *Debts*, altho' he might have gotten himſelf a great Renown in thy everlaſting Perdition, and might have ſet thee up as a flaming Monument of his Wrath, and inſcribed on the Victory and Triumph to the Glory of his everlaſting Vengeance. And ſhouldeſt not thou then, *O Man, O Worm*, forgive thy Fellow-ſervant, one of the ſame Mould and Materials with thy ſelf, one to whom perhaps thou art no way Superior, unleſs that he hath now given thee an Opportunity of pardoning him; one who poſſibly may hereafter be helpful unto thee, and in Agreement and Peace with whom thou mayeſt find much Comfort and Good to thy ſelf; ſhouldſt thou not much more forgive him? Certainly God may very well think thee unworthy of his Pardon, who art infinitely his Inferiour, if thou canſt not think thoſe worthy of thy Pardon, who in Nature are thy Equals.

Secondly, Conſider the *Wrongs* and *Debts* that God hath forgiven thee are infinitely greater than thoſe thou art to forgive unto Men: Their Offences againſt thee are but *Pence*, but thine againſt God are *Talents*. And as there is a vaſt Diſproportion in the *Nature* of the *Offences*, ſo is there likewiſe in the *Number* of them. The Servant in the *Parable*, whom his Lord forgave, owed him *Ten Thouſand Talents*; but his Fellow-ſervant, whom this Wretch would not forgive, owed him but *an Hundred Pence*, Matth. 18. So is it with us, our Sins againſt God, for the greatneſs of them, are *Talents*, for the number of them are *Ten Thouſand*; in every thing we do we wrong the Glory of God, and are continually offending him: But Men do not always wrong us; or if they did, yet the leaſt of our Offences againſt God is far more heinous than the greateſt of Mens can be againſt us; we cannot ſpeak of him, nor to him, but that by our unworthy and low Conceptions we revile him far more than any Man can do us by the moſt ſtudied and bitter Invectives. The leaſt irreverent Thought of God is a greater Injury againſt him than it would be againſt us if Men ſhould wound or ſtab us. And yet altho' thy Deeds be as great as *Talents*, and ſo numerous as *many Thouſand Talents*, yet thy Lord and Maſter frankly forgave thee All: And this ſhould, by all the Obligations of Ingenuity, conſtrain thee to forgive thy Fellow-ſervant ſo ſmall *Debts* as a *Hundred Pence*, when he hath not wherewithal to make thee Satisfaction. See how our Saviour preſſeth this in the forecited Place, *Mat.* 18. 32. *I forgave thee all that Debt thou owedſt me, becauſe thou deſiredſt me; and ſhouldſt not thou have had Compaſſion on thy Fellow-ſervant, as I had Pity on thee?* Certainly if ever thou accountedſt the pardoning Grace and Mercy of God Sweet and Precious, I will not ſay thou ſhouldſt be glad of Wrongs that thou mighteſt have occaſion to

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Pardon them; but yet certainly thou ſhould moſt cordially embrace all ſuch Occaſions, if it were but only to recommend the Excellency of thy Charity unto others, as Divine Love hath recommended its Fulneſs and Riches to thy deareſt Eſteem; and that's the Second. But,

Thirdly, Conſider the binding Particle in the Text, *Forgive us our Debts, as we forgive our Debtors.* And now think with thy ſelf that thou doſt but bind and ſeal the guilt of thy Sins upon thy own Soul, unleſs thou art willing and ready to forgive others. Thou who art revengeful and implacable, inſtead of praying pronounceſt the moſt direful and dreadful Curſe that can be againſt thy ſelf, and beggeſt of God no more to forgive thee, than thou doſt forgive thoſe that have offended thee; and ſo thy Prayer is not only turned into Sin, but into a Snare and Curſe, and thou paſſeſt upon thy ſelf the tremendous Sentence of thine own Eternal Damnation; for if thou prayeſt that God would forgive thee as thou forgiveſt others, thou either curſeſt thy ſelf, or elſe thou muſt forgive them.

Now this forgiving of others muſt have theſe Qualifications.

Firſt, It muſt be *unfeigned and cordial from thy very Heart and Soul*, for ſo thou wouldſt have God forgive thee. It is not enough to forbear *outward Revenge*, but thou muſt not harbour in thy Breaſt the leaſt Grudge or Prejudice againſt them. God forgives ſo as to forget; but if thou keepeſt *Malice* raked up in thy Heart till thou canſt find a fit Opportunity to vent it in *Revenges*, how canſt thou but expect that God likewiſe ſhould take his Advantage againſt thee, and when it would make moſt for the Glory of his Juſtice, break forth upon thee, and exerciſe his Vengeance in thy everlaſting Deſtruction?

Secondly, Thou art obliged likewiſe to *forgive freely without any Recompence or Satisfaction from others.* If the Injury be ſupportable, we ought not ſo much as expect or deſire Satisfaction; if it be otherwiſe, and yet the Perſons offending unable to make *Satisfaction*, we ought to *forgive* them without taking any unmerciful Revenge upon them; which is the wicked Cuſtom of many, who will caſt their inſufficient *Debtors* into Priſon, and there let them Starve and Rot; tho' by this Cruelty they cannot ſatisfie their *Debt*, but their Malice and Revenge.

Thirdly, We muſt *forgive others fully and compleatly*; for God doth ſo. He pardons our Sins ſo fully, that they are in his Account as if they had never been committed; and ſo muſt we pardon Injuries wholly and fully as if there had never been any done us. This the *Apoſtle* obſerves towards the *Galatians*, who were a People as injurious to his Miniſtry and Authority as any could be, and yet he forgives it ſo fully that he tells them, *Gal.* 4. 12. *Brethren, I beſeech you be as I am, for I am as you are; you have not injured me at all.* And to expreſs all this we muſt blot out the remembrance of all Wrongs, and be ready chearfully to take all Occaſions to do Good unto them; yea, not only to take them, but to ſeek them: This will be a plain Evidence that no *Leaven* of *Malice* or *Revenge* hath ſoured our Spirits.

Well then, to Sum and Cloſe up all; what is it thou canſt plead for *Revenge* which the Conſideration of God's pardoning thee will not abundantly Anſwer? Is it that the Wrongs that others have done thee are great and inſupportable? What, are they more intolerable than thy Sins againſt God? Is it that he is a vile and inferiour Perſon unto thee? How much more art thou ſo unto God? Is it that he hath often wronged thee? Are they not *Ten Thouſand Talents* that God hath forgiven thee? Is it that he will be emboldened to wrong and injure thee again? Poſſibly ſo, but thou art not certain of it: However, conſider how often thou haſt abuſed the Mercy of God to encourage thee in ſinning againſt him: Is it that Men will think thee Baſe and Cowardly if thou putteſt up ſuch Wrongs and Injuries; ſeek thou the Honour that cometh from God, and not the vain, fooliſh, Repute of Men. But is God indeed accounted Faithful in pardoning thee? Or doth he ſpare thee becauſe he dare not ſtrike thee? Certainly there is no Offence, nor Aggravation of any Offence, that can be pleaded as a Reaſon for *Revenge*, but the ſame may in a greater Meaſure, and in a higher Proportion, be pleaded why *God* ſhould *Revenge* himſelf upon thee; and yet if notwithſtanding this thou hopeſt for Pardon and Forgiveneſs from him, go then to thy Brother and do likewiſe.

And thus I have finiſhed the *Fifth Petition*; the Matter of which being of ſuch vaſt and important Conſequence I have expatiated beyond what my Firſt intended Method would allow. I ſhall Contract my ſelf in what remains, and keep my ſelf within the Limits of an *Expoſition.*

We are now come unto the *Sixth* and *Laſt Petition* of this moſt Excellent and Divine Prayer, which ſome divide into Two, making the other Negative, *Lead us not into Temptation*, and the other Poſitive, *But Deliver us from Evil.* But the Matter being not great whether they be One or Two I ſhall not contend about it.

And here before I come to ſpeak of the *Petition* itſelf I ſhall (as I have done in the former) ſpeak ſomething concerning the Reaſon and Wiſdom of its Order and Method.

And the only Thing that I ſhall remark, is, that whereas it immediately follows upon that *Petition*, wherein we beg the *Pardon of our Sins*, that we may not be *led into Temptation*, this ought to Teach us that it ſhould be our Care not only to ſeek for the Pardon of our paſt Sins, but to endeavour the Prevention of Sin for the future. And therefore, as when our Saviour cured the *Impotent Man* that had lain a long Time at the *Pool* of *Bethesda* without Relief he gives him this Caution, *John* 5. 14. *Behold thou art made whole, Sin no more, leſt a worſe Thing come unto thee*; ſo when God hath healed thoſe Mortal Wounds that Sin hath made in our Souls by his pardoning Grace, it highly concerns us, with our moſt exact Circumſpection, to beware that we be not again entangled in Guilt, and with our moſt fervent Affections to pray that we may not be expoſed to the *Fiery Darts* of the *Devil* to Wound us anew: For Relapſes and Recidivations are always moſt Dangerous and Fatal; and new Wounds received upon old Scars moſt difficult to be healed. And indeed without this preventing Grace of God all his pardoning Grace would be but in vain: It would be fruitleſs to forgive Sins, if God did not withal ſecure us for the future from running upon the Score with his Juſtice; for ſuch is the Force and Fraud of the *Tempter*, and the Corruption of our own Natures ſo prone to comply with whatſoever he offers and ſuggeſts to us, that did not God as well give us a Stock to live upon, as *forgive* us our former *Debts*, we ſhould ſoon run our ſelves as deep in Arrears as ever, and make our ſelves liable to be Seized on by Juſtice, and Condemned to the Infernal Priſon. And therefore that God's Grace in forgiving our Treſpaſſes may not be in vain, our Saviour hath Taught us to ſubjoin this Requeſt, *Lead us not into Temptation, but Deliver us from Evil.* And thus much for the *Connexion* of this *Petition* with the foregoing.

The *Petition* itſelf contains in it Two Branches, the one againſt *Temptations*, the other againſt the Prevalency of them: *Lead us not into Temptation*; ſuffer us not to be Aſſaulted and Buffetted by the Wicked One: Or if, O Lord, thou ſhalt in thy All-wiſe Counſel and Purpoſe permit us to be *Tempted*, yet Deliver us from the Evil to which we are *Tempted.* Let us endure *Temptations* as our Affliction, but let us not conſent to them, and make them our Sins.

It is the former of theſe that I ſhall *Firſt* ſpeak to, and therein I ſhall endeavour to ſhew,

Firſt, What *Temptations* are. And,

Secondly, How God may be ſaid to *Lead us into Temptation*, for that is ſuppoſed when we Pray he would not do ſo.

Firſt, What *Temptations* are. Temptation, according to the proper ſignification of the Word, is no other but a *Trial* or *Probation.* And this may be of Two Kinds, Exploratory, or Suaſory.

Firſt, There is an *Exploratory Temptation*, to ſearch out and to diſcover what is in Man, what his Graces and Corruptions are.

Secondly, There is a *Suaſory* or *Enticing Temptation*, that enclines the Will and Affections to cloſe with what is preſented to them.

Now in general we may obſerve Five ſeveral Sorts of *Temptations*, whereof ſome are of the former, others of the latter, kind.

Firſt, Some whereby one Man Tempts another.

Secondly, Some whereby we Tempt our ſelves.

Thirdly, Some whereby we Tempt God.

Fourthly, Some whereby God Tempts us. And,

Fifthly, Some whereby the Devil Tempts us.

Firſt, There are ſome *Temptations* whereby one Man Tempts another: And ſuch *Temptations* may be faultleſs, when they come only by Exploration, either to find out Mens great Excellencies: Thus the Queen of *Sheba* came to Tempt or to Prove *Solomon* with *hard Queſtions*, 2 Chron. 9. 1. to know whether his Wiſdom was anſwerable to the *Fame* that went of it: Or elſe to find out and diſcover their Rottenneſs and Hypocriſie; and thus the *Church* of *Epheſus* is commended for tempting or trying thoſe who ſaid they were Apoſtles, and were not, finding them to

o be Liars; but it is *Deviliſh* when it is either by *Suaſion* unto that which is *Evil*; hus the *Whoriſh Woman* tempted the *Young Fool*, Prov. 7. 18. Or with a Deſign to enrap or draw any into Danger; thus the *Old Prophet* tempted the *Young Prophet*, beng vext that God ſhould Honour him with ſo important a Meſſage whilſt he was paſſed by, and knowing that God would not ſuffer his Diſobedience to go unpuniſhed, 1 *Kings* 13. 18. And ſuch was the Wicked Plot laid by the *Phariſees*, Luke 20. 3. when they came and asked our Saviour whether *it was Lawful to pay Tribute to Cæſar or not?* Which if he had affirmed, would have leſſened his Repute among the People, and made them to fall off from him, becauſe they looked upon *Cæſar* but s an *Uſurper*, and groaned for Deliverance from the *Roman Yoke of Bondage*; yea, nd many of them hoped and expected that this would have been effected by our Saviour; or if he had denied, it would have brought him into Danger of his Life as an Enemy unto *Cæſar*, as afterwards he was accuſed to be.

Secondly, There is a Way of *Temptation* whereby a Man *tempts* himſelf, and that s Praiſe-worthy, when it is only by Exploration and Trial of his own Heart to find out what Graces and what Corruptions lodge there: Thus we find the Saints in *Scripture* often examining and proving themſelves; and every Chriſtian is commanded expreſly ſo to do, 2 *Cor.* 23 5. *Examine your ſelves whether you be in the Faith, prove your own ſelves*; but it is Wicked and Sinful in Two Caſes.

Firſt, Then a Man wickedly and ſinfully tempts himſelf, when by preſuming upon his own Strength he unneceſſarily runs into Danger, and ventures upon the next Occaſions of ſinning, for this is to come within the *Devil's Purlieus*; and if any ſuch be made his Prey they muſt thank their own Venturouſneſs and Folly.

Thus we *tempt* ourſelves to the Commiſſion of thoſe Sins which we beforehand know ſuch Company, or ſuch Employments, or other like Circumſtances, will prompt us to commit.

Secondly, A Man is ſaid to tempt himſelf, *when he is drawn aſide by his own Luſts, and enticed*, James 1. 14. For whenſoever any particular, ſinful, Object is propounded, it is this Luſt that excites the Heart to cloſe with it, and embrace it; this is indeed the great *Tempter*, without which other *Temptations* to Evil would be but weak and ineffectual; and though poſſibly they might prevail through the innate Liberty of our Wills, yet were it not for our Corruptions that cleave unto us, *Temptations* would have no more Advantage upon us than our own free Choice, and we might as eaſily reject as conſent unto them.

Thirdly, There is a *Temptation* by which we are ſaid to tempt God; for the *Scripture* frequently witneſſeth that God is *tempted* by us, *Exod.* 12. 2. *Moſes* chiding the People of *Iſrael*, expoſtulates with them, *Wherefore do you tempt the Lord?* And God himſelf complains of it, *Numb.* 10. 22. *That they had tempted him Ten times*, Mal. 3. 15. *Acts* 15. 10. and divers other Places. God is therefore tempted by us, not as we are unto Evil; for this the Apoſtle expreſly denies, *James* 1. 13. *God cannot be tempted to Evil.* But,

First, *Tempting of God* is ſometimes taken for a preſumptuous trying of the Providence of God, when we have no Warrant nor Neceſſity to caſt ourſelves upon the extraordinary Effects of it: Thus Chriſt anſwers the Devil, tempting him to precipitate himſelf from the *Pinacle* of the *Temple*, upon Confidence of an Extraordinary and Miraculous Support from God, *It is written*, ſays he, *Thou ſhalt not tempt the Lord thy God*, *Matth.* 4. 7. That is, we muſt not put God upon working of *Miracles* for our Deliverance, when we may keep ourſelves from the Danger in an ordinary providential Way.

Secondly, *Tempting* of God is oftentimes the ſame with provoking him; and therefore we find them put together, *Pſal.* 95. 8. *As in the Provocation, and in the Day of Temptation in the Wilderneſs:* And therefore look how God may be ſaid to be provoked, ſo he may be ſaid to be tempted; that is, both in Condeſcention to our Capacities, and in Reference to the Effects of it; for as a Man that is provoked is tempted to take Revenge upon him that hath done him the Injury, ſo God expreſſeth himſelf as provoked by our Sins, and tempted thereby to inflict Wrath and Vengeance upon us for them; but this is only Figuratively: As for any proper *Temptation* by any New Motion or Inclination wrought in the Divine Will by the Preſence of any New Object, ſo God cannot without Blaſphemy be ſaid to be tempted.

Fourthly, There is a *Temptation* whereby God is ſaid to tempt us; now this is always Holy and Juſt, and it is only a *Temptation* of *Trial* and *Probation*; ſometimes it is to diſcover his Peoples Graces; and ſo he tempted *Abraham*, that his Obe-

dience might be conspicuous, *Gen.* 22. 1. And sometimes to discover their Corruptions; so he tempted *Hezekiah*, 2 *Chron.* 32. 31. It is said *that God left him to try him, that he might know all that was in his Heart*; not but that God knew it before, for he is the Searcher of the Heart, and the Trier of the Reins; but that hereby it might be discovered, and made apparent, and that *Hezekiah* by the Discovery of his Pride and Corruption might take occasion to humble himself the more deeply before God.

Fifthly, There is a *Temptation* whereby *Satan* tempts us; yea, it is his proper Work, and that from which he hath his Name ὁ πειράζων the *Tempter*, 1 Thess. 3. 5. *Lest by some Means the Tempter might have tempted you.* Now as God *tempts* only by *Exploration* and *Trial*, so the *Devil* always *tempts* by *Suasion*, inducing us by all possible Arguments and Motives to the Commission of Sin, that he may have Advantage to accuse us of it, and hereafter to torment us for it.

Now among these many various Kinds of *Temptations* which have been reckoned up those *Temptations* which we are to pray against are of Three Sorts.

Such as proceed from our own Lusts and Corruptions, such as proceed from other Mens perswading us, either by Motives or Examples, unto that which is Evil; or lastly, such as proceed from the *Devil*; or else they may be reduced to these Two Heads, the Temptations which proceed from our own inbred Lusts and Corruptions, and those which proceed from the *Devil*; for indeed Wicked Men are but his Agents and Instruments when they tempt us to that which is Evil.

Now that our Saviour Christ should make it the great Matter and Object of our Prayers, to beg of God that we may not be *led into Temptation*, we may observe that it is a Christian's Duty not only to keep himself from Sin, but also to endeavour to keep himself from Temptation to Sin. For,

First, It is a very ill Sign of a Rotten and Carnal Heart to be content to lye under a *Temptation*, although it doth not consent to the Commission of Sin; it speaks some kind of Contentment and Complacency that we take in the Sin, when though we do not commit it, yet we are very well pleased to hear of it, and to entertain Motions and Sollicitations to it: This argues the Soul is not Chaste towards God, that though we cannot enjoy it in Commission, yet we will make some Recompence to ourselves for the Scrupulousness of our Consciences, by enjoying it in the Temptation.

Secondly, If you suffer a *Temptation* to lodge in your Hearts you are in imminent Danger of being prevailed upon by it; the *Temptation* will be continually gathering Strength, and your Opposition against it may in some Time flag, and grow remiss, and Objects, and Opportunities, and such like Advantages, may add such a force to the *Temptation*, as may hurry you away into the Commission of them, contrary to your former Resolutions; you can promise yourself no Safety, no, not from the Commission of the vilest Sins, as long as you suffer the *Temptation* to abide upon you: Puddles that stand long unmoved will at last breed filthy and venomous Creatures; so a *Temptation* that lyes long unmoved and undisturbed upon you will form some filthy and loathsome Sin or other: The only secure Way is to strike at the *Temptation* itself, to cut that off, and then there is no Danger to be feared from the Sin; this is the Course St. *Paul* took, 2 *Cor.* 12. 8. when he was *buffeted by a Messenger from Satan*, that is, assaulted by a *Temptation*, he not only takes Care that he might not yield to it, that was not altogether enough for a truly Gracious Soul to do, but he labours to be rid of the *Temptation* itself; *for this Thing I besought the Lord thrice*, that is, often, *that it might depart from me:* He prays not only that he may be kept from the Sin to which he was *tempted*, but that he might be freed also from the *Temptation* itself.

Thirdly, Consider that as all *Temptations* are dangerous, and that we have great Reason to fear lest in the End they should prevail upon us to commit the Sin to which we are *tempted*, so most of them are not only *Temptations*, but Sins also. Indeed there is a *Temptation* to Sin, which is a *Temptation* only, and no Sin, for so Christ himself was tempted, *Matth.* 4. 1. *He was led into the Wilderness to be tempted of the Devil*; and we read there with what *horrid Temptations* he was assaulted, even to worship the *Devil*, to distrust God, and to destroy himself; and yet as Black as these *Temptations* were they were only *Temptations*, and no Sins; for so the Apostle tells us, *Heb.* 4. 15. *He was tempted in all Things like unto us, Sin only excepted.* And such sometimes are the *Temptations* wherewith the *Devil* assaults the Children of God, horrid and hellish *Temptations*, even to deny the very Being of God, the Truth of the Scriptures, the Immortality of the Soul, Heaven and Hell, and such Bubblings of Blasphemies

against

againſt the very Fundamentals and Ground-works of Religion; and yet if we be watchful preſently to abhor and reject theſe Injections of *Satan*, and to caſt back into his Face theſe his *Fiery Darts*, which he ſhoots into our Souls, they are not our Sins, though they are our Troubles; but they ſhall be charged upon *Satan*, to whom of Right they do belong, we being but only Paſſive and Sufferers in them. But truly the moſt of our *Temptations* are Sins themſelves, and therefore we have great Reaſon and Need to pray againſt them, for they are Sins unto Sins; Sins as they are irregular and inordinate Motions of our Paſſions and Affections, and unto Sin as they tend to the bringing forth of farther Evil; and ſuch are all the *Temptations* of our inbred Luſts and Corruptions, when our Deſires and Affections ſtrongly encline us to thoſe *Objects* which God by his expreſs Law hath forbidden us: Were it not for theſe ſinful *Temptations*, the others, which are immediately injected by the *Devil*, would not have any great Advantage to prevail over us; for by reaſon of our Luſts and Corruptions our Hearts always ſtand open to let in the Devil; and were it not that theſe have ſeized on the Soul the Devil muſt have ſtood without; and though he had knock'd, yet would he have knock'd in vain; and therefore we ſee in his *Firſt Temptation* he deals all without Doors; there was no Natural Luſt in our *Firſt Parents* to befriend him, or to betray the Soul unto him: He ſhuts up himſelf therefore in the Body of a *Serpent*, queſtioning with *Eve* about God's Commands, perſwades her of the Deſirableneſs of the *Forbidden Fruit*, tells her that *God's Threatning* was rather to Fright them, than to Hurt them: But in all theſe Methods of Tempting *Satan* had no admiſſion into the Soul, becauſe Luſt as yet had taken no Poſſeſſion of it, but ever ſince the Corruption of our Natures, contracted by the Commiſſion of the firſt Offence, the *Devil* doth not ſtand to *tempt* us without Doors, but he enters boldly, as into the Houſe of his Old Friend *Concupiſcence*, nay, as into his own Houſe; for the Souls of Wicked Men are ſo called, *Matth.* 12. 29. He is by Luſt let into the inmoſt Receſſes and Retirements of the Heart, and can now propound *Objects* immediately to our *Fancies*, and by our *Fancies* darken our Underſtandings and Affections, and incline our Wills.

Again, our Natural Corruption, as it admits, ſo it entertains and cheriſheth, the *Temptations* of the *Devil*. A Spark of Fire, if there were no Fewel prepared for it to ſeize on, would preſently die and vaniſh; and ſo truly would *Satan's Temptations*, that are like ſo many Sparks of *Hell-fire* ſtruck by the Devil into our Souls, were it not for the prepared Fewel, the catching Tinder of our Luſts and Corruptions, theſe *Temptations* would ſoon go out and expire, and be like a *flaſh* of *Lightning*, that might poſſibly ſtartle us, but could not burn us. And thus, though our *Saviour Chriſt* was grievouſly *tempted*, yet it is ſaid, *Joh.* 14. 30. *The Prince of this World cometh, and hath nothing in me*; that is, the *Devil* could find no Sin or Corruption in him, and therefore could faſten none of his *Temptations* upon him.

Thus we ſee what abundant Reaſon there is for us to pray earneſtly againſt *Temptations*, whether they proceed from *Satan*, or from our own Corruptions; the one Sort being always Sins of themſelves, and both Sorts inclining and inducing us unto Sin.

But ſince *Satan* and our own Hearts prove *Tempters* unto us, ſome may poſſibly ask how ſhall we know when it is Satan that *tempts* us, and when the *Temptation* ariſeth from our own Corruptions?

The *Queſtion* is Nice and Difficult; yet becauſe it may tend to the Satisfaction of ſome who are Curious in obſerving the Workings of their own Souls, I Anſwer,

Firſt, There is but one kind of *Temptations* to Sin, which have not their Riſe and Original uſually from Luſt, and thoſe are *Temptations* to ſin againſt the Light and Law of Nature, as to the denying thoſe Truths that are clear and evident by Natural Reaſon and ſtrong Impreſſions on the Minds of Men, as the Being of a God, the Immortality of the Soul, future Rewards and Puniſhments, and the like; or elſe the doing of thoſe Things which are repugnant to the Dictates of the Law of Nature, as for a Man to be *tempted* to offer Violence to himſelf, and to deſtroy himſelf: It is very probable that ſuch *Temptations* have not their Riſe and Original from our Natural Corruptions, but are immediately darted into the Soul by the Devil; though indeed our Corruptions too often catch at them, and brood upon them, till they have from ſuch *horrid Temptations* as theſe conceived ſome *horrid* and *monſtrous* Sin in the Soul; ſuch Injections as theſe are Balls of *Wild-fire* kindled in *Hell*, and caſt into the Soul by the *Devil*; and are not our Sins any farther than they are entertained by us, and conſented unto.

Secondly, As for those *Temptations* which have a greater Compliance to the corrupt Tendency and Inclinations of our sinful Natures, which are not to such unnatural Sins as the other, it is very hard, if not impossible, to judge whether they originally proceed from *Satan*, or from our own inbred Corruptions; usually they both join together; if *Satan* first inject them, usually our Lusts nurse and foster them; or if our wicked Hearts be the first *Parents* of them, usually *Satan* inforceth them, and by additional Recruits of *Temptations* makes them more prevalent and permanent, and by fair and specious Colours makes them more plausible and taking; and certainly there being such an innumerable Company of *Evil Spirits*, that notwithstanding the great Work and Employment they have to do in the World, yet *Hell* could spare a *whole Legion* of them to Garrison in one possessed Man, we may not doubt ut that they are continually busie, prying into every one of our Tempers. And as long Experience hath made them very Sagacious in guessing at the first Motions of our Hearts, by the Alterations they find in our Fancies, or the Humours of our Bodies, of which they have an exact Intuitive Knowledge; so when by such visible Symptoms they perceive Corruption stirring in us, they presently join Issue with it, and by all their Art and Policy inflame our Lusts by adding New Fewel to them, improving the first Motions and imperfect Embrio's of Wickedness till they arrive to their full Strength and Stature.

Thus if by any *Symptoms* the *Devil* can perceive Wrath and Malice boiling within our Breast, he will presently move the Tongue to give it vent in Opprobrious and Reviling Speeches, and these he will second with injurious and violent Actions. So St. *James* tells us, *James* 3. 6. *The Tongue setteth on fire the Course of Nature, and is itself set on fire of Hell.* But as a Holy Man, I think St. *Austin*, being demanded by a curious Questionist concerning the Origin of Evil, how Sin first got into the World? Replied, It was not so necessary to discourse how it came into the World as to consider how we might get it out again: So truly it is not so necessary critically to enquire whence *Temptations* come into the Heart, as how they may be got out of it. And to this I may give the same *Answer* that Christ did to his *Disciples*, Matth. 17. 21. *This Kind goeth not out but by Fasting and Prayer.* We ought fervently to pray that God would rebuke the Wicked One, and cause him to depart from us, that he would by his Grace suppress all the Tumultuous Rebellions of our own Lusts and Passions, and neither lead us into *Temptation*, nor leave us under *Temptation.*

And thus I have done with the *First General* in this *Petition*, shewing you what *Temptations* are.

The Second is to shew you how God may be said to lead Men into *Temptation*; for it may seem very strange that the Holy and Righteous God should have a Hand in *Tempting* of Men, which is so proper a Work of the *Devil*, and of our own Corruptions.

But the different Manner of God's *leading us into Temptation*, and *Satan's Tempting* us, will sufficiently justifie him from the least Aspersion or Suspicion of being the Author of Sin. And therefore,

First, God is said to *lead us into Temptation* when he providentially presents outward *Objects* and Occasions, which do solicite and draw forth our inward Corruptions. When the *Temptation* of our inward Lusts meet with external Inducements that are cast in a Man's Way by God's Providence, then as we may be said to *Tempt* him, so God may be said to *lead us into Temptation.* Thus *Achan* and *Judas* were no doubt of it covetous Wretches before the one stole the *Wedge of Gold*, and the other *betrayed his Master*; but the *Temptations* of those Lusts were not as yet come to their Strength, till the glittering of the *Wedge of Gold*, and the *proffered Reward* of the *High Priest*, raised their Covetousness to its full heighth. Indeed we find the Propensions of our wicked Hearts strongly bent towards Sin at all Times, even then when we have no *external Objects* propounded to excite them; but when these inward Inclinations do meet with outward Enforcements, as alluring *Objects*, fit Opportunities, strong Perswasions from others, inducing Examples, or the like, the *Temptation* then grows headstrong and wild to purpose; and if Grace doth not rein it in with a hard Hand it will certainly hurry us into the Commission of that Sin which hath so many Advantages to commend it to the Soul. Now all these *Objective Temptations* God may most righteously administer to our Lusts in the Common Course of his *Providence*, and we often see he doth so; for there is no outward Act of Sin committed in the World but the Sinner took Occasion from some *Providence* of God to perpetrate it. A *Thief* steals not any Thing but what *God's Providence* brings in his Way. The *Murderer* slays not any Man but whom

Providence

Providence offers to his Sword and Violence; and all the Villainy that ever was acted in the World was by a *Providence*, tendring the Lusts of Men *Objects* and *Opportunities*, without which Sin conceived in us could not be brought to Light.

And therefore when we pray that God would not *lead us into Temptation*, we pray that God by his *Providence* would so order and dispose all the Occurrences of our Lives, so as not to lay before us those *Objects*, nor proffer us those *Occasions*, which might either excite or draw forth our inbred Corruptions. And indeed this is a most necessary Petition to be preferred to the Throne of Grace; for we cannot but be conscious to ourselves how hard a Thing it is to keep our Hearts from sinful Desires when we encounter *Objects* to excite them, and how hard a Thing it is to keep ourselves from sinful Actions when once sinful Desires are excited in us.

Secondly, God is said to *lead us into Temptation* when he withdraws the Influences of his Grace and Spirit from us, and leaves us under the Power of a *Temptation*. Those very *Temptations* which when assisted by Divine Grace we could easily resist and subdue, will, when God withdraws himself from us, sadly prevail over us, and shamefully foil us. Thus it is said that God left *Hezekiah* to *try or to tempt him*, 2 Chron. 32. 31. And indeed since our corrupt Natures are of themselves prone only unto Evil, if God withdraw the Auxiliaries of his Grace, (as for many Righteous Causes he often doth,) every *Temptation* that assaults us will ravish our Consciences, and captivate our Souls: For all the Security that we have from the committing of the most flagitious Crimes is wholly from God's Grace, either restraining or renewing us; the former holding us back from the outward Act of Sin, the latter weakning and destroying the inward Habit and Principle of Sin: And therefore when we pray that God would not *lead us into Temptation*, we beg that he would still continue the Influences of his Grace unto us, and by them excite and quicken our Graces, that his Grace may not forsake us, nor our Grace fail us; that we may not be exposed to the Assaults of Spiritual Enemies, Naked and Defenceless, to become a sure and easie Prey unto them.

Thirdly, God is said to *lead Men into Temptation* when he permits *Satan*, and Wicked Men, his Instruments, to *tempt* us; yea, sometimes he gives them Commission as well as Permission, and appoints and sends them to do it. Thus we find in the Case of *Ahab*, 1 Kings 22. 24. *Who shall perswade* Ahab *that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-Gilead?* And an *Evil Spirit* steps forth and very officiously accepts of the Employment, as most congruous to so malicious a Nature, and God sends him with his Commission in the 22d Verse, *Thou shalt perswade him, and prevail; go forth, and do so*; and so he did. And as God doth sometimes thus send the *Tempter*, and give him Commission to assault and prevail over Wicked and Ungodly Persons, their former Sins provoking him to punish them with farther Impieties, so whensoever any of us are *Tempted* God doth at least permit *Satan* to sift and winnow us, sometimes to his own Defeat, but too often to ours. And in this Sense there is no *Temptation* that befals us but God leads us into it; and therefore it is very observable, that whereas in 1 *Chron.* 21. 1. it is said that *Satan provoked* David *to Number* Israel, yet in 2 *Sam.* 24. 1. it is said *the Lord moved* David *against* Israel *to say, Go Number* Israel *and* Judah. Here one and the same *Temptation* is attributed both to God and to the *Devil*; but it must be understood under a diverse Habitude and Respect; *Satan* Tempted him effectively, God only permissively; and thus God may be said to *lead every Man into Temptation* whom he suffers to be Tempted: When therefore we pray that God would *not lead us into Temptation*, we pray that he would not permit the *Devil* to approach near unto us, nor to cast his *Fiery Darts* at us; but that he would put a Hook into the Nose of that great *Leviathan*, and so bridle and restrain his Fury that he may not be able to assault us. These now are all the Ways that I know of how God may be said *to lead Men into Temptation*; either by offering them Objects and Opportunities by his Providence, which may correspond with their inward Lusts and Corruptions, and as it were entice, and call them forth; or else by permitting *Satan* and Wicked Men to tempt us: Or lastly, by withdrawing from us the Influences of his Grace and Holy Spirit, and leaving us under the Power of *Temptations* when they do assault us; but for any proper, effective, or perswasive, *Tempting* of Men to Sin, this is infinitely abhorrent to his Pure and Holy Nature, in which Sense St. *James* tells us, *James* 1. 13. *Let no Man say when he is tempted that he is tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted to Evil, neither tempteth he any Man.* But though God cannot thus *tempt* any Man without a Stain to his Infinite Purity and Holiness, yet he may *lead Men into Temptation*, either providentially or permissively, or by substracting his Grace whereby they should stand;

ſtand; and yet at laſt juſtly puniſheth them for ſinning: And this is no Unrighteous Thing with God, for he lays no Conſtraint upon the Freedom of our Wills, but we ſin freely, and of our own accord.

Now although God can eaſily keep us from all Aſſaults and Attempts of our Spiritual Enemies, yet he permits us to be *tempted* by them for moſt Wiſe and Holy Ends. As,

Firſt, He leaves theſe *Canaanites* to moleſt us, to teach us the *Wars of the Lord*, to make us continually watchful, to breathe and exerciſe our Graces, to adminiſter Matter for our Conqueſt, and Occaſion for our Crown and Triumph.

Secondly, To convince us of our own utter Inability to ſtand of ourſelves without his Help and Aſſiſtance; thereby engaging us to depend upon his Arm, and to call for Divine Supplies and Succours.

Thirdly, To Glorifie both his Juſtice and Mercy. His Juſtice in giving up Wicked Men to the Rage of Temptations, to be hurried by them from Sin to Sin, till at laſt they put an End to the Succeſſion of their Sins in Eternal Damnation; and his Mercy in ſuccouring of, and ſupporting and delivering, his Children out of all their *Temptations*. And therefore when St. *Paul* prayed to be freed from the Buffetings of the Meſſenger of *Satan*, God anſwers him, *My Grace is ſufficient for thee, my Strength is made Perfect in Weakneſs*, 2 *Cor.* 12. 19. When the *Devil* preſumes he hath ſo well laid his *Temptations* that it is impoſſible for the People of God to eſcape his Snares, yet God finds a Way for their Deliverance out of them all; for God holds the great *Tempter* under a powerful Reſtraint, ſo that he cannot touch us beyond Permiſſion and Commiſſion. And therefore that Place in *Rev.* 2. 10. is very Remarkable to this Purpoſe, *Fear none of thoſe Things that thou ſhalt ſuffer; behold, the Devil ſhall caſt ſome of you into Priſon, that you may be tried, and you ſhall have Tribulation Ten Days.* How many Reſtraints are here mentioned to be put upon that malicious Spirit? He ſhall *caſt into Priſon*, whereas he would willingly caſt into *Hell*, or at leaſt into the Grave: It ſhall be but *ſome of you*, whereas his Spight and Rage is againſt all the Children of God; and it ſhall be *but Ten Days*, but for a ſhort Time neither; the Place, the Number, the Time, all limitted, and that with ſuch a Reſtraint that all the Pride and Rage of the *Devil* ſhall not be able to exceed it.

Fourthly, God permits his own Children to be *tempted*, that by their Victory over *Temptations* he may confound the Malice of *Satan*, and commend the Excellency of his own Ways and Service; this highly honours God, and ſhames the *Malice* of the *Devil*, when we are neither terrified by Sufferings, nor induced by the Pleaſures of Sin from the Courſe of our Obedience; for this evidently declares that we are True and Loyal to our Great *Sovereign*: That we more fear his Eternal Wrath and Diſpleaſure than thoſe light Afflictions that are but for a Moment; and that we find more true Joy and ſolid Delight in his Service than in the Ways of Sin and Vanity; and therefore God calls us forth as his Champions, puts his Cauſe in our Hands, and bids us reſiſt manfully for the Credit and Honour of Piety, and then lets looſe *Satan* upon us, whom if we can but Conquer, (which certainly we ſhall do if we but ſeriouſly reſolve it,) God and Angels, who from the *Theatre* of *Heaven* are Spectators of the Combat, give us their Applauſe, and will hereafter give us our Crown: See how God Glories over this baffled *Devil*, and upbraids him with the Victorious Conſtancy of his Servant *Job*; God had before commended the Integrity of *Job*, Chap. 1. 8. *Haſt thou conſidered my Servant* Job, *that there is none like him upon the Earth, a Perfect and Upright Man, one that feareth God, and eſcheweth Evil?* To this that *Malicious Spirit* ſullenly replies, *Doth* Job *fear God for Nought?* Thou needeſt not Glory in his ready Service and Obedience when he is ſo well paid for it; no wonder he is ſo Pious and Devout when he gets ſo well by it; but leave him a while to me, to take from him thoſe Inducements that make him ſo Pious and Holy, and I will undertake that even this Perfect and Upright Man ſhall *curſe thee even to thy Face*; God accepts the Challenge on his Servant's behalf, *Satan* and *Job* enter the Liſt, the *Devil* buffets him ſore, deſtroys all his Cattel, ruins his Houſe, kills his Children; yet *Job* ſhrinks not for all this, but Wreſtles naked with his Adverſary, and foils him: See now how God rejoices at his Champion's Victory, and upbraids the *Devil* with his ſhameful Overthrow, Ch. 2. 3. *Haſt thou conſidered my Servant* Job, *that there is none like him in the Earth, a Perfect and an Upright Man, one that feareth God, and eſcheweth Evil.* God repeats the ſame Character and Commendation which he had before given him, Glorying as it were over *Satan* that *Job* had made his Words good; *yea, and ſtill he holds faſt his Integrity, although thou moveſt me againſt him to deſtroy him without Cauſe.* So truly

ly whenſoever God ſuffers us to be *tempted*, it is that by our Conqueſt he might bring Honour to himſelf, and Credit to Piety and Religion: For this makes it appear that we ſee ſo much Excellency in the Ways of God, that nothing in the World, whether Croſſes or Crowns, Thorns or Thrones, Pains or Pleaſures, Loſs or Profit, can in the leaſt perſwade us to baulk or forſake them; and in ſuch an Heroick *Champion* as this God himſelf Glories and Triumphs.

And thus I have finiſhed the former Part of this *Petition*, *Lead us not into Temptation*, the next follows, *But deliver us from Evil.*

Now here, before I come to ſpeak of the Words themſelves, let us obſerve their Connexion with, and Dependance upon, the foregoing Words; for whereas our Saviour hath taught us to pray with this Adverſative Particle, *And lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil*, this may inſtruct us, that the beſt Security againſt Sin is to be ſecured againſt *Temptations* unto Sin; for though it be no Excuſe that we are violently tempted to Sin, when we yield to the Commiſſion of it, yet withal it too often happens, that thoſe whom God *leads into Temptation*, and engageth amidſt the preſs of their Enemies, it too often happens that they come off Bleeding and Wounded. Yet,

Firſt, It is no Excuſe for ſinning, becauſe no *Temptation* is a *Compulſion*; the *Devil* can only perſwade, he cannot conſtrain, us to Sin; God may let him into the Fancy, and ſuffer him to Paint upon that the moſt Alluring Images that Vice can be repreſented in, but when he hath done all this it is ſtill our own Choice that makes us like what his Pencil hath drawn there; and in this lyes a great Difference between God's Operations upon us by his Grace, and Satan's upon his Suggeſtions; in that God hath an immediate Acceſs to the very elicite Acts of our Wills and Underſtandings; and can, and doth, by his Spirit actuate them by an immediate Energy, and call forth, not only by, but to, their Objects; but now theſe are ſuch Sacred Apartments of the Soul that the *Devil* hath no *Key* to them: And therefore his Method is to bribe the Attendants on theſe Chief Powers of the Soul, the *Fancy* and the *Paſſions*, to which he hath Admiſſion through the near Dependance they have upon material *Organs*, and by theſe to ſend in Meſſages, and offer Propoſals to it, which yet, if it be not baſely Falſe and Treacherous to its God, it may reject and diſdain. If the *Devil* could force Men, he would likewiſe juſtifie them, for that can be no Sin where there is no Liberty: The ſame *Temptation* which compels to any Action, would likewiſe make that Action to be no Tranſgreſſion, becauſe Laws are not given but upon Suppoſition of Freedom; and therefore whoſoever ſins upon a *Temptation*, ſins not meerly becauſe he was *tempted*, but becauſe he would ſin; and though the Sin had not been committed without the *Temptation*, yet the *Devil* can be no farther chargable with it than only becauſe his Malice prompts him to perſwade us: Our own Wills are the moſt dangerous *Devils*, freely embracing the Profers of *Satan*, and conſenting to our own Deſtruction, and whilſt we conſent to that upon which God hath threatned and entailed it: And therefore when thou ſinneſt, think not to lay the Fault upon *Satan*, or his *Evil Inſtruments*, whom he makes uſe of in *tempting*; for though it be their Fault and Guilt to *tempt*, yet it is not only thine to yield; and God will not condemn thee for being *tempted*, which thou couldſt not help, but for yielding and conſenting, which is thine own free Act, and thine own Sin alſo; thou, who art drawn away by thy lewd Companions to abuſe thy ſelf, and diſhonour thy Body by *Riot* and *Luxury*, or to break God's Laws and Man's by Theft, or any other condemned Crimes, though thou haſt a great deal of reaſon to hate them, yet haſt thou infinitely more reaſon to hate and abhor thy ſelf; they can but perſwade, they cannot compel thee; yea, if they ſhould threaten thee with *Death* itſelf, unleſs thou conſenteſt, yet thou lyeſt under no Force, but ſinneſt freely, and upon very weak Motives doſt deſtroy and damn thy own Soul, ſince all Motives inducing to Sin muſt be accounted weak when God hath over-balanced them with the Promiſe of everlaſting Life, and the Threatning of everlaſting Death: And therefore we find God as juſtly as frequently in *Scripture* charging Mens Perdition upon themſelves, and laying the Blood of their Souls upon the ſtubborn Reſolvedneſs of their own Wills, *Hoſea* 13. 9. *O* Iſrael, *thou haſt deſtroyed thy ſelf.* John 5. 40. *Ye will not come unto me that you may have Life.* Matth. 23. 37. *O* Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, *how often would I have gathered you, as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her Wings, and you would not?* And therefore let your *Temptations* be what they will, yet the Sin and Guilt is ſtill your own, if as you are led into *Temptations*, ſo *Temptations* lead you into Sin.

Secondly,

Secondly, Tho' it be no Excuſe for ſinning, yet it is too ſeldom ſeen, that thoſe who are brought into *Temptation*, are brought off again without contracting ſome Guilt on their *Conſciences* by it. For ſince there is ſo great a Correſpondence between *Temptations* and our *Corruptions*, it would be as ſtrange for a Man that hath been hotly aſſaulted by them to have no Impreſſion made upon him, as to carry Fire in his Boſom and his Cloaths not be burnt; yea, almoſt as *Miraculous* as to walk ſecure in the midſt of a *Fiery Furnace* untouch'd by the Flames. There is a ſtrong Sympathy between our corrupt Hearts and *Satan*'s Temptations; and as it is with Strings tuned to *Uniſons*, upon the Motion of the one the other alſo will move and vibrate; ſo is it here, the Heart vibrates, and is ſecretly affected upon the firſt Motion of a *Temptation* with ſome Paſſion of Delight and Complacency towards that ſinful Object; and there is a kind of Liking and Approbation of it in the very firſt Conception of our Thoughts, before they are yet deliberated and digeſted; ſo that it is almoſt as impoſſible for Temptations to aſſault us without leaving ſome Guilt and Pollution behind them, as it is for *Objects* rightly preſented to a *Mirror* to make no Impreſſion of their Image upon it; for though the Temptation ſhould produce nothing but hovering and fleeting *Idea*'s, and ſome imperfect Shadows of Deſires and Affections in us, which yet are check'd and ſcattered as ſoon as ever they begin to form themſelves, yet there is not the thinneſt Film of a ſinful Thought, nor the leaſt breathing of a ſinful Deſire, but the Holy Law of God and his Word, which reacheth to the dividing aſunder of the Soul and Spirit, and is a Judge and a Diſcerner of the Thoughts and Intents of the Heart, doth ſtrictly prohibit and condemn theſe callow, unfledg'd, Motions of our Hearts to be Concupiſcence, the ſad Effects of *Original Sin*, and the fruitful Cauſe of all Actual.

And therefore if we would be *delivered from Evil*, we have very great Cauſe firſt to pray that we be not *led into Temptation*; for ſome *Temptations* do almoſt ſo inſeparably follow one upon another, that this will be our beſt Security againſt thoſe ſecret Deſires and Wouldings, and firſt Smatterings and Rudiments of Wickedneſs, which elſe the Compliance of our corrupt Hearts with *Satan*'s *Temptations* will certainly betray us unto. Hence it is that when God in *Scripture* frequently dehorts us from Sin, he extends the Prohibition to all *Temptations* and *Occaſions* of ſinning; yea, thoſe Things which in themſelves conſidered may be lawfully and innocently done by us, yet becauſe they may prove Snares and *Temptations* to us, we muſt as carefully refrain from them as we earneſtly deſire to keep ourſelves far from Sin: And therefore it ſufficeth not the *Wiſe Man* to command, *If Sinners entice conſent thou not*, Prov. 1. 10. but that thou mayeſt be ſure not to conſent, thou muſt order thy Actions and Converſe ſo as that thou mayeſt not be enticed by them: In the 15th *Verſe* ſays he, *Walk not thou in the Way with them, refrain thy Feet from their Path:* And ſo we have the ſame Counſel given us by him in another *Chapter*, that we may not be inveagled by the Allurements of a ſtrange Woman, be ſure to avoid all Occaſions thereof, *Prov.* 5. 8. *Remove thy Way far from her, come not near the Door of her Houſe.* And again, *Prov.* 4. 14, 15. *Enter not into the Path of the Wicked, and go not in the Way of Evil Men, avoid it, paſs not by it, turn from it, paſs away.* Here is Earneſtneſs even to a *Tautology*, as ſome may prophanely think, but *Sacred Writ* can admit of no ſuch Thing; but there are ſo many Expreſſions heaped up, ſignifying the ſame Thing only, to denote how great the Neceſſity of avoiding *Temptations* and *Occaſions* to Evil is to thoſe who deſire to avoid the Sin: We have Treacherous and Deceitful Hearts within us, that have often betrayed us when we have truſted them; and I beſeech you call to mind when you have emboldned yourſelves to venture upon *Temptations* and ſinful *Occaſions*, being confident and fully reſolved not to yield to them; have you not often been ſurprized, and led away captive, contrary to your Hopes, contrary to your Intentions, contrary to your Reſolutions, contrary to the vain Confidences with which you were before poſſeſs'd? Methinks former Experience ſhould make you cautious never again to truſt thoſe Hearts with ſuch Opportunities and Advantages for Wickedneſs, ſince they have been ſo often already Treacherous and Deceitful to us; venture them not therefore upon *Temptations*, for what Security have you that a ſinful Heart will not ſin, yea, and betray you to commit thoſe great Abominations which poſſibly you cannot now think of without Horrour and Shivering.

And thus much I thought fit to note to you from the Connexion of this Part of the *Petition* with the former, *Lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil.*

In the Words themſelves we have Two Things chiefly conſiderable, the Thing that we pray againſt, and the Perſon to whom we pray; that which we pray againſt is

is *Evil*, that we may be *delivered from it*; the Perſon to whom we pray is God our Heavenly Father.

That which we pray againſt is *Evil*. Some limit this Word *Evil* only unto *Satan*, making the Senſe to be deliver us from the *Evil One*, founding this Interpretation upon that *Article* that is joined with the Original Word πονηρὸς; but this is not always diſcretive, but ſometimes indefinite; as for Inſtance *Matth.* 12. 35. and many other Places. And therefore conſidering the Comprehenſiveneſs of this Prayer, we ought to allow the Word a large Extent, and to comprehend under it,

Firſt, *Satan*, whoſe Proper *Stile* and *Epithete* it is to be called *the Evil One*; and ſo we find this *Black Title* given him in *Scripture*, Matth. 13. 19. *The Wicked One cometh and ſnatcheth away that which was ſown.* And 1 John 2. 13, 19. *You have overcome the Wicked One.* He is the Wicked One eminently and ſingularly; he is the Chief Author of *Evil*, his *Temptations* are all unto *Evil*, his Delight is only in *Evil*, he is the Father of all thoſe that do *Evil*, and therefore this is the moſt Proper and Significant Character of the *Devil*; but yet it is alſo aſcribed unto Men according to their Reſemblance of him.

Secondly, All other *Evils* are here meant, whether they be of Sin or Sorrow, whether they be Tranſgreſſions or Puniſhments, and that either Temporal Puniſhments in thoſe Judgments which God afflicts upon Sinners here, or Eternal Judgments, ſuch as he hath threatned to inflict upon them hereafter. From all theſe we pray to be deliver'd; but the greateſt of all theſe is Sin. For,

Firſt, It is greateſt in the Nature of it, as being the only Thing that is contrary to the greateſt Good, even God; for in all other Things elſe in the World there is ſomething of Good, even as much as derived and participated of God: And ſo the very *Devils* themſelves have a *Metaphyſical* Goodneſs in them, as they are Creatures, and have received their Beings and Powers from God, who is the Author of nothing that is *Evil*. But *Sin* hath not the leaſt Ray or Footſteps of Goodneſs in it, but is only Defect and Irregularity; and that alone which as his Soul always hates, ſo his Hands never made.

Secondly, It is the greateſt *Evil* in the Effects and Conſequences of it; it once turn'd Glorious *Angels* into Hideous *Devils*, and tumbled them down from Heaven to Hell, filled the World with Woes and Plagues, brought Death and Diſeaſes, and a Vaſt and Endleſs Sum of Miſeries, into it; it torments and terrifies the Conſcience, kindles Hell-flames, expoſes the Soul to the Eternal and Direful Revenges of the Great God, and is ſo perfectly and only *Evil*, that the worſt of Things here, were they free from the Contagion of *Sin*, would be excellent and amiable.

To pray therefore againſt the *Evil* of *Sin*, is to pray againſt all other *Evils* whatſoever; for the *Devil*, the *Evil One*, cannot hurt us but by *Sin*: And no other *Evil* can befal us but for *Sin*, God inflicting them as the due Guerdon and Reward of our Tranſgreſſions. *Sin* therefore being the Chief and Principal *Evil*, and all others but Retainers to it, I ſhall at preſent ſpeak only of God's delivering us from *Sin*.

Now as there are Two Things in *Sin* which make it ſo exceeding *Evil*, the Guilt of it whereby it damns, and the Filth of it whereby it pollutes, the Soul, ſo God hath Two Ways to deliver us from it.

Firſt, By removing the Guilt already contracted, which he doth in juſtifying and pardoning the Sinner.

Secondly, By preventing us from falling into the Filth and Pollution of it for the future.

Of the Pardon of Sin I have already largely treated in the foregoing Petition: The Deliverance from Evil, which we here pray for, is by preventing it for the future. And whereas we are taught by our *Saviour* to beg this of God, our Heavenly Father, we may obſerve that it is only the Almighty Power of God that can keep us from Sin; and that will appear if we conſider either our Enemies or our ſelves.

Firſt, Conſider the Mighty Advantages that our great Enemy the *Devil* hath againſt us: As he is a Spirit he is both Powerful and Subtil, and both theſe are whetted by his great Malice againſt us; long Experience alſo for above Five Thouſand Years hath made him very politick in dealing with Souls, and carrying on his own Deſigns and Intereſt: He knows our Temper, our Paſſions, and our Inclinations, and can chuſe and cull out thoſe *Objects* which ſhall infallibly ſtrike and Effect us; he waits thoſe *Mollia tempora fandi*, thoſe Eaſie Hours of Whiſpering his Suggeſtions to us when we are moſt facile and compliant, when we are moſt eaſily wrought upon, and made ſoft to his Hands by ſome foregoing Circumſtances: And if after all this he deſpairs to prevail

upon us as a *Devil*, he can quickly ſhift his Shape, and transform himſelf into an *Angel of Light*, and engage our very Conſciences unto Evil; he can diſguiſe his Temptations into Impulſes of the *Holy Spirit*, perſuade us that what he prompts us to is our Duty, head his *Fiery Darts* with *Scripture Sentences*, wrap up his Poiſon in the Leaves of the *Bible*, and wound our Souls by our Conſciences; and certainly this *Devil* of Light is now gone Abroad into the World with all that Power of Deceivableneſs he can, and we cannot but with Sad and Bleeding Hearts obſerve his too General Prevalency and Succeſs: And beſides all this, he is continually preſent with us, follows us up and down where-ever we go, and is always at our Elbow to prompt us to Evil, and at our Right Hand to oppoſe us in that which is Good. *Hell* hath *Emiſſaries* enough to afford every Man a *Fiend* for his Attendant; and theſe critically obſerve every Glance of thine Eyes, every Flaſh of thy Paſſions, and are preſently ready to apply ſuitable *Temptations* unto thee, and to ſtrike thee in that Part of thy Soul which is ſofteſt, and moſt yielding: And as the *Syrians* that were ſent by *Benhadad* to the King of *Iſrael* to intercede for him, watched every Word that ſhould fall from his Mouth that they might lay hold of it to obtain further Favour from him, ſo theſe *Spies* of *Hell* do watch every Kind Word, and every Kind Look, of thine towards Sin, and want no Skill to improve them to obtain yet greater Matters from thee. Now if God did not appear to deliver us from theſe Subtil *Wiles* and *Methods* of the *Devil*, how ſoon would he make Fools of the Wiſeſt and moſt Experienced Chriſtians?

Secondly, Conſider the Mighty Diſadvantages that we lye under to oppoſe the *Temptations* of the *Devil*, which though they be many and great, yet I ſhall name but Two, which may be found even in the Beſt of Men.

Firſt, Our Inadvertency and Heedleſneſs, through which we are often ſurprized into Sin, and captivated by the Cunning Craftineſs of our Enemies, which lye in wait to deceive. How ſeldom is it that we ſtand upon our Guard, or if we do, that we are compleatly armed? Sometimes our *Shield*, ſometimes our *Helmets*, ſometimes our *Sword* of the *Spirit*, is wanting. How ſeldom is it that we attend all the Motions of the Enemy? Indeed a Chriſtian ſhould look round about him, for he is every where beſet and encompaſſed about with Enemies; and whilſt he is vigilant to ward one Part, the *Devil* falſifies his Thruſt, and wounds him in another: But if he cannot wound on the Right Hand by *Preſumption*, he will try what he can do on the Left by *Deſpair*; if he cannot prevail by his *Temptations* to cauſe us to neglect and caſt off Holy Duties, he will *tempt* us to Pride our ſelves in the well performing of them; if he cannot make us fall, he will *tempt* us to be High-minded becauſe we ſtand, and ſo make our very ſtanding the Occaſion of our Woful downfal; and becauſe we are apt to think our ſelves better than others, he will *tempt* us to be Supercilious Deſpiſers and Contemners of others.

Now, O Chriſtian, it is a very hard Matter, and thou wilt find it ſo, thus to turn thee about to every Aſſault; and that Man had need to have his Spiritual Senſes well exerciſed that ſhall be able dextrouſly to do it. Now when ſo great Circumſpection is ſcarce ſufficient for our Security, how can they poſſibly eſcape without fearful Wounds and Gaſhes in their Conſciences, who are ſupinely negligent of their Souls, and mind not which Way their Thoughts, their Paſſions, their Affections, encline, and ſo give the *Devil* a Handle to turn their Souls by which Way he will? Certainly if we do not buckle our *Spiritual Armour* cloſe to us, but ſuffer the Joints of it by our Heedleſneſs to lye open, the *Devil* may eaſily wound us whereſoever, and in whatſoever, Part he pleaſeth. And truly, if through this Inadvertency, and Want of Circumſpection, *Adam* in the State of *Innocency*, and the State of Uprightneſs, fell, when the *Devil* had no immediate Acceſs or Admiſſion into the Inward Faculties and Powers of his Soul, yet if *Satan*, who was but a Young, Unpracticed and Unexperienced, *Devil*, could prevail with him by his Wiles to ruin himſelf, and to betray the great Truſt which God had depoſited in his Hands for all his Poſterity, how much greater may we think is his Advantage over us, into whom he may inſinuate himſelf and his *Temptations*, and when we are buſie about other Things, ſtrike and wound us at unawares?

Secondly, Beſides this Inadvertency the *Devil* hath another Grand Advantage to lead us into *Evil*, and that is becauſe we are naturally prone, and enclined of our ſelves, to thoſe very Sins to which he tempts us. It is very hard for that Place to eſcape that hath Enemies without, and Traytors within: So ſtands the Caſe with us, we are not only beleaguer'd, but betray'd; there are in our Hearts Multitudes of

of Lusts that hold Intelligence with the *Devil*, and espouse his Cause; yea, there is no one Sin, how vile and profligate soever, but it may find Partizans in our Base and Wicked Hearts, wherein are the Seeds and Principles of all Impieties; and therefore as Things of a like Nature presently concorporate, (as we see one Drop of Water diffuseth itself and runs into another,) so *Temptations* to Sin meeting with a Sinful Nature are presently entertain'd, and as it were embodied together; for whilst we pursue what *Satan* tempts us unto we do but pursue what our own Natural Lusts and Corruptions enclin'd unto before, waiting only for an Opportunity of being called forth into Act.

And therefore considering both the Advantages the *Devil* hath against us, and the great Disadvantages under which we lye, he a Spirit, we but Flesh, he Wise and Subtil, we Foolish and Ignorant, he Experienc'd, we Raw and Unpracticed, he Diligent and Watchful, we Careless and Negligent, he laying a Close Siege to us without, and we Betraying our selves within, it must needs be ascribed only to the Goodness and Grace of God to deliver us from the Commission of that *Evil* to which we are so fiercely and cunningly *tempted.*

And thus I have demonstrated the *Proposition*, that it is only the Almighty Power of God that can preserve us from Sin; it now remains to shew you the Ways and Methods that God takes to do it, and those are in the General Three; by *Restraining Providences*, by *Common and Restraining Grace*, and by *Sanctifying and Renewing Grace.*

First, God delivers us from *Evil* by his *Restraining Providence*, putting an Hook into Mens Nostrils, and a Bridle into their Jaws, and by a Powerful Hand reining them in when they are most fiery and furious. And thus he often doth with the worst and vilest of Men, whose Lusts, though they estuate and boil within, and are like the raging Sea, raging and rouling in their Hearts, yet God sets Bounds to their Proud Waves, and saith to them as he doth to the great Sea, hitherto shall you proceed, and no farther. It is to this we owe it that the Wickedness of Men hath not yet made the World an Uninhabitable *Desart*, that *Solitudes* and *Wildernesses* are not as secure Retreats as frequented Cities, and Savage Beasts as safe Company as Men: To this we owe it that almost every one is not a *Cain* to his Brother, an *Amnon* to his Sister, a *Judas* to his Master, and a *Devil* to all the World; for where Grace doth not change, *Divine Providence* doth many Times so chain the Sinner that he cannot bring forth that Wickedness he hath conceived; that although he be permitted Sin enough to destroy himself, which his very Will and Affection to Evil is sufficient to do, yet thrugho God's withholding Opportunity or Abilities from him his Sins are not permitted to break out to the Ruin and Destruction of others. Though God doth as it were permit them to give up their Hearts to the *Devil*, yet he ties up their Hands; let them imagine and intend as much Mischief as *Hell* can inspire them with, yet none of all this shall they execute any otherwise than as his Holy and Wise *Providence* permits. Yea, *Divine Providence* is effectual not only in keeping Wicked Men from the Outward Acts of Sin, but even God's deareft Children and Servants they also have a great deal of Corruption stirring in their Hearts, and even in them Lust is too fruitful, conceiving those Wickednesses which God often by his *Providence* so stifles and strangles in the very Birth. May not the best of us with thankful Acknowledgments of the *Divine Goodness* towards us reflect back upon many Disappointments that we have met with, to which we had given our Consent, and entertained Purposes of sinning? May we not all say, Had not God denied Opportunities, or cast in Diversions, or cut off the Provisions which we had made for our Lusts, we should at such or such a Time have dishonoured the Gospel, scandalized our Profession, opened the Mouths of wicked and ungodly Men to blaspheme the Holy and Reverend Name of God, and contracted to our own Consciences black and horrid Guilt, by the Commission of some infamous Crimes, of which we were guilty by consenting to them? God hath hedg'd up the *Broad Way* with Thorns, that so he might turn us into the *Narrow Way* that leads to Eternal Bliss and Happiness.

Now the particular Methods that *Divine Providence* makes Use of to prevent the Sins of Men are many and various, and all of them wise and just.

First, Sometimes God by his *Providence* cuts short their *Power*, whereby they should be enabled to Sin. All that *Power* that Wicked Men have is either from themselves, or their Associates, whom they make use of to accomplish their Wickedness; and sometimes *Divine Providence* strikes them in both, it cuts off their Instruments for Counsel. And thus *Providence* over-ruling *Absalom* to reject the Politick

Counsel of *Achitophel*, prevents all that Mischief that so Wise and so Wicked a *Statesman* might afterwards have contrived, upon which he goes home and hangs himself; and as if his *Sagacity* forsook him not in his Death, by that last Action gave a Prophetick *Omen* of his Master's attending *Destiny*.

Sometimes God cuts off their Instruments for Execution: So God miraculously defeated the huge and vast Host of the blaspheming *Rabshekah*, and by unseen Strokes slew almost Two Hundred Thousand of them dead upon the Place. Sometimes God immediately strikes their Persons, and disables their Natural Faculties; so he smote the Men of *Sodom* with Blindness, and put out those very Eyes that had kindled in them the Flames of unnatural Lusts: Thus likewise when *Jeroboam* had stretched forth his Hand to lay hold on the *Prophet* God suddenly withers it up. Sometimes he hides their Wits from them, and besots them: So the *Jews* in *John* 7. 30. sought to have apprehended *Jesus*; and though he was in the very midst of them, and there was enough of them to do it, yet God so astonishes them, that they only stand gazing on him, whilst he passes through the Crowd of them, and escapes away. And indeed it is a great Mercy of God to take away that Power from Men that he sees they will only use to their own Destruction. And though Wicked Men would think that if God should now strike them Dumb, or Blind, or Lame, or Impotent, that it would be a heavy Plague or Curse inflicted upon them; yet, believe it, it is far better that God should strike thee Dumb, than that ever thou shouldest open thy Mouth to rail at him and his People: Better thou wert stricken Blind, than that ever the *Devil* and filthy Lusts should enter into thy Soul by the Windows of thine Eyes: Better that thou wert maim'd, than that ever thou shouldst have Power to commit those Sins which will damn if but intended, but if executed will sink the Soul Sevenfold deeper into Damnation.

Secondly, Sometimes *Providence* prevents Sin, by raising up other opposite Powers against a Sinner. Thus God defeated the Designs of the *Scribes* and *Rulers*, who hated Christ, and oftentimes they would have put him to Death; but it is said they feared the People, whom his Doctrine, his Miracles, and his Course of Life, had obliged to himself. Instances of this Nature are many, and occur familiarly.

Thirdly, Sometimes *Providence* casts in some seasonable Diversion, which turns Men off from the Commission of those Sins which they had intended. Thus the Providential passing by of *Merchants* induced the *Patriarchs* to Sell their Brother *Joseph*, whom before they had determined to famish. As skilful Physicians, when one Part of the Body is oppressed with ill and peccant Humours, draw them to another Part less dangerous: So God by his *Providence* many times turns Men from the Commission of greater Sins to a lesser Sin. And I believe there are but few Men, who if they will but seriously examine their Lives, may produce many Instances, both of the Devil's Policy in fitting them with Occasions and Opportunities of Sinning, and of God's *Providence* in causing some urgent Affairs, or some sudden and unexpected *Accidents*, to intervene, whereby they are turned off from what they purposed.

Fourthly, Sometimes by his *Providence* he takes off the *Objects* against which they intended to Sin. Thus God preserved St. *Peter* from *Herod*'s ambitious Rage. He intended the next Morning to put him to *Death*, but that very Night God sends his *Angel* to work his Escape, and thereby hinders the Execution of that wicked Purpose. And thus in all Ages God many times hides his Children from the Fury of wicked Men, that their Wrath against them, like *Saul*'s *Javelin*, misseth *David*, and striketh only the Wall, from whence it often rebounds back into their own Faces.

These now are some of the most Remarkable Methods of *Divine Providence*, in preventing the Sins of Men. And I am very prone to think that there are very few who if they will be at the Pains to reflect back upon, and strictly examine that Part of their Lives that is past and gone, they may easily produce many Remarkable Instances, both of the Devil's Policy in fitting them with Opportunities and Occasions of sinning, and of God's *Providences* in causing some immergent Affairs, or some other strange and unexpected Accidents, to interpose, so that he hath either Graciously taken away our Power, or taken away the *Objects* of our Lusts, or diverted us when we were in the Pursuits of them. To this we owe much of the Innocency, and in some Respects Blamelessness, of our Lives, that we have not been a Scandal to the Gospel, a Shame to the Good, and a Scorn to the Bad: And this is the *first* Way how God preserves from Sin by his *Providence*.

Secondly, God preserves from Sin by his *Restraining Grace*. Now this *Restraining Grace* is that which is common, and vouchsafed to wicked Men as well as good. In

*dea

deed God by it deals in a ſecret Way with the very Heart of a Sinner; and tho' he doth not change the habitual, yet he changeth the preſent actual, Diſpoſition of it, ſo as not only by External Checks laid upon Mens Luſts, but by Internal Perſwaſions, Motives and Arguments, they are taken off the Proſecution of thoſe very Sins which yet remain in them unmortified and reigning. Thus *Eſau* comes out againſt his Brother *Jacob* with a Troop of Two Hundred *Ruffians*, intending doubtleſs to take Revenge upon him for his *Birthright* and *Bleſſing*; but at their firſt Meeting God by a ſecret Work ſo mollifies his Heart, that inſtead of falling upon him to kill him, he falls upon his Neck and kiſſes him. Here God reſtrained *Eſau* from that Bloody Sin of *Murder*, not in a Way of *External Providence* only, but with his own Hand he immediately turns about his Heart, and by ſeeing ſuch a Company of *Cattel* bleating and bellowing, timerous *Women*, and helpleſs *Children*, bowing and ſupplicating to him, he turns his Revenge into Compaſſion, and with much urging receives a Preſent from him who he thought to have made a Prey. The ſame powerful Reſtraint God laid upon the Heart of *Abimelech*, a Heathen King, *Gen.* 20. 6. where God tells him, *I withheld thee from ſinning againſt me, and therefore ſuffered I thee not to touch her.* Here was nothing viſible that might hinder *Abimelech*, but God inviſibly wrought upon his Heart, and unhing'd his ſinful Deſires. And from theſe Two Inſtances of *Eſau* and *Abimelech* we may clearly collect how *Reſtraining Grace* differs both from *Reſtraining Providence*, and from *Sanctifying Grace:* From *Providence* it differs, becauſe uſually when God *Providentially reſtrains* from Sin, he doth it by ſome viſible apparent Means, which do not reach to work any Change or Alteration upon the Heart, but only lays an External Check upon Mens ſinful Actions. But by *Reſtraining Grace* God deals in a ſecret Way with the very Heart of a Sinner; and altho' he doth not change the Nature of it, yet he alters the preſent Inclination of it, and takes away the Deſire of committing thoſe Sins which yet he doth not mortifie. And from *Sanctifying Grace* it differs alſo, in that God vouchſafes it to wicked Men, and Reprobates, to the end that their Lives may be more plauſible, their Gifts more ſerviceable, and their Condemnation more intolerable. And indeed the Efficacy of this *Reſtraining Grace* may be ſo great, that there may appear but very little Difference between the Converſation of a true Chriſtian, whom *Special Grace* Sanctifies, and the Converſation of one in a State of Nature, whom common Grace only reſtrains: They may both live outwardly without Blame or Offence, avoiding the groſs Pollutions of the World, and ſhine in a Sphere above the ordinary Sort of Men, and yet the one be a *Star*, and the other but a *Meteor*. The Highway may be as dry and as fair in a Froſty Winter as in a Warm Summer, but there is a great deal of difference in the Cauſe of it: In Summer the Sun dries up the Moiſture, in Winter the Froſt binds it in. So the Ways of thoſe who have only a *Reſtraint* laid upon them may be as fair and clear as the Ways of thoſe who are truly *Sanctified*; but the Cauſe is vaſtly different, Grace hath dried up the Filth of the one, but only bound in the Filth of the other.

Now God doth thus by his *Reſtraining Grace* preſerve Men from Sin, by propounding to them ſuch Conſiderations and Arguments as may be ſufficient to engage Conſcience againſt it, when yet the Will and Affections are ſtill bent towards it. *Reſtraining Grace* thunders the Curſe of the Law, and brandiſheth the Sword of Juſtice in the Face of a Sinner, reports nothing but *Hell* and *Everlaſting Torments*, and ſuch terrible Things which may ſcare Men from their Sins, though ſtill they love them. It is indeed a great Mercy of God to keep us from Sin, even by legal Terrors, and uſually theſe are a good Preparation and Introduction for Saving Grace. Doubtleſs the Thoughts and Fears of *Hell* have with very good Succeſs been made Uſe of to keep Men from thoſe Sins that lead unto *Hell*. But yet if in our Conflicts againſt *Temptations* we can draw Arguments from no other *Topicks* but *Hell*, and *Eternal Death*, and *Deſtruction*; if we cannot as well quench the *Fiery Darts* of the Devil in the *Blood of Jeſus Chriſt*, as in the *Lake* of *Fire* and *Brimſtone*; it is much to be doubted whether our abſtaining from Sin be from any higher Principle than what is common; only for fear of Puniſhment, and not for love of God or Goodneſs.

Thirdly, God hath another Method of keeping Men from Sin, and that is by his *Special* and *Sanctifying Grace*. And this is proper only to the Children of God, who are really Sanctified, and made Gracious. Now whatever Sin God doth thus preſerve any from, he doth it by exciting the inward Principle and Habit of Grace to the actual Uſe and Exerciſe of it. There is a Twofold Grace always neceſſary to keep the

the beſt Chriſtians from Sin *Habitual* and *Exciting*, and God by the one quickens and ſtirs up the other, which elſe would lye ſluggiſh and dormant.

Habitual Grace denominates the Soul alive unto God, but it is no otherwiſe alive than a Man in a Swoon is; it is only *Exciting* and *Influential Grace* that can enable it to perform the Functions and Offices of Life. In the drieſt Winter there is Life in a Seed that lyes buried under Ground, but it acts not till the *Sun's* Influence draws it forth; but then it heaves and ſhoves away the Earth that covered it, and ſpreads itſelf into the Beauty of a Flower and Fruit. So it is here: *Inherent, Habitual, Grace* is indeed an Immortal Seed, and it is but a Seed till the Influences of an approaching God awaken it, and chafe its benumbed Virtue, and then it ſtirs and thruſts away all that Dung and Filth of Corruption under which it lay buried, and flowers into *Actual Grace*. *Habitual* and *Influential Grace* muſt both concur to produce *Actual Grace:* As neceſſarily as there muſt be both the Concurrence of the heat of the *Sun*, and the Life of the *Root*, to the Production of a *Flower*. Now God by exciting the *Inherent* and *Habitual Grace*, which was before in the Soul, keeps Men from ſinning Two Ways.

Firſt, Hereby he prevents and excludes thoſe Sins which were we not employed in the Exerciſe of Grace we ſhould certainly commit. When the Soul is conſtantly employed in Holy and Spiritual Affairs, Sin then neither hath Room nor Opportunity to exert itſelf. It is kept out of the Thoughts when they are employed about Holy Meditations. It is kept out from the Affections when they are ſet upon *Heavenly Objects*. It is kept out from the Converſation when both the Duties of our general and particular Callings are duly performed in their reſpective Seaſons. The *Apoſtle* exhorts us, *Epheſ.* 4. 27. *Not to give Place unto the Devil.* Truly when God's *Exciting Grace* quickens our *Inherent Grace* to a continual Exerciſe; when every Faculty is filled with Holy Actions, and every Seaſon with Holy Duties, the *Devil* then can have no Place to tempt, nor Corruption to ſtir. It is the beſt Security God can give us from the Commiſſion of Evil to quicken us to the Performance of what is Good. When we *Hear*, *Pray*, or *Meditate*, or attend upon the *Publick Ordinances*, we ought to bleſs God for this his *Exciting Grace*, whereby we have not only performed a Duty, but alſo poſſibly eſcaped ſome foul and notorious Sin, which elſe we might have committed. We who are here this Day before the Lord, had we neglected (as ſo many others do) this preſent Opportunity, who of us knows what horrid *Temptations* and fearful *Sins* we might in our *own Houſes* have been expoſed unto, which in *God's Houſe* we have avoided? *David*, when he walked idlely upon the Roof of his Houſe, lyes open to the Snares of the *Devil*, and falls into thoſe foul Sins of *Adultery* and *Murder:* Had he then been at his *Harp* and his *Pſalms* he might thereby have driven the *Evil Spirit* from him, as formerly he was wont to do for his Maſter *Saul*. *Running Streams* preſerve themſelves clear and pure, whereas *ſtanding Puddles* ſoon grow corrupt, and breed noiſome and venomous Creatures. So is it with the *Heart*, whilſt God's *Exciting and Quickning Grace* puts it upon continual Exerciſe it is preſerved from Corruption: But when it once grows ſluggiſh, and doth not freely flow forth into the *Actings of Grace*, and the *Performance of Duties*, the Spawn of all manner of Sins will breed there, and filthy Luſts crawl to and fro without Diſturbance. And therefore in praying that God would *deliver us from Evil*, we pray that he would continually vouchſafe unto us the quickning Influences of his *Holy Spirit*, that he would always fill our Sails with that Wind that bloweth where it liſteth: *Awake, O North-wind, and come thou South-wind, and blow upon our Garden, that the Spices thereof may flow forth:* For indeed if the *Spices* do not, the *Stench* will.

Secondly, As God by his *Exciting Grace* hinders thoſe Sins which might ariſe in the Heart, ſo he ſuppreſſeth thoſe that do ariſe. There is the greateſt Contrariety imaginable between *Inherent Grace* and *Indwelling Sin:* VVhen the one is vigorous the other languiſheth; and both of theſe oppoſite Principles have their Seat in the ſame Heart, and both of them are in a continual Expectation of an exciting Influence to call them out into Act. Indwelling Corruption is uſually rouzed up by *Temptations*, and when it ſtirs in the Heart, and is ready to break forth into the Life, *Habitual Grace* is of itſelf ſo feeble, that it cannot make any Oppoſition, until a kindly Influence from the Spirit of God calls forth ſome particular Grace, that is moſt of all contrary unto it, to reſiſt and ſubdue it. This Method God uſed to keep St. *Paul* from ſinning: He was under a ſharp and pungent *Temptation*, which he calls a *Thorn in the Fleſh*, 2 Cor. 12. 7. *Satan* buffets, and he prays, and God anſwers, *My Grace is ſufficient for thee;* my

my Grace is ſufficient, not thine: The Grace that is in thee is weak and helpleſs; it is a very nothing if I withdraw my Influence from it, but the quickning Grace that flows from me, this alone is ſufficient to remove the *Temptation*, and to prevent the Sin. Now whilſt God's *Exciting Grace* works thus upon St. *Paul's Inherent Grace*, this *Temptation*, this *Thorn* at his Breaſt, (as they report of the *Nightingal*,) only makes him the more wakeful and vigilant. But if God ſhould have ſuſpended his gracious Influence, this *Thorn* would ſadly have wounded his Conſcience by the Commiſſion of ſome foul and groſs Sin.

Now as all manner of Sin lyes couched and comprehended in that Body of Sin which we carry about with us, ſo all manner of Graces are couched alſo in that Principle of Grace which God hath implanted in his own Children: And when the Devil by a *Temptation* calls forth a particular Sin, God alſo by his exciting Influence calls forth a particular contrary Grace to hinder the Commiſſion of it. Thus when they are tempted to *Pride* God calls forth *Humility* to prick that ſwelling and puffy Bladder. So when they are tempted to *Wrath* and *Paſſion* he ſtirs up *Meekneſs* to oppoſe it. When a *Murmuring* and *Repining* at God's Diſpenſations, he puts *Patience* upon its perfect Work. And in brief there is no one Sin whatſoever that the *Devil* can by his *Temptations* ſtir up in the Heart, but God alſo can, and often doth, ſtir up a contrary Grace to quell and maſter it. But now there are *Two Graces* which are more eſpecially employed in this Service; and they are an *awful Fear*, and *filial Love*, of God: And therefore when we pray that God would *deliver us from Evil*, we pray,

Firſt, That he would ſo affect our Hearts with that Dread and Reverence of his Holy Majeſty, that we may not dare to commit the leaſt Sin, knowingly and willingly, againſt him. For the *Fear of God* is a powerful Preſervative to withhold the Soul from conſenting to *Temptation*; and when we are fully poſſeſſed with it, we ſhall be able to return that Anſwer to every Sollicitation of the Devil that *Joſeph* did to the filthy Enticements of his lewd *Miſtreſs*, How ſhall we do this Thing and Sin againſt God? Yea, it will preſerve us not only from the more groſs and ſcandalous Acts of Sin, but from the ſecret lurking Wickedneſſes that lye deep in the Heart. 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. *Let us cleanſe our ſelves from all Filthineſs and Pollution, both of Fleſh and Spirit, perfecting Holineſs in the Fear of God.* Indeed, where this *Fear* of God is deeply implanted it will keep us from offending him in our Thoughts, as well as in our Actions. We ſhall be afraid to Sin againſt him by Hypocriſie, or Unbelief, or Impenitency, as well as by Murder, or Blaſphemy, or any of thoſe flagitious Crimes, which not only the Law of God, but the Law of Nature and right Reaſon, condemn.

Secondly, We pray that God would ſo affect our Hearts with a *Holy and Filial Love* of himſelf, that may ſweetly, and yet powerfully, keep us from whatſoever may be an Offence unto his *Divine Majeſty*. For Love would not willingly do any Thing that may offend or grieve the *Object* loved. There is a Holy Ingenuity in this Grace, that ſtrongly engageth the Heart to love what God loves, and to hate what he hates. Now the only *Object* of God's Hatred is Sin, and therefore where the *Love of God* is implanted, it will cauſe ſuch a Divine Simpathy of Affection, that thoſe who *love the Lord will hate Sin and Iniquity*, as the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks, *Pſal.* 97. 10. And certainly Hatred of Sin is a moſt effectual Means to keep us from committing of it. And thus I have ſhewn you the Methods that God uſeth in delivering us from *Evil*. By his *Reſtraining Providence*, by his *Reſtraining Grace*, and by his *Sanctifying and Renewing Grace*.

Hence then ſee to whom you are to aſcribe your Preſervation from *Evil*, and from thoſe horrid Sins that others fall into. Sacrifice not to your own Net, not to the Freedom of your own Wills, not to any Excellency in your own Diſpoſition and Temper, not to your Natural Averſation to what is Wicked and Impious: But give the Praiſe and Glory both of what thou art, and of what thou art not, wholly unto God. Thy Nature is as ſinful as the worſt of Mens; and that thy Life is not as ſinful and wicked as the worſt, proceeds only from the Goodneſs and Grace of God which hath made the Difference; yea, a Difference little leſs than *Miraculous*; for is it not a *Miracle* that when the Fountain is as bitter in our Hearts, as in the Hearts of others, yet that the Stream ſhould not be ſo? Whence is it, that ſince we have the ſame corrupt Hearts with *Cain* and *Judas*, or any of the moſt branded Wretches in the World of Sin and Wickedneſs, that yet we have not committed the like Impieties with them, but that God hath either *reſtrained* or *ſanctified* us? But Sanctifying

Grace

Grace of itſelf is not enough, for whence is it then that we have not committed the ſame Sins that thoſe have done, who yet have been ſanctified, whoſe foul Sins and ſad Micarriages are recorded for our Warning? Are we more *Holy* than they? Have we obtained a greater Meaſure of *Sanctification* than they? No, only our Gracious God by vouchſafing us a conſtant Influence of his *exciting Grace* hath been pleaſed to keep us from thoſe Sins, into which he ſuffers wicked Men to fall, and not only them, but ſometimes his own Dear Children alſo. Well then, let not the ſtrong Man glory in his Strength, but let him that glorieth glory in the Lord, for he is our Strength, and our Deliverer: *What have we that we have not received? And if we have received it, why ſhould we boaſt as if we had not received it?* It is not what we have already received, but what we are continually receiving from God, that makes us to differ from the vileſt and moſt profligate Sinners in the World.

And thus much ſhall ſuffice for the Way and Method how God doth *deliver us from Evil.* Now that which we pray for in this *Petition* is,

Firſt, That if it ſhall pleaſe God to *lead us into Temptation*, yet that he would not leave us under the Power of *Temptation*, but with *every Temptation he would make a Way for us to eſcape, that we may be able to bear it.*

Secondly, That if at any time *Temptation* ſhould get the upper Hand, and prevail over us to the Commiſſion of Sin, yet that God would not leave us under the Power of that Sin, but raiſe us up again by true Repentance, and godly Sorrow, that ſo at laſt we may be delivered from the great and Soul-damning Evil of Obduration and Impenitency.

Thirdly, That God would not only deliver us from groſs and ſelf-condemning Impieties, but from every Evil VVay and VVork, and preſerve us blameleſs to the Heavenly Kingdom of his Son.

Fourthly, That he would be pleaſed not only to deliver us from that which is in itſelf *Evil*, but from all the Occaſions, and all the *Appearances, of Evil*, for theſe alſo are *Evil*, if not in Effect, yet in Tendency.

And thus now I have finiſhed the Sixth and Laſt *Petition* of this moſt Excellent and Divine Prayer of our Saviour: And I nothing doubt but in the Diſcourſes I have made of it you have ſeen it verified what at firſt I affirmed of it; that it is a comprehenſive Summary of all that we can ask of God, whether it be for Supplies of our Temporal or Spiritual Wants, and that all other Prayers which we make are but a Commentary upon this, drawing that out at length which here is cloſely wound up in one Bottom.

This Prayer of our Saviour now expounded unto you conſiſts, as I told you in the Beginning, of Four Parts.

Firſt, The Preface or Introduction, *Our Father.*

Secondly, The Requeſts or Petitions, which are Six.

Thirdly, The *Doxology* or *Praiſe.* And then,

Fourthly, The Concluſion or Ratification of all in the VVord *Amen.* The Two Firſt I have diſpatched, I now come to the

Third, And that is the *Doxology* or *Praiſe*, for Praiſe is a neceſſary Part of Prayer; this Praiſe now is here aſcribed unto God, by aſcribing unto him his Attributes, *Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, for ever.* In which VVords Four of God's *Attributes* are mentioned and aſcribed unto him.

Firſt, His Sovereignty, *Thine is the Kingdom.*

Secondly, His Omnipotency, *Thine is the Power.*

Thirdly, His Excellency, *Thine is the Glory.*

Fourthly, His Eternity, all theſe are thine *for ever.*

The *Kingdom* is thine for ever. The *Power* is thine for ever. The *Glory* is thine for ever. For ſo this Particle *for ever* is to be diſtributed unto each of the foregoing *Attributes.* Now in aſcribing unto God theſe Attributes we may conſider the Eminency and the Propriety of them.

The Eminency of them in the *Particle The*, *The Kingdom*, *The Power*, *The Glory*, denoting to us the higheſt and the chieſeſt of all theſe: For *His Kingdom* is that which ruleth over all. *His Power* that which no Created Power can controul. *His Glory* ſuch as ſtains all other Excellencies, and makes all their Light and Luſtre to be only the Shadow of God.

The Propriety of this Attribute in this Particle *Thine*; though others may have *Kingdoms*, and *Power*, and *Glory*, yet theſe in their Eminency belong only unto God; they are thine, and thine only, Originally, Infinitely, and Unchangeably.

Now

Now all theſe Attributes of God are annexed to the *Petitions* of this Prayer by the Illative Particle *For*, *For thine is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory.* And this carries in it the Strength and Force of a Reaſon, both why we pray unto God, and likewiſe why God ſhould grant us thoſe Things that we pray for.

Firſt, We pray unto God, for his is the *Kingdom*, and the *Power*, and the *Glory*, *for ever*, and therefore he alone is able to relieve and ſupply us.

Secondly, VVe plead for the obtaining of thoſe good Things which we ask of him, therefore grant them unto us, *For thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, for ever.* This adds ſtrong Conſolation and Aſſurance to our Faith, that we ſhall be heard in theſe Requeſts that we preſent to God. For,

Firſt, His *is the Kingdom*, and we are his *Subjects*, and therefore we may depend upon him as our *King* for Help and Protection.

Secondly, His *is the Power*, and therefore he is able to ſupply and help us, and to do abundantly for us above what we can ask or think.

Thirdly, *His is the Glory*, and therefore ſince what we ask is for his Honour and Praiſe, we may firmly believe our Requeſts ſhall be granted unto us. And,

Fourthly, All theſe are his *for ever*, and therefore we may reſt aſſured that at no Time our Prayers ſhall be in vain: But as it is the ſame unchangeable God, who in former Ages hath done great Things for, and given great Things unto, his Servants who have called upon him, ſo he ſtill retains the ſame Power, and the ſame Compaſſion; his Ear is not heavy, nor his Arm ſhortned, nor his Bowels withered, and therefore we may with Aſſurance expect that he will ſupply our Wants, and grant our Deſires, ſince the Treaſures of his Mercy are for ever unexhauſted. Thus every VVord is a forcible Reaſon, both to oblige us to Addreſs our ſelves unto God, and likewiſe to move him to beſtow upon us thoſe good Things which we thus ask at his Hands. And from hence by the VVay we may obſerve Two Things.

Firſt, That in our Prayers we ought to plead with God by weighty and inforcing *Reaſons.*

Secondly, That the moſt forcible *Reaſons* in Prayer are to be taken from the Attributes of God.

Firſt, That in our Prayers we ought to plead with God by weighty and enforcing *Reaſons.* Thus God bids us to *take unto our ſelves Words, and to turn unto him, Hoſea* 14. 2. And thus if we look into *Scripture*, thoſe Prayers of the Saints which are there Recorded, we ſhall find them Diſputes, (if I may ſo call them,) as well as Requeſts, and ſo many Reaſons urged in them, as if by Dint of Arguments they would conſtrain God to yield to their Deſires. So in *Moſes*'s Prayer, *Exod.* 32. 11. *Wherefore doth thy Wrath wax hot againſt thy People, which thou haſt brought forth out of the Land of* Egypt *with great Power? Wherefore ſhould the* Egyptians *ſay, for Miſchief did he bring them out to ſlay them in the Mountains, and to conſume them from the Face of the Earth? Turn thee from thy fierce Wrath, and repent of this Evil againſt thy People. Remember* Abraham, Iſaac, *and* Jacob, *thy Servants, to whom thou ſwareſt by thy own ſelf, and ſaidſt unto them, I will multiply your Seed as the Stars of Heaven, and all this Land that I have ſpoken of will I give unto your Seed, and they ſhall inherit it for ever.* And ſo *Joſhua* pleads with God, *Joſh.* 7. 8. *O Lord, what ſhall I ſay when* Iſrael *turneth their Backs before their Enemies? For the* Canaanites, *and all the Inhabitants of the Land, ſhall hear of it, and ſhall environ us round, and cut off our Name from the Earth, and what wilt thou do unto thy great Name?* And ſo *Jehoſhaphat*, 2 Chron. 20. 6. *O Lord God of our Fathers, art not thou God in Heaven, and ruleſt thou not over all the Kingdoms of the Heathens, and in thy Hand is there not Power and Might, ſo that none is able to withſtand thee?* And ſo in the following *Verſes* he pleads with God by ſuch powerful *Arguments* as if he would extort Mercy and Deliverance from him. Now altho' it be true that all the Arguments we can urge, and all the Reaſons that we can alledge, cannot alter the Purpoſes and Determinations of God, as to any Event that he hath ordain'd, yet there is this Twofold Uſe and Neceſſity of pleading them.

Firſt, Becauſe by conſidering the Reaſons we have to pray for ſuch Mercies, our Deſires will be the more earneſt and fervent for the obtaining of them: It will put Spirits and Life into our *Petitions*, when we can repreſent to God the Neceſſity of our asking, which to his Mercy will prove a ſtrong Motive for his granting.

Secondly, Becauſe Reaſons in Prayer do mightily conduce to the ſtrengthning of our Faith, and gives us great Encouragement to believe that we ſhall certainly ob-

tain what we have ſo much Reaſon to ask: Now Faith and Aſſurance of obtaining our Requeſt is a great Condition to the Acceptation of our Prayers; and therefore the *Apoſtle* commands us *to lift up Holy Hands*, as *without Wrath*, ſo alſo *without Doubting*, 1 Tim. 2. 8. And again, *Jam.* 1. 7. *Let him ask in Faith, nothing wavering; for let not that Man think that he ſhall receive any Thing of the Lord.* Now when we can humbly repreſent unto God both the great Neceſſity that we ſtand in of thoſe Mercies that we beg, and likewiſe the Equity which ariſeth either from his Promiſes paſt, or his *Name* and *Attributes* proclaimed, that we ſhould receive them, what abundant Strength and Confidence may this add to our Faith, and make us come to God with an humble Expectation, that he would either anſwer our Prayers, or our Reaſons? And therefore if thou wouldſt be ſure to have thy Prayers anſwered, pray chiefly for ſuch Things for which thou canſt produce ſuch *Reaſons* as cannot be anſwered. And therefore,

Secondly, The moſt forcible *Reaſons* and *Arguments* in Prayer are to be taken from the *Attributes of God:* Theſe muſt needs be powerful when they are himſelf; and if thou canſt but get an *Attribute* to take thy Part when thou comeſt to the Throne of Grace, and if thou canſt but rightly uſe and fit it to thy Requeſts, thou may'ſt be ſure of Speeding, for God will not, nay, he cannot, deny himſelf; in us there can be nothing found to move him, nor anywhere out of himſelf; and where we find (as very often we do in *Scripture*) that the Miſeries and Afflictions of God's People are made uſe of as a Plea for Mercy, yet this Plea itſelf, which is uſually moſt winning, and moſt affecting, can no otherwiſe prevail with God than as his Pity and Compaſſions engage him to relieve thoſe that are in Miſery; and to ſpeak properly, they are not our Afflictions, but the Glory of his Power and Mercy in delivering us from them, that is a Motive unto God; only it is the Art of a praying Chriſtian aptly to repreſent himſelf as an *Object* for God's *Attributes* to be exerciſed about; and if he can but intereſt any *Name* or *Attribute* of God in his behalf, he may be confident of the Succeſs of his Prayer, and that he ſhall not return aſhamed: Theſe Two Obſervations I gather from the Illative Particle *For*; *For thine is the Kingdom*, &c.

Concerning the *Kingdom of God* I ſhall ſpeak but very little now, having already treated of it in explaining the *Second Petition* of this moſt Excellent Prayer, *Thy Kingdom come.* Certain it is that God's *Univerſal Kingdom* is here underſtood as he is the High Creator and Supreme Lord of all Things, both in Heaven and in Earth, yet not ſo as to exclude his *Peculiar Kingdom of the Church*; and this is an Excellent Argument to confirm our Faith for the obtaining of thoſe Things which we pray for, becauſe the Kingdom is God's, and he is the Abſolute Sovereign over all, and therefore all Things are at his diſpoſe: As for Spiritual Bleſſings which we ſeek he hath the Power of beſtowing of them, for he is *King* of his *Church*, and beſtows the Gifts and Graces of his Spirit upon the Faithful *Subjects* of that his *Kingdom:* And as for Temporal Bleſſings that we beg, he likewiſe can readily beſtow them upon us, for he is the Univerſal *Monarch* of all the World, a *King* to whom all other Kings are ſubject, and all other *Thrones* are but the Footſtool of his.

And therefore in the general, whatſoever we want, be it Protection or Proviſion, our Faith in the *Sovereignty* of God may encourage us to ask it with an humble Boldneſs and Confidence, for it is the Office of a *King* to give both unto his Subjects.

But let us more particularly conſider how *God's Kingdom* may be accommodated to all the *Petitions* of this Prayer of our Lord, as a ſtrong Argument and Reaſon to prevail with God for the obtaining what we requeſt in each of them.

Firſt, The *Kingdom* is God's, therefore he will ſee that his *Name be hallowed and glorified* in it: *Kings* are jealous of their Honour; and it is a great Offence either to ſpeak or do any Thing that may redound to their Diſcredit. It is fit and decent for a King to have the higheſt Name, and the greateſt Repute, among his *Subjects*; and therefore we may be ſure God will maintain this in the World; yea, ſo jealous is God of having Diſhonour reflected upon him, that he hath forbidden not only the Profanation and Trivial Mention of his own *Name*, but the Profanation of that which doth but belong unto him, *Matth.* 5. 34, 35. *Swear not by Heaven, for it is God's Throne; neither by the Earth, for it is his Footſtool; neither by* Jeruſalem, *for it is the City of the Great King:* Heaven is the Throne of his *Majeſty*, the Theatre of his Power; *Jeruſalem* and the *Temple* the Seat of his Worſhip. And therefore as *Kings* and *Princes* have Reſpect ſhewn to their *Preſence-Chamber*; ſo God, becauſe he is the Great *King* of Kings, and *Lord* of Lords, requires to be reverenced in all that doth

doth appertain unto him, and he will be ſanctified in all that drew near unto him. Thoſe who will not actually hallow him by their Obedience, on them God will be hallowed paſſively by their Puniſhment. And becauſe he is a *King* he will maintain the Honour of his *Majeſty* and Royalty: And therefore we may with Faith pray, *Hallowed be thy Name: For thine is the Kingdom*, &c.

Secondly, The *Kingdom is God's*, and therefore this *Kingdom ſhall come*; it ſhall be maintained, it ſhall be eſtabliſhed, it ſhall be enlarged and encreaſed. Is it not the higheſt Concern of a *King* to look that his *Kingdom* be not overthrown, and himſelf depoſed and outed of it? So is it God's Intereſt and Concernment to preſerve his *Kingdom* from the Incurſion of Enemies, and the ſad Conſequences of the Rents and Diviſions of his *Subjects*. He hath promiſed that the *Gates of Hell ſhall never prevail againſt it*, that he will enlarge the Borders of it, and give all Nations unto Jeſus Chriſt for his Inheritance and Poſſeſſion. And therefore when we pray, *Thy Kingdom come*, we may very well expect that our Requeſts ſhould be granted; for the *Kingdom* is *God's*, and we do but pray that he would regard his own Intereſt and Concerns, that he would *look down from Heaven and viſit this Vine which his own Right Hand had planted; that neither the Wild Boar out of the Foreſt may root it up, nor the Cunning Foxes pluck off its tender Grapes.*

Thirdly, The *Kingdom is God's*, and therefore we may well pray, *That his Will may be done on Earth as it is in Heaven:* For what is *Sovereignty* without Obedience to it but a meer Pageantry, a Mock-ſhew of Idle Royalty? It is but fit and rational to pray that his Will ſhould be done whoſe the Kingdom is. And whilſt we thus pray we may be confident of being heard and accepted, ſince the Reaſon we urge is ſo natural and preſſing.

Fourthly, The *Kingdom is God's*, and therefore we may with great Encouragement to our Faith pray for *Our Daily Bread*, and all thoſe Temporal Accommodations that are needful and expedient for us; for it is a *Kingly Office* to provide Things neceſſary for their *Subjects*, to protect and defend them, to ſupply and relieve them; and therefore, *Pſal.* 72. where we have a perfect Character of a Good King, it is ſaid, Verſe 6. *He ſhall come down like Rain upon the Mown Graſs, and as Showers that Water the Earth:* That is, he ſhall be to his People as ſoft Showers to the ſprouting Graſs, kindly nouriſhing it, and making it grow and flouriſh: And certainly God, who is the Greateſt and Beſt of *Kings*, will be ſo much more to his People and Subjects; and ſince he hath aſſumed to himſelf the Stile and Name of *King*, he will provide abundantly for their Peace and Proſperity.

Fifthly, The *Kingdom is God's*, and therefore we may well make our Applications to him for *Pardon*, and beg of him the *Forgiveneſs of our Offences*, ſince it is the Prerogative Royal of *Kings* to forgive Offenders. Hence our Saviour deſcribing the Proceſs of the General Jndgment, when he comes to ſpeak of pronouncing the Sentence of Abſolution upon Believers ſtiles himſelf *King*; ſo we read, *Matth.* 25. 34. *Then ſhall the King ſay to them on his Right Hand, Come ye Bleſſed of my Father inherit the Kingdom.* So that here our Faith hath a very ſtrong Plea to urge with God for the Pardon of our Sins, *Forgive us our Treſpaſſes: For thine is the Kingdom*; and it belongs to the Royalty of thy Kingdom to forgive humble and penitent Suppliants.

Sixthly, The *Kingdom is God's*, therefore we may well pray in Faith that he would *Deliver us from Evil*; for this is one Great End of Government, to protect their Subjects from the Aſſaults of their Enemies: And God, who is our *King*, will not neglect this Care when we do with an humble Faith urge him to it, by repreſenting to him that the *Kingdom* is his; for his Intereſt is involved in the Safety and Welfare of his People.

And thus I have briefly ſhewn you in general that all our Prayers ought to be enforced with ſtrong and cogent Reaſons, which although they are not properly Motives unto God, yet are they good Grounds for our Faith to build upon, and therefore a good Evidence when we uſe them that our *Petitions* ſhall be heard and granted. And I have likewiſe particularly accommodated this *Firſt* Motive and Argument, taught us by our Saviour, *Thine is the Kingdom*, to each of the *Six Petitions*, which he hath inſtructed us to preſent to God.

The Second Attribute that we are to conſider, as a Reaſon and Motive urged in this Prayer, is the Power of God: *Thine is the Power.*

Now *Power*, according to the uſual Acceptation of the Word, is nothing elſe but an Ability to work thoſe Changes and Mutations upon created Beings which were not in them before; I ſpeak only of *Active Power*, and the Two Terms of it are, either

tain what we have ſo much Reaſon to ask: Now Faith and Aſſurance of obtaining our Requeſt is a great Condition to the Acceptation of our Prayers; and therefore the *Apoſtle* commands us *to lift up Holy Hands*, as *without Wrath*, ſo alſo *without Doubting*, 1 Tim. 2. 8. And again, *Jam.* 1. 7. *Let him ask in Faith, nothing wavering; for let not that Man think that he ſhall receive any Thing of the Lord.* Now when we can humbly repreſent unto God both the great Neceſſity that we ſtand in of thoſe Mercies that we beg, and likewiſe the Equity which ariſeth either from his Promiſes paſt, or his *Name* and *Attributes* proclaimed, that we ſhould receive them, what abundant Strength and Confidence may this add to our Faith, and make us come to God with an humble Expectation, that he would either anſwer our Prayers, or our Reaſons? And therefore if thou wouldſt be ſure to have thy Prayers anſwered, pray chiefly for ſuch Things for which thou canſt produce ſuch *Reaſons* as cannot be anſwered. And therefore,

Secondly, The moſt forcible *Reaſons* and *Arguments* in Prayer are to be taken from the *Attributes of God:* Theſe muſt needs be powerful when they are himſelf; and if thou canſt but get an *Attribute* to take thy Part when thou comeſt to the Throne of Grace, and if thou canſt but rightly uſe and fit it to thy Requeſts, thou may'ſt be ſure of Speeding, for God will not, nay, he cannot, deny himſelf; in us there can be nothing found to move him, nor anywhere out of himſelf; and where we find (as very often we do in *Scripture*) that the Miſeries and Afflictions of God's People are made uſe of as a Plea for Mercy, yet this Plea itſelf, which is uſually moſt winning, and moſt affecting, can no otherwiſe prevail with God than as his Pity and Compaſſions engage him to relieve thoſe that are in Miſery; and to ſpeak properly, they are not our Afflictions, but the Glory of his Power and Mercy in delivering us from them, that is a Motive unto God; only it is the Art of a praying Chriſtian aptly to repreſent himſelf as an *Object* for God's *Attributes* to be exerciſed about; and if he can but intereſt any *Name* or *Attribute* of God in his behalf, he may be confident of the Succeſs of his Prayer, and that he ſhall not return aſhamed: Theſe Two Obſervations I gather from the Illative Particle *For*; *For thine is the Kingdom*, &c.

Concerning the *Kingdom of God* I ſhall ſpeak but very little now, having already treated of it in explaining the *Second Petition* of this moſt Excellent Prayer, *Thy Kingdom come.* Certain it is that God's *Univerſal Kingdom* is here underſtood as he is the High Creator and Supreme Lord of all Things, both in Heaven and in Earth, yet not ſo as to exclude his *Peculiar Kingdom of the Church*; and this is an Excellent Argument to confirm our Faith for the obtaining of thoſe Things which we pray for, becauſe the Kingdom is God's, and he is the Abſolute Sovereign over all, and therefore all Things are at his diſpoſe: As for Spiritual Bleſſings which we ſeek he hath the Power of beſtowing of them, for he is *King* of his *Church*, and beſtows the Gifts and Graces of his Spirit upon the Faithful *Subjects* of that his *Kingdom:* And as for Temporal Bleſſings that we beg, he likewiſe can readily beſtow them upon us, for he is the Univerſal *Monarch* of all the World, a *King* to whom all other Kings are ſubject, and all other *Thrones* are but the Footſtool of his.

And therefore in the general, whatſoever we want, be it Protection or Proviſion, our Faith in the *Sovereignty* of God may encourage us to ask it with an humble Boldneſs and Confidence, for it is the Office of a *King* to give both unto his Subjects.

But let us more particularly conſider how *God's Kingdom* may be accommodated to all the *Petitions* of this Prayer of our Lord, as a ſtrong Argument and Reaſon to prevail with God for the obtaining what we requeſt in each of them.

Firſt, The *Kingdom* is God's, therefore he will ſee that his *Name be hallowed and glorified* in it: *Kings* are jealous of their Honour; and it is a great Offence either to ſpeak or do any Thing that may redound to their Diſcredit. It is fit and decent for a King to have the higheſt Name, and the greateſt Repute, among his *Subjects*; and therefore we may be ſure God will maintain this in the World; yea, ſo jealous is God of having Diſhonour reflected upon him, that he hath forbidden not only the Profanation and Trivial Mention of his own *Name*, but the Profanation of that which doth but belong unto him, *Matth.* 5. 34, 35. *Swear not by Heaven, for it is God's Throne; neither by the Earth, for it is his Footſtool; neither by* Jeruſalem, *for it is the City of the Great King:* Heaven is the Throne of his *Majeſty*, the Theatre of his Power; *Jeruſalem* and the *Temple* the Seat of his Worſhip. And therefore as *Kings* and *Princes* have Reſpect ſhewn to their *Preſence-Chamber*; ſo God, becauſe he is the Great *King* of Kings, and *Lord* of Lords, requires to be reverenced in all that doth

doth appertain unto him, and he will be ſanctified in all that drew near unto him. Thoſe who will not actually hallow him by their Obedience, on them God will be hallowed paſſively by their Puniſhment. And becauſe he is a *King* he will maintain the Honour of his *Majeſty* and Royalty: And therefore we may with Faith pray, *Hallowed be thy Name: For thine is the Kingdom*, &c.

Secondly, The *Kingdom is God's*, and therefore this *Kingdom ſhall come*; it ſhall be maintained, it ſhall be eſtabliſhed, it ſhall be enlarged and encreaſed. Is it not the higheſt Concern of a *King* to look that his *Kingdom* be not overthrown, and himſelf depoſed and outed of it? So is it God's Intereſt and Concernment to preſerve his *Kingdom* from the Incurſion of Enemies, and the ſad Conſequences of the Rents and Diviſions of his *Subjects*. He hath promiſed that the *Gates of Hell ſhall never prevail againſt it*, that he will enlarge the Borders of it, and give all Nations unto Jeſus Chriſt for his Inheritance and Poſſeſſion. And therefore when we pray, *Thy Kingdom come*, we may very well expect that our Requeſts ſhould be granted; for the *Kingdom* is *God's*, and we do but pray that he would regard his own Intereſt and Concerns, that he would *look down from Heaven and viſit this Vine which his own Right Hand had planted; that neither the Wild Boar out of the Foreſt may root it up, nor the Cunning Foxes pluck off its tender Grapes.*

Thirdly, The *Kingdom is God's*, and therefore we may well pray, *That his Will may be done on Earth as it is in Heaven:* For what is *Sovereignty* without Obedience to it but a meer Pageantry, a Mock-ſhew of Idle Royalty? It is but fit and rational to pray that his Will ſhould be done whoſe the Kingdom is. And whilſt we thus pray we may be confident of being heard and accepted, ſince the Reaſon we urge is ſo natural and preſſing.

Fourthly, The *Kingdom is God's*, and therefore we may with great Encouragement to our Faith pray for *Our Daily Bread*, and all thoſe Temporal Accommodations that are needful and expedient for us; for it is a *Kingly Office* to provide Things neceſſary for their *Subjects*, to protect and defend them, to ſupply and relieve them; and therefore, *Pſal.* 72. where we have a perfect Character of a Good King, it is ſaid, Verſe 6. *He ſhall come down like Rain upon the Mown Graſs, and as Showers that Water the Earth:* That is, he ſhall be to his People as ſoft Showers to the ſprouting Graſs, kindly nouriſhing it, and making it grow and flouriſh: And certainly God, who is the Greateſt and Beſt of *Kings*, will be ſo much more to his People and Subjects; and ſince he hath aſſumed to himſelf the Stile and Name of *King*, he will provide abundantly for their Peace and Proſperity.

Fifthly, The *Kingdom is God's*, and therefore we may well make our Applications to him for *Pardon*, and beg of him the *Forgiveneſs of our Offences*, ſince it is the Prerogative Royal of *Kings* to forgive Offenders. Hence our Saviour deſcribing the Proceſs of the General Jndgment, when he comes to ſpeak of pronouncing the Sentence of Abſolution upon Believers ſtiles himſelf *King*; ſo we read, *Matth.* 25. 34. *Then ſhall the King ſay to them on his Right Hand, Come ye Bleſſed of my Father inherit the Kingdom.* So that here our Faith hath a very ſtrong Plea to urge with God for the Pardon of our Sins, *Forgive us our Treſpaſſes: For thine is the Kingdom*; and it belongs to the Royalty of thy Kingdom to forgive humble and penitent Suppliants.

Sixthly, The *Kingdom is God's*, therefore we may well pray in Faith that he would *Deliver us from Evil*; for this is one Great End of Government, to protect their Subjects from the Aſſaults of their Enemies: And God, who is our *King*, will not neglect this Care when we do with an humble Faith urge him to it, by repreſenting to him that the *Kingdom* is his; for his Intereſt is involved in the Safety and Welfare of his People.

And thus I have briefly ſhewn you in general that all our Prayers ought to be enforced with ſtrong and cogent Reaſons, which although they are not properly Motives unto God, yet are they good Grounds for our Faith to build upon, and therefore a good Evidence when we uſe them that our *Petitions* ſhall be heard and granted. And I have likewiſe particularly accommodated this *Firſt* Motive and Argument, taught us by our Saviour, *Thine is the Kingdom*, to each of the *Six Petitions*, which he hath inſtructed us to preſent to God.

The Second Attribute that we are to conſider, as a Reaſon and Motive urged in this Prayer, is the Power of God: *Thine is the Power.*

Now *Power*, according to the uſual Acceptation of the Word, is nothing elſe but an Ability to work thoſe Changes and Mutations upon created Beings which were not in them before; I ſpeak only of *Active Power*, and the Two Terms of it are, either

the effecting of ſomewhat that was not, or the annulling and deſtroying of that which was: This is the Notion of *Power*, whether it be aſcribed to God or Man; and in both it is either *Abſolute* or *Ordinate*. *Abſolute Power* reſpects the ſimple Ability of acting, *Ordinate Power* reſpects alſo the Will and Determination to act: And therefore in God, whoſe *Power* we are now treating of, his *Abſolute Power* is of a much larger Extent than his *Ordinate*, for the one relates to all Things poſſible, that is, to all Things whoſe Exiſtence doth not imply a Contradiction, the other relates only to Things future, and this likewiſe ſuch as ſhall exiſt according to the common Courſe and Method of God's *Ordinary Providence*; for *Miraculous* Effects, although they are produced according to the Will and Ordination of God, yet they appertain not to his *Ordinate*, but to his *Abſolute*, *Power*. So then the *Objects* of God's *Abſolute Power* are Things meerly poſſible, or Things future, which are without the Compaſs and Sphere of Second Cauſes to produce. But the *Objects* of God's *Ordinate Power* are Things future, produced according to the Laws of Natural Agents, and the Virtue of Second Cauſes. Yet both theſe Powers in God are infinite, the one Objectively, the other Formally.

Firſt, God's *Abſolute Power* is *Objectively* infinite, that is, the *Object* of it is infinite; for all Things poſſible are the *Object* of this *Power*, and all Things are in themſelves poſſible which do not imply a Contradiction: And Oh how vaſt and incomprehenſible is the Sum of theſe! God might have Created more *Worlds*, more *Angels*, and *Men*, than he hath done; more Sorts of Creatures, and more of every Sort, if he had ſo pleaſed; yea, and he might have been Creating and Acting from all Eternity to all Eternity; and in his infinite Duration be ſtill producing New, and therefore Infinite, Effects; *for with God nothing is impoſſible*, *Luke* 1. 37. And the only Reaſon why God hath produced ſuch Effects, and no other, ſo many, and not more, is not from want of Power, but meerly from the free Determination of his own Will and Counſel. He might have hindred the *Fall* of Man, reſtored the fallen *Angels*, raiſed the *Stones* to be *Children* unto *Abraham*, brought more Deluges and general Plagues upon the World, if he had ſo pleaſed: Yea, and though our Fancy and Imagination hath a large *Empire*, and ſeems boundleſs in theſe Fictions and Pourtraitures of Things which we Paint and Limn there, yet God can really Create more than we can only imaginarily Create, for we can only patch together thoſe Things which we have ſeen, or have otherwiſe been the *Objects* of our Senſes, and by putting together ſeveral pieces of Things really exiſting, make an *Idea* of that which never was. But God can actually cauſe thoſe *Species* and Kinds of Beings in the World which never were, nor ever was there a former Reſemblance of them, and ſo can infinitely exceed the largeſt Scope of what in us ſeems moſt unlimitted, even our Thoughts and Fancies, for he is able to do above what we are able to think.

Secondly, God's *Ordinate Power* is infinite formally; that is, thoſe Things which he works according to the Counſel of his own Will, they are all effected by infinite Power; for though the *Objects* themſelves are finite, both for Nature and Number, yet the Power that produceth them is infinite; for ſince the Eſſence of God is infinite, and each of his Attributes is his Eſſence, it follows likewiſe that his Power is infinite, even in the Production of Things that are finite. Now it appears that the Power of God is infinite,

Firſt, By the Works of Creation; for though the Things that are created are finite, and but a few in Compariſon with thoſe that are poſſible, yet it is no leſs than the infinite Power of God that can impregnate the vaſt Womb of Nothing, and make it bring forth a Being. It muſt needs be an Almighty Word that can call forth a Creature out of Non-exiſtence, and make it ſtart up into the Rank of Things that are: And therefore we find God often aſcribing it to himſelf as a Glorious Demonſtration of his Almighty Power, that he ſpreads forth the Curtains of the Heavens, that he laid the Beams of the Earth, that he hung out thoſe Glorious Lights of the *Sun*, *Moon*, and *Stars*, that he breathed forth all the various Sorts of the Creatures which People the Univerſe, and by the commanding Word of his Mouth they were made: His Power and his Hand formed all thoſe Beautiful Creatures we behold out of a rude and confuſed *Chaos*, and that *Chaos* itſelf out of the greater Confuſion of Nothing: And altho' Second Cauſes by their

Power

Power and Natural Energy introduce various Forms into Things, yet all the Matter they have to work upon was first God's Workmanship; and there is nothing made by Man but it is the Creature of God, at least as to the Matter and First Principle of it. Now it is only Infinite Power that can bring Something out of Nothing; yea, and it is Infinite Creating Power that can form Things out of Matter utterly indispos'd to receive the Stamps of such Natures as God imprints upon them; for no Created Agent can work either where there is nothing to work upon, or where it is altogether unfit and uncapable naturally to be form'd into such a Being as the Agent intends; and therefore the Apostle tells us, *Rom.* 1. 20. *That the invisible Things of God from the Creation of the World are clearly seen, being understood by the Things that are made, even his Eternal Power and Godhead.*

Secondly, The Infinite Power of God is demonstrated in those Miraculous Effects which have been extraordinarily produced in the World: It must needs be an Almighty Arm that can Arrest the Course and *Impetus* of Nature, and turn it quite contrary to its own Byass; for no Created Power, either in Heaven or Earth, can by their own Efficacy work a *Miracle*, nay, they cannot be so much as Natural Instruments, but only Moral in the Production of what is *Miraculous*: Indeed *Angels*, both Good and Bad, may produce very strange and marvellous Things by their suddain, invisible, and effectual, applying of proper Actives to Passives, and by suiting the secret and unknown Virtues of Causes to fit and dispos'd Patients; but they cannot produce any Thing that is miraculous, and wholly either above or contrary to the Course and Sphere of Nature: And those Men who have been so highly dignified as to be the Moral Instruments of *Miracles*, (as we say that *Moses* and *Elijah*, and the Apostles of Christ, wrought many *Miracles*,) yet they did not perform those Works by any Natural or Proper Physical Influence, but only by their Prayers and commanding Faith; it is God alone that is the immediate, efficient, Cause of whatsoever Events have been *Miraculous* in the World; and therefore when some raised the *Dead*, and others cured the *Blind* and *Lame*, when *Moses* first cleft the *Sea*, and afterwards the *Rock*, with his wondrous *Rod*, when *Joshua* stopt the *Sun* in its Course, and *Isaiah* turn'd it Ten Degrees backward, all these Extraordinary and Supernatural Effects are no otherwise to be ascribed unto them than as to remote Instruments, who by their Prayers and Intercessions prevailed with God to manifest his Power, as an Attestation of that Commission they had received from him: His *Infinite Power* is the Sole Author of them, and to this End hath he wrought them, that those who take little notice of his *Power*, in the common and ordinary Products of it, may be seized with Admiration and Astonishment when they hear of such Events, as neither *Reason* nor *Nature* can give any Account of, and may be forced to acknowledge, with the *Magicians* of *Ægypt*, that it is the *Finger of God*; or more Religiously with the *Psalmist*, Psal. 89. 13. *Thou hast a Mighty Arm, strong is thy Hand, and high is thy Right Hand.*

Thirdly, The *Power* of God is Infinite, even in the common Course and Effects of his Providence: Whatsoever comes to pass is through the Infinite Power of God: There is not the least Spire of Grass that sprouts out of the *Earth*, not the least Atome that plays and wanders to and fro in the *Air*, not any Motion of any Creature, how inconsiderable soever it be, but the *Almighty Power* of God is to be seen in it; for although one Second Cause may depend upon another in a long *Series*, yet are they all ultimately resolved into the *First Cause* of all, and invigorated by his Influence. See for this *Hosea* 2. 21. *I will hear the Heavens, saith the Lord, and they shall hear the Earth, and the Earth shall hear the Corn, and the Wine, and the Oil, and they shall hear* Jezreel. Be the Chain of *Second Causes* never so long, yet God holds the first Link in his own Hands, and conveys his *Power* through them all to their last Effects; so that if we duly ponder the Mysteries and Wonders of *Nature*, it will appear that it is as much *Infinite Power* to make a poor *Worm* to crawl, or a *Sparrow* to fly, or to fall to the Earth, as it was at first to Create the World. It requires no more *Power* in God to work *Miracles* than the most ordinary and common Events that happen; only those are said to be *Miracles* which are against or above the Course of Nature, and those to be Natural Events which are according to it; but to a considering Mind both the one and the other do equally declare the Almighty and Infinite *Power* of God.

Now this Power is in the *Text* ascribed to God by Way of *Emphasis* and Eminency, *Thine is the Power*; which notes unto us some Peculiarity in the *Power* of God, which distinguisheth it from all *Created Powers* whatsoever, and it consists in these following Things.

First,

First, In that the *Power of God* is Infinite, (as hath been demonstrated already,) but the *Power* of all Creatures is only finite and limitted. God's *Absolute Power* hath no Bounds, but whatsoever is possible to be he is able to produce; his *Ordinate* and *Actual Power* is indeed limitted, but only by his Will, *Psal.* 115. 3. *He hath done whatsoever he pleased.* But our Wills are often limitted by our Power; and those Things which we with the Accomplishment of, yet many times fail in taking Effect, only because we want Might and Power to bring them to pass: And therefore when we ascribe *Power* unto God, *Thine is the Power*, we attribute unto him a *Power* that is Infinite, a *Power* which can effect whatsoever his Will hath fore-determined above, yea, and contrary to all the *Power* of all the Creatures, both in Heaven and Earth: Hence it is called *the exceeding Greatness of his Power*, Ephes. 1. 19.

Secondly, The *Power* of God is *Originally* in himself; but all *Created Powers* are only derived from him: Whatsoever is in God is (according to the known Rules of the Schools,) God himself; and therefore as God hath not his Being from any other, so neither hath he his Power from any other; but whatsoever Ability is found in any of the Creatures is from God, whether it be Natural or Moral Power, Strength or Authority.

First, All derive their Natural Power from God; it is he that endews them with Strength, and with all that Force and Might which they enjoy. 1 *Chron.* 29. 12. *In thy Hand is Power and Might, in thy Hand it is to make Great, and to give Strength unto all.*

Secondly, All derive their Moral Power and Authority from God. *Prov.* 8. 15, 16. *By me Kings Reign, and Princes decree Justice; by me Princes Rule, and Nobles, even all the Judges of the Earth*, says the Essential Wisdom of the Father.

Thirdly, The *Power of God is Supreme*; all other *Power* is but subordinate unto him; and therefore he can weaken the Strength, and frustrate the Attempts, of all that shall combine themselves together against him; for his Power is such as no Creature can resist: And as *Billows* do but dash themselves in pieces by dashing against the *Rock*, so all the united Force of *Nature*, should they make Head against God, would but dash themselves in pieces, by dashing against the *Rock of Ages*, whose Counsels and Purposes shall stand firm, though all the World dissent from them, and endeavour to oppose them; yea, the Power of God is so Absolute and Sovereign, that the greatest Created Powers are but Instruments for God to make use of to bring about his own Designs; and therefore they are compared to *Axes*, and *Saws*, and *Staves*, Isa. 10. 15. *Shall the Ax boast itself against him that heweth therewith? Or shall the Saw magnifie itself against him that shaketh it?* Yea, in *Verse* 5. God is said to take up a Great King, and a Great Nation, only as a Rod to chastise his People with, *O Assyrian, the Rod of mine Anger, and the Staff in their Hand is mine Indignation*; and as a *Staff*, a *Rod*, or an *Ax*, cannot move themselves without the Hand and Guidance of him that makes use of them; so neither can the Mightiest *Princes*, nor the most Powerful People, move themselves but by the Power and Direction of God, who applies them as so many Tools or Instruments to whatsoever Work he pleaseth.

Now upon all these Accounts Power may be thus eminently ascribed unto God, *Thine is the Power.*

Yet when we affirm God's Power to be thus *Sovereign* and *Infinite*, it doth not therefore follow that it must take all Things whatsoever within its Reach and Extent, for there are several Things, which, as St. *Austin* speaks, *Lib.* 5. *de Civitate Dei.* cap. 10. God cannot do because he is Omnipotent, *Quædam Deus non potest, quia est Omnipotens.*

First, God *cannot do the Things that are contradictory*; he cannot will the same Thing to be, and not to be, at the same Time: That there should be a Body without Quantity, or any other Corporeal Property, belonging to it, as the Papists absurdly dream in their monstrous Doctrine of *Transubstantiation*; for when they have Recourse to the *Almighty Power* of God, by which they say that those Things which are naturally impossible may be affected; as for the same Body to be in Ten Thousand Places at once; for the same Body to have *Quantity*, (as it hath in Heaven,) and no *Quantity*, as in the *Sacrament.* We truly answer, That the *Power* of God never reacheth to verifie Contradictions; and that it is as great a Contradiction to affirm a Body to be in more Places than one at once, or to be, and not to have Quantity, especially to have it, and not to have it, as it is to affirm that it is a Body, and no Body.

Secondly, *God cannot do any Thing which may justly bring upon him the Imputation*

of Sin; for Sin is not from Power, but from Weakneſs, ſince all Impiety conſiſts of Defect, and all Defect is from Impotence; and therefore the Apoſtle tells us, *Jam.* 1. 13. *God cannot be tempted with Evil:* Holineſs and Purity is an Eſſential *Attribute* of the *Divine Eſſence*; and therefore God can as ſoon not be as be the Author of Sin; for all Sin muſt ariſe either from Weakneſs in the Underſtanding, or Perverſeneſs in the Will; but the *Divine Underſtanding* is infinitely clear, and therefore cannot be dazled with the falſe Shews and Appearances of Evil; and the *Divine Will* is infinitely Holy, and confirmed to the Sovereign Rule of his Sapience and Wiſdom. And therefore where there is no poſſibility of Ignorance in the one, nor of Irregularity in the other, there can be no Obliquity in thoſe Actions which proceed from both, but they muſt all needs be moſt Holy, Juſt and Righteous.

Thirdly, *God cannot do any Thing that argues him mutable and unconſtant:* He cannot change his Purpoſes, nor break his Promiſes, nor alter the Thing that is gone out of his Lips: And tho' the *Scripture* makes frequent mention of God's *Repenting* himſelf of what he hath done, ſo we read *Gen. 6. 6. It repented the Lord that he made Man*, Exod. 32. 19. *The Lord repented of the Evil that he thought to do unto his People.* 2 Sam. 24. 16. *And the Lord repented him of the Evil*; yet theſe and ſuch like Expreſſions are ſpoken only by Way of Accommodation to our Capacities, and ſpoken συμπαθῶς καὶ ἀνθρωπινῶς, compaſſionately, and after the Manner of Men, but muſt be underſtood, θεοπρεπῶς, after ſuch a Manner as is befitting God: For as Men when they repent of what they have made do again deſtroy it, and act contrary to their former Actings; ſo becauſe God doth ſometimes act contrary to his former Actings he is ſaid to *Repent* of what he had done; altho' in ſtrict Propriety of Speech the Immutability of his *Eſſence* is ſuch, that all his Purpoſes and Counſels ſtand firm and fixed for ever, *Mal. 3. 6. I am the Lord, I change not.* James 1. 17. *With him is no Variableneſs, nor Shadow of Turning.* And therefore becauſe of this Eternal Fixedneſs of God's Purpoſe it is ſaid *that he cannot deny himſelf*, 2 Tim. 2. 13. *That he cannot lie*, Tit. 1. 2. and that it is *impoſſible that God ſhould lie*, Heb. 6. 18. becauſe theſe Things imply Inconſtancy and Fickleneſs, which is always an Effect of Weakneſs; for whenſoever we alter our Counſels and Reſolutions it is becauſe we ſee ſome Inconvenience would follow upon them, which we did not before conſider, which to impute to God were the higheſt Blaſphemy.

Now theſe Three Things only excepted, all other Things in the World fall within the Compaſs of *God's Power*. He is able to do all Things, (as *Origen* ſpeaks excellently,) the doing whereof would not deny him to be God, or to be Holy, or to be Wiſe.

And therefore he cannot bring to paſs Contradictions, nor can he alter his Eternal Purpoſes, for this would derogate from his Infinite Wiſdom. He cannot be the Author of Sin, for this would be a Stain and Blot upon his Infinite Purity and Holineſs, and both will be Impotency rather than Power; and were he weak enough to do thoſe Things he would not be God, for it is Eſſential to God to be infinitely Wiſe, and infinitely Holy.

Let us now briefly ſhew how this Conſideration of the *Power* of God may be made uſe of as a prevalent Argument for the ſtrengthning of our Faith in Prayer, and the aſſuring us of that we ſhall obtain what we ask; for our *Saviour* hath taught us to ſubjoin it to all our *Petitions* as a Reaſon why we ſhould ask, and as a Motive why we ſhould ſpeed, *For thine is the Power.*

Now the great Strength of this lyes here, in that it muſt needs be a mighty Encouragement to our Faith to reflect and conſider that whatſoever we ask, we ask it of a God that is able to give it us; he is not a weak, impotent, *Deity*, but a God who hath *all Power* in his Hands, and therefore can effect whatſoever we deſire of him.

Behold what Care God hath taken to ſtrengthen our Faith when we Pray unto him. There are but Two Things that can make us doubt of Speeding in our Requeſts, the one is whether God will, the other is whether he can, grant us what we ask; and that our Faith might not boggle at either of theſe our Saviour hath as it were hedged in, and incloſed all our Prayers with theſe Two great Fences of our Faith, God's Willingneſs and his Power to help: The Preface to this Excellent Prayer contains the one, and the Concluſion of this Prayer the other: He is our *Father*, and therefore if Earthly Parents, whoſe Bowels of Mercy are but finite, are yet ſo tender over their Children, and ready to do their utmoſt to contribute what Aſſiſtance they can towards them, much more will our *Heavenly Father*, whoſe Mercies and Compaſſions are Infinite and Boundleſs; but leſt our Faith ſhould yet ſtagger and

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ſuſpect the *Power* and *Ability* of God to relieve and help us, the *Concluſion* of this Prayer puts in a Caution againſt all Unbelieving Scruples in this Caſe; *Thine is the Power.* So that we have abundant ſecurity for our Faith in whatſoever we deſire of God, becauſe he hath declared himſelf both willing and able to ſupply our Wants, and ſatisfie our Deſires. Indeed the *Power* of God alone is not a ſufficient Plea, for we have before ſeen that God is able to effect infinitely more than he will; but then the *Power* of God is a ſtrong and forcible Plea when it is joined with his Will: And when we are once aſſured by the Promiſes of his Word that God is *willing* to beſtow upon us the Bleſſings that we ask, then to bend the Force of this Plea towards him, that he is likewiſe *able*, will moſt certainly prevail. And that Prayer that is directed in Faith, and winged with both theſe Motives, ſhall never return into our Boſoms in vain, and ineffectual.

Thus have I finiſhed the Two Firſt *Attributes* of God made uſe of by our Saviour in this *Prayer*, his *Sovereignty*, and his *Omnipotency*. It remains now that we ſpeak ſomething to the Third *Attribute* of God, which our Lord here teacheth us to make uſe of in praying to him, and that is the *Glory* of God. *For thine is the Glory.*

But this is an *Attribute* ſo bright and dazling, ſo ſurrounded and fringed about with Rays of inacceſſible Light, that the *Holy Angels* themſelves cannot ſtedfaſtly behold it, but twinkle and glimmer, yea, veil their Faces, at the full Beams of that *Object*, the Viſion of which is yet their Eternal Joy and Happineſs. And therefore whatſoever weak or vile Man can either ſpeak or conceive of the Infinite Glory of the Great God, will inſtead of exalting, debaſe, it; and we ſhall but defame while we attempt to celebrate it; ſo infinitely do the *Perfections* of the *Deity* ſurmount our moſt raiſed Affections, that our very Praiſes thereof are but leſſening of it: And whatſoever we aſcribe unto God is but detracting from him. Think with yourſelves a little, if Two Blind Men that never ſaw the *Sun* were diſcourſing together about it, what ſtrange, uncouth and improper, Fancies would they form of its Light and Splendor? Surely ſuch, yea, vaſtly more, confuſed and diſproportioned all our Notions and Conceptions of the *Glory* of God, which is a Light that is inviſible, Obſcurity that is dazling, and whatſoever elſe is moſt inconceivable to humane Capacities. For the *Scripture* ſometimes deſcribes God's Dwelling-place to be *in that Light unto which no Mortal Eye can approach.* And ſometimes that his *Pavillion is dark Clouds*, which no Eye can penetrate: And both do ſignifie how impoſſible a Thing it is to ſearch out God, and to find out the Almighty to Perfection.

Yet ſince he hath been graciouſly pleaſed to give us ſome refracted and allay'd *Rays* of himſelf, ſuch as we are able to bear, both in the Works of Creation and Providence, and likewiſe in his Holy Word, let us with all humble Modeſty take notice of thoſe Diſcoveries which he hath made of his Glory, wherein we ſhall find enough, if not to ſatisfie our Curioſity, yet to excite our Veneration, and by ſeeing ſome Glimpſes of his *Back-parts* which he cauſes to paſs before us, our Deſires will be made more earneſt after that Eſtate of conſummate Happineſs, where we ſhall for ever behold his Face, where we ſhall no longer ſee him *darkly through a Glaſs*, but ſhall *ſee him as he is*, and *know him as we are known by him.*

Glory therefore, according to the true and genuine import of the Word, ſignifies any Excellency or Perfection in a Subject that either is or deſerves to be accompanied with Fame and Renown. And hence we may well diſtinguiſh a Twofold Glory in God, the one *Eſſential*, the other *Declarative.*

The *Eſſential* Glory of God is the Collection and Syſtem of thoſe Attributes which Eternally and Immutably belong unto the Divine Nature.

The *Declarative Glory* of God is the Manifeſtation of thoſe his Attributes, ſo that his Creatures may take notice of them with Praiſe and Veneration. Both are here intended by our *Saviour* when he teacheth us to aſcribe the *Glory unto God.*

God is *Eſſentially Glorious* in all thoſe Attributes which appertain unto his Infinite Being, for each of them is infinitely perfect in itſelf, and the Complexion and concentring of them all together make up a Glory infinitely Great and Incomprehenſible. Thus his *Holineſs* is Glorious, *Exod.* 15. 11. *Glorious in Holineſs.* His *Power* is Glorious, 2 *Theſſ.* 1. 9. *They ſhall be puniſhed with Everlaſting Deſtruction from the Preſence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power.* Col. 1. 11. *Strengthened with all Might according to his Glorious Power.* His *Majeſty* is Glorious. *Pſal.* 145. 5. *I will ſpeak of the Glorious Honour of his Majeſty.* His *Kingdom* is Glorious, *Pſal.* 45. 11. *They ſhall ſpeak of the Glory of thy Kingdom.* His *Grace* and *Mercy* is Glorious,

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Epheſ. 1. 6. *To the Praiſe of the Glory of his Grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved.* And from all theſe reſult the *Glory* of his Great and Terrible *Name*, which hath in it an exceſſive Brightneſs and Luſtre from the Conſtellation of ſo many *Glories* united in it. *Deut.* 28. 58. *That thou mayeſt fear this Glorious and Fearful Name, the Lord thy God.* Yea, ſo infinite is this *Eſſential Glory* of God, that it diffuſeth and ſheddeth abroad its Light and Glory upon thoſe Things which have but Relation to him; therefore the *Church* is ſaid to be *Glorious*, becauſe made in ſome faint Reſemblance like unto God, *Pſal.* 45. 13. *The King's Daughter is all Glorious within*, Epheſ. 5. 27. *That he might preſent it to himſelf a Glorious Church, not having Spot or Wrinkle.* The *Goſpel* is therefore Glorious, becauſe it is that Glaſs wherein we ſee the *Glory* of God by a reflected Light. And as the Beams of the *Sun* falling upon a *Glaſs*, make it ſhine with an exceeding Brightneſs; ſo the *Glory* of *God* ſtriking upon the *Goſpel*, and from thence rebounding off to us, hath ſtamp'd it with an excellent Glory and Luſtre. 1 *Tim.* 1. 11. *According to the Glorious Goſpel of the Bleſſed God.* His *Throne* is Glorious, *Jerem.* 17. 12. *A Glorious High Throne from the Beginning is the Place of our Sanctuary.* Yea, not only his Throne, but that which might ſeem more deſpicable, his very *Footſtool* is Glorious, Eſa. 6. 13. *I will make the Place of my Feet Glorious.* Now this *Eſſential Glory* of God is both *Immutable* and *Incomprehenſible.*

Firſt, The *Eſſential Glory of God is Immutable*, the ſame for Ever; no Addition can be made unto it, nor no Diminution from it; for before there were ever any Creatures extant God was the ſame Glorious Being that now he is: Our Praiſes and Acknowledgments can no more contribute to this Glory than the Eye that ſees the *Sun* can increaſe the Light of it: For God's *Attributes* that are his Glory are no adventitious, accidental, Things, that may be aſſumed or laid aſide at Pleaſure, but they are all as neceſſary as his Nature is; and therefore though he be ſaid to *cloath himſelf with Light and Glory as with a Garment*, yet is it a Garment that cannot be put on or off; but whatſoever God is in any one Moment of Eternity, the ſame he is from all Eternity unto all Eternity: *He is the Lord who Changeth not, and with whom there is no Variableneſs, nor ſhadow of Turning.*

Indeed there are ſome *Titles* in God's Stile which ſeem not to have been always appertaining to him, and in reſpect of his Eternal Being may appear as New Stars in the Heavens, and argue ſome Alteration and Change in his Glory, as to be *Creator*, the Lord and *Governour* of this World, which he was not from all Eternity, nor could be till the Creatures were formed.

But here we muſt carefully diſtinguiſh between the *Abſolute* and *Relative Attributes* of God. His *Abſolute Titles* and *Attributes* are ſuch as belong unto him ſimply, without depending upon any Reſpect or Reference to any thing without and beſides himſelf; and ſo he is *Infinite*, *Eternal*, *Wiſe*, *Holy* and *Merciful*, in himſelf, and was ſo for ever, before there were any *Created Objects*, unto which, or upon which, he might manifeſt theſe his *Attributes.* But now the *Relative Titles* of God have a Time wherein they began, and wherein they ſhall likewiſe ceaſe; as to be a *Creator* and *Preſerver* of the World, as it now ſtands, wherein though there may be daily Mutations, yet God is the ſame, Immutable, becauſe theſe are only Extrinſecal Denominations, and ariſe meerly from that Change that is made upon the Creature; not from any Change that is made in God, for ſtill his *Power* is the ſame, whether he exert it in Creating or no: His *Wiſdom* is invariably the ſame before he manifeſted it in the Government of the World as ſince; and in all the Mutations that he brings upon the World he is ſtill the ſame *Immutable and Unchangeable God.* Only as thoſe who Sail think the *Shore* removes, when it is but the *Ship*: So are we ſubject to the ſame Miſtakes, and are apt to think *God is changed*, when only *our ſelves are changed*; that he moves from not being a Creator to be a Creator, when in Truth we only move from not being Creatures to be Creatures. And therefore when we ſay God is now a *Creator*, which once he was not; it implieth no more Change in God than it would in any *Object* which now is ſeen, which before was not ſeen; and this is only a different external Denomination that makes no real Change in the Thing; but it may be theſe *Speculations* are too abſtruſe, and therefore I ſhall not detain you longer in them.

Secondly, *As the Eſſential Glory of God is Immutable, ſo it is alſo Incomprehenſible*, for it is Infinite, and the entire Perfection of the *Deity.* It is the very Face of God, and therefore, *Exod.* 33. 15. when *Moſes* deſired God to ſhew him his Glory, God *Anſwers* him in the 20th Verſe, *Thou canſt not ſee my Face, for*

for there can no Man see my Face and live. And although the *Angels* in Heaven, and the *Spirits* of *Just* Men made perfect, have brighter and more radiant Discoveries made unto them of the *Glory* of God than any that we can bear, yet neither they nor any other Creature can possibly comprehend the full Latitude and utmost Extent of that *Glory*, any more than it is possible for a finite Thing to contain what is infinite. And hence it follows, that when the *Scripture* promiseth us as one great Part of our Reward that we *shall see God as he is*, 1 *John* 3. 7. we must not understand it as if ever we could arrive to such a Capacity as to see and know God as he is in his Infinite *Essence*; for God's *Essence* being altogether indivisible, to know God essentially, were to know him comprehensively, to know him as much as he is to be known in himself; that is, to know him as much as he knows himself, which is impossible, for no finite Understanding can comprehend an infinite *Object*. And yet our Sight and Knowledge of God shall so far surmount those dim and glimmering Discoveries which here he makes of himself to us, that comparatively the *Apostle* might well call it *a seeing him as he is, and a knowing him as we are known by him.*

And thus much for the *Essential Glory* of God, which is himself, and his own Infinite and Eternal Excellencies and Perfections. But besides this,

Secondly, There is another Glory of God, and that is his *Declarative Glory*, which is nothing else but that visible Splendor and Lustre that reflects from his *Essential Glory*, upon the Notice and Admiration of his Creatures: So that there is a very great difference between God's being Glorious and being Glorified. God is always equally Glorious in himself, so he was before the Foundations of the World were laid, before ever there were any Creatures to Celebrate his Praise; but he is glorified by his Creatures, declaring and setting forth the infinite Excellencies that are in his *Essence*. We cannot set any New *Gems* in his *Diadem* which did not shine there before; but when we observe and admire those several *Coruscations* of his *Attributes* which appear in those various Methods that God takes to manifest them, then are we said to give Glory unto God. His Holiness is always the same, but when we endeavour to imitate it, then we glorifie it. His Power is always the same, but we glorifie it when we depend upon it. His Mercy and Goodness is always the same, but we are said to glorifie it when we praise and extol it; and therefore God tells us, *Psal.* 50. 23. *Whoso offereth Praise glorifieth me.* We can add nothing to God by all the Glory that we ascribe unto him; but then we are said to give him *Glory* when we admire, and adore, and celebrate, those *Glories* that are in him. And so S. *John* 12. 28. Christ prays, *Father glorifie thy Name*; that is, make thine *Essential Glory*, the Glory and Brightness of thine *Attributes*, conspicuous to the World; to which *Request* there was an *Answer* returned from Heaven, *I have both glorified it, and will glorifie it again*; that is, (as I suppose the Words may well be interpreted,) I have already glorified my *Mercy*, which is my *Name*, in thy *Incarnation* and *Mission*, and I will also glorifie my *Justice* in thy *Passion* and *Crucifixion*: By the one declaring how Gracious I am in providing a Saviour for the ruin'd World, by the other how Just and Holy I am in exacting a full aud compleat Satisfaction for the Sins and Transgressions of the World.

Now we may both add unto and diminish from this *Declarative Glory* of God. We rob God of his *Glory* when we interpose between his *Attributes* and the Manifestation of them unto others. We hereby wrong and injure his Repute and Esteem in the World; and although we cannot pluck off any of his *Attributes* from him, (*For if thou sinnest, what dost thou against God? Job* 35. 6.) yet we obstruct the shining of them upon others; as in an *Eclipse* of the *Sun*, the *Moon* doth not darken the *Sun*, but only darkens us, and hinders the Light which still is the same in itself from breaking out upon the Lower World: So wicked Men by their Sins, though they cannot deprive God of the *Brightness of his Glory*, yet they impede the *Emanations* and Out-flowings of his Glory, and hinder others from admiring and adoring of it as they ought.

Now the Ways whereby God useth to express and declare his Glory are various.

First, He doth it by his Works, *Psal.* 19. 1. *The Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament sheweth his Handy-work.* For they manifest to the World the *Attributes* and *Perfections* of their Great Creator, even his *Wisdom*, *Power* and *Goodness*. Some of *God's Works* are his *Footsteps*, and some are his *Images*: The *Image* of God is seen in Rational and Intellectual Creatures; and by considering the *Wisdom*, *Understanding*, and *mental Faculties*, that God hath endowed them with, we may come to apprehend some

ſome faint Shadows and Reſemblances of the Infinite *Wiſdom* and *Knowledge* of the *Original Cauſe* of them, ſince whatſoever is in them muſt needs be in a far more Eminent Degree in the Author and Maker of them. But all God's Works carry, *quædam veſtigia Dei*, ſome Prints and Footſteps of God ſtamp'd upon them, whereby although they do not all ſhew his Likeneſs, yet they ſhew his *Power* and *Wiſdom* in framing them. *Rom.* 1. 20. *The inviſible Things of God from the Creation of the World are clearly ſeen, being underſtood by the Things that are made, even his Eternal Power and Godhead.* But he eſpecially glorifies himſelf in the Extraordinary Miraculous Works of his Hands, whether in a Way of Mercy, or in a Way of Judgment. *Exod.* 15. 11. *Who is like unto thee, O Lord, glorious in Holineſs, fearful in Praiſes, doing Wonders?* Pſal. 85. 9. *Surely his Salvation is nigh them that fear him, that Glory may dwell in our Land.* That is, God by his wonderful Deliverances of his Church and People eſtabliſheth his *Glory* to dwell among them.

Secondly, *God declares his exceeding and infinite Glory by his Word*; for therein he hath given us the moſt clear and lively Repreſentations of himſelf. And thoſe *Attributes* which his *Works* could never have diſcovered to us he hath manifeſted by his revealed Will. This is that *Table* on which he hath drawn his moſt reſembling *Image*, this is that Glaſs wherein *we beholding the Glory of the Lord are changed into the ſame Image from Glory to Glory*, 2. Cor. 3. 18. And it conſiſts of Two Parts, the *Law* and the *Goſpel*, the one diſcovers to us the *Glory* of God's *Juſtice*, the other the *Glory* of his *Mercy*, and both of them are *Glories*, 2 Cor. 3. 9. *For if the Miniſtration of Condemnation*, which is the Law, *be Glory, much more doth the Miniſtration of Righteouſneſs*, which is the Goſpel, *exceed in Glory.*

Thirdly, *The moſt clear Manifeſtation of the Glory of God was made in Chriſt, who was the Brightneſs of his Glory, and the expreſs Image of his Perſon*, Heb. 1. 3. In him Heaven was brought down to Earth, the Infinite comprehended, the Inviſible made conſpicuous, and all the *Miracle* both of Grace and Glory reconciled to our very Senſes. In him all the *Attributes* of the *Divine Nature* are ſo interwoven with the Infirmities of the *Humane*, that (if I may ſo ſpeak) God in him ſtudied to exhibit to us a Perſon like our ſelves, to give us ſome Advantage for our Apprehenſions to conceive of his Infinite Perfections. In him Omnipotence became weak, Eternity mortal; Innocence itſelf guilty; God, Man; the Creator, a Creature; the Maker of all, its own Workmanſhip; Life itſelf in him underwent the Sentence of Death: And all theſe ſtrange and impoſſible Truths, as for other Ends, ſo for this, that we might have ſome clearer Hints and Diſcoveries of the Infinite Glories of God, which in their full Brightneſs would only dazle and confound us, and were diſcernable by us only thus tempered and obſcured. And therefore the Apoſtle calls him *God manifeſted in the Fleſh*, 1 Tim. 3. 16. Certainly God in Fleſh muſt needs be rather veiled and hidden than manifeſted; but altho' to himſelf he was obſcured, yet to us he was manifeſted; becauſe if the Glory of the *Deity* had not been thus *clouded* and *allayed* it had not been *manifeſted.* For that *Light* which when tempered makes us *ſee*, will ſtrike us *blind* when too Glorious. As we may ſafer direct our Eyes towards the *Sun* when it is under an *Eclipſe* than when it ſhines with uncheck'd *Rays.* Hence St. *John*, ſpeaking of Chriſt in the mean Eſtate of his Humiliation, ſaith of him, St. *John* 1. 9. *We beheld his Glory, the Glory as of the only Begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth.*

Thus now you have ſeen what the *Eſſential* and *Declarative Glories* of God are, let us now conſider why this Attribute ſhould ſo eminently be aſcribed unto God, *Thine is the Glory.* Now there may be Three Reaſons given of it.

First, *Becauſe all that is Excellent and Glorious in the Creatures is to be found in God; and that either formally or eminently.* Is *Grace* or *Holineſs*, *Wiſdom* or *Strength*, *Duration*, *Juſtice* or *Mercy*, any Excellency in thoſe Creatures to which they are attributed? They are all in God formally, and infinitely more Glorious, and with infinite more Perfections, than they are in the Creatures: For Created Beings have but their limited and ſtinted Proportions of theſe *Qualifications*, but God is *infinitely Holy*, *infinitely Wiſe*, *infinitely Juſt*, and *infinitely Merciful:* Theſe Things are in him without Allays or Mixtures from their Contraries. He is *Holy* without any mixture of *Sin*, *Wiſe* without any mixture of *Folly*, *Juſt* without any mixture of *Iniquity*, *Merciful* without mixture of *Cruelty.* Yea, theſe are all in him without any Bounds ſet them by his Nature and Capacity; for they are his Nature, and therefore as infinite and as unbounded as it.

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Again, Thoſe Excellencies that are in the Creatures, and cannot formally agree with the *Divine Eſſence*, yet they are all in him eminently. Are any Creatures Excellent for the Beauty and Symmetry of their Parts, for Light, for Motion, or ſuch like Qualities, that do not belong unto the *Divine Nature?* Yet all theſe are eminently in God, for he is the Prime and Original Cauſe from whom they derive their Being and Perfection; ſo that all Glory is his, his incommunicatively from any other communicatively from him.

Secondly, *All Glory in reſpect of God is but Darkneſs and Obſcurity.* And ſo it was both a True and Divine Conception of *Plato* when he ſaid *That Light was but a Shadow of God*; for as Shadows are vaſtly dark when the Light that ſurrounds them appears, ſo God is infinitely brighter than Light itſelf: Yea, the Sun, that Created Fountain of Light, is but a Black Coal compared with this Eternal Father of Lights. This is well expreſſed by *Job* 25. 5. *Behold even to the Moon, and it ſhineth not, and the Stars are not pure in his Sight.* As the Light of the Sun when it ariſeth drowns and extinguiſheth all other Lights, (for its Brightneſs as it brings a Day to all the reſt of the World, ſo it brings a Night to the Stars,) ſo the Infinite Brightneſs of the Glory of God overcaſts all other Glory whatſoever with Night and Obſcurity. Hence it is ſaid *That God chargeth his Angels with Folly*, Job 4. 8. So that if thoſe Wiſe and Intellectual Creatures be compared with God they are but Fooliſh and Ignorant; for the Glory of his Infinite and Unſearchable Underſtanding ſo far tranſcends their Reach that they know nothing in Compariſon with him who knoweth all Things. The Two Chiefeſt Glories of Men are Wiſdom and Strength, Wiſdom to contrive, and Power to execute, theſe perfect him as he is a Man, but yet ſee how the Apoſtle undervalues both theſe when compared with God. 1 Cor 1. 25. *The Fooliſhneſs of God is wiſer than Men, and the Weakneſs of God is ſtronger than Men.* And therefore becauſe God's Glory is infinitely ſurpaſſing all others our Saviour aſcribes it to him peculiarly, *Thine is the Glory.*

Thirdly, *Becauſe all other Glories in the Creatures ſerve only to illuſtrate the Glory of the Great God.* Seeſt thou any Excellency and Perfection in any of the Creatures? God hath ſo endowed them with it, not that thou ſhouldeſt fix there, and make that thy Idol, but that thou mighteſt have a Hint from thence how much more perfect he himſelf is, and take thy Riſe from Viſible Excellencies to admire thoſe that are Inviſible. Is there ſo much Beauty and Harmony in the Frame of Nature? Think then how much more harmonious and orderly are the Counſels and Deſigns of the Great God, who hath contrived and diſpoſed the whole Courſe and Circuit of Second Cauſes. Is there ſo much Awe and Dread in the Preſence of an *Earthly Majeſty* to daunt all that are not Impudent and Profligate Offenders? Think then how infinitely Venerable is the Face of the Great God, ſince it is only ſome Ray of his Authority and Majeſty ſhining in them that makes them ſo dreadful. Is it ſuch a Pleaſant Thing to the Eye to behold the Light? Raiſe then not thine Eye of Senſe, but thine Eye of Faith, to conſider how infinitely Bright and Glorious that Light is that is never Clouded; that Light which though it infinitely diffuſe itſelf, yet reſides always in its Center; *For God is Light, and in him there is no Darkneſs at all*, 1 John 1. 5.

Thus you ſee that God hath therefore made any Created Being Glorious and Excellent, that it might ſerve as a Monitor to put us in Mind of his greater Glory; and the more Excellent any Perfections are in the Creature, the greater Advantage have we from them to raiſe our Meditations unto God.

And having thus ſhewn you why Glory is in ſuch an eſpecial Manner attributed unto God, *Thine is the Glory*, it remains now to conſider what Force this Plea hath to confirm our Faith, that we ſhall obtain from God thoſe Things which we pray for; and here let us ſee its Influence upon every Petition.

Firſt, The Glory is God's, therefore his Name ſhall be Hallowed. For his Declarative Power conſiſts in the Hallowing of his Name, ſince to Hallow is nothing elſe (as I ſhewed you in the Explication of that Petition) but to declare God to be Holy, and this is to give Glory unto God. Hence we have them both joined together, *Levit.* 10. 3. *I will be ſanctified by them that come nigh unto me, and before all the People I will be glorified.* To ſanctifie is to glorifie God. And therefore what better Argument can we urge that God would provide for the Sanctifying of his Name than this, that the Glory is his, and if his Name be prophaned in the

World,

World his Glory needs muſt ſuffer? How can the World know that God is infinitely Glorious in all his Perfections and Attributes, unleſs he take Care by his own Methods to have his Name Sanctified among his People in their Expreſſions and Actions, and to have it Sanctified upon the Wicked in their Plagues and Puniſhments? Therefore we may well pray in Faith, *Hallowed be thy Name, for thine is the Glory.*

Secondly, The Glory is God's, therefore *His Kingdom ſhall come.* For where ſhould he be Honoured but in his own Kingdom? God is greatly diſhonoured, and his Glory traduced, in the reſt of the World: And therefore if he will have any Glory ſecured and maintained, he muſt take Care of his Church to maintain and propagate it. *Pſal.* 76. 1. *In* Judah *is God known, his Name is great in* Iſrael. The Glory of a King falls together with his Kingdom; and it lays a Blot upon his Honour if he ſhould ſuffer his Enemies to overthrow it, while he hath Power to defeat their Enterprizes; ſince therefore the Glory is God's, we may be confident that he will provide for the Security and Welfare of his own Kingdom, and will for his Honours ſake eſtabliſh it ſo ſure, that the Gates of Hell, all the Power and Policy of Men and Devils, ſhall never be able to prevail upon it to its Extirpation.

Hence then whenſoever we ſee the Rage of the Profeſſed Enemies of the Name of Chriſt encroaching upon the Borders of his Dominions, when the State of the Church Militant ſeems viſibly to impair, or when the Hypocriſie and Wickedneſs of thoſe who are the profeſſed Enemies of Chriſt ſeems to eat out the very Heart and Power of True Godlineſs, we may well pray in Faith *Thy Kingdom come.* Lord, raiſe, Lord, enlarge, Lord, eſtabliſh, it, *For thine is the Glory*; and unleſs thou wilt confine thy Glory only to Heaven, and account the Praiſes and Eternal Hallelujahs of Saints and Angels a ſufficient Adoration for thy great Name, Lord, have regard to this thy Poor, Decaying, Kingdom, for only in it, and in Heaven, is thy Glory celebrated: And if thou leaveſt this thy Kingdom to be over-run by the Agents and Miniſters of the Devil, if Prophaneneſs and Idolatry gain ground in it ſo as to thruſt thee out of the Throne, what were this but to give thy Glory to another, which thou haſt promiſed not to do?

Thirdly, The *Glory is God's*, therefore *his Will ſhall be done in Earth as it is in Heaven.* The greateſt Glory that God can receive from us is by our Obedience, John 15. 8. *Herein* (ſaith our Saviour) *is my Father glorified, that ye bear much Fruit*; God's Chiefeſt Glory is his Holineſs, and therefore he is ſtiled Glorious in Holineſs. And we have no better Way to glorifie the Holineſs of God than by endeavouring to be Holy as he is Holy; for then do we declare it to be a Thing which we value as moſt Excellent and Glorious when we ſtrive to imitate it, and would fain get as much of it as our Frail Natures can receive. And therefore we may well pray in Faith *Thy Will be done, for thine is the Glory*, becauſe the greateſt Glory we can give to God is by *doing his Will.*

Fourthly, The *Glory is God's*, and therefore will he provide for us *our Daily Bread*, and all Things that are neceſſary for our Good. And therefore when God was miraculouſly to provide Bread for his People in the Wilderneſs he tells them, *Exod.* 16. 7. *In the Morning then ſhall ye ſee the Glory of the Lord.* And certainly it is not for the Glory of God that any of his ſhould want Things fitting and neceſſary for them: Only let us leave it to him to judge what is ſo; for although he ſhould reduce thee to a Morſel of Bread, and a Cup of Cold Water, yet he gives thee all that is fit for thee; and ſhould he give thee more it would not be a Boon, but a Curſe.

Fifthly, The *Glory is God's*, therefore will he forgive thy *Debts* and *Treſpaſſes*. The Wiſe Man hath told us, *Prov.* 19. 11. That *it is the Glory of a Man to paſs over a Tranſgreſſion*, and ſhall it not much more be the Glory of God, whoſe Mercies are infinitely more Glorious than our Charity can be? Yea, he tells us, *Prov.* 25. 2. That *it is the Glory of God to conceal a Thing*, that is, to hide and cover our Sins ſo that they ſhall not be found againſt us: And expreſly, *Epheſ.* 1. 6, 7. That *we have Redemption, even the Forgiveneſs of Sins, to the Praiſe and Glory of his Grace.* And I have ſhewed you, in opening of the Petition, that it is a very High Honour and Superiority to forgive, it is the Prerogative-royal of a King, and therefore we may pray with Faith, *Forgive us our Treſpaſſes, for thine is the Glory.*

Sixthly, The *Glory is God's*, therefore he will deliver us from the Aſſaults and Incurſions of our Enemies; he will deliver us from Temptations, or from the Evil of Temptation. He will not ſuffer us to be tempted above what we are able to bear, but will with every Temptation make a Way for us to eſcape; hereby to demonſtrate the Glory of his Wiſdom and Power, that it is above all the Wiles

and Power of the Devil and our Spiritual Enemies. And therefore we may well pray, *Lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil, for thine is the Glory*, because it is the Honour of God to defend his Servants from the Incurſions of his and their Enemies.

Thus we have treated on Three of God's Attributes aſcribed to him in this *Doxology*, his *Dominion*, his *Power*, and his *Glory*. It remains now to conſider the Amplification of all theſe by that Expreſſion, *For ever*, which is to be referred and accommodated to the foregoing Titles, *The Kingdom is thine for ever, the Power is thine for ever*, and *the Glory thine for ever*. Now this Application of it denotes to us the Eternity of God's Attributes, and conſequently his Nature.

Indeed this Particle, *For ever*, doth not always in *Scripture* ſignifie a ſtrict and proper Eternity, for it is often applied to Things of various Durations.

Firſt, Sometimes (moſt improperly) thoſe Things which have both beginning and end are ſaid to be for ever. So the *Moſaical* Pædagogy, and thoſe Rites and Obſervances which were impoſed upon the *Jews* by the *Levitical* Law, are ſaid to be everlaſting, although they were not to continue any longer than between *Moſes* and *Chriſt*, which Space was not compleatly Fifteen Hundred Years. Thus the Prieſthood is ſaid to be Eternal, *Numb.* 25. 13. where it is called, *The Covenant of an everlaſting Prieſthood.* So the Sprinkling of the Blood of the Paſſover is to be commanded to be obſerved for ever, *Exod.* 12. 24. So *Circumciſion* is called, *An everlaſting Covenant*, Gen. 17. 13. And many more ſuch Inſtances might be given.

Yea, Things of a far ſhorter Duration than theſe, ſuch as are only to continue during Life, are yet ſaid to be eternal. The Servitude of him that refuſed Freedom was to be for ever, *Exod.* 21. 6. that is, during his Natural Life. And ſo the *Pſalmiſt* often reſolves himſelf, and exhorts others to Praiſe and Magnifie God *for ever*. And indeed it is very ordinary in *Scripture* that thoſe Things are ſaid to be *for ever*, which were not to alter their State for ſome Continuance of Time, nor to be diſuſed till the Date prefixed to them were expired.

Secondly, Some Things which had no beginning, but ſhall have an end, are yet ſaid to be *for ever*. And ſuch (as they reſpect their Objects) are the Decrees or Foreknowledge of God, which ſhall in their due time be fulfilled. Thus, *Eph.* 3. 11. they are called, *The Eternal Purpoſe of God*, and yet they ceaſe under the Notions of Decrees and Preſcience, when that which was from all Eternity Decreed and Foreknown takes its Accompliſhment.

Thirdly, Thoſe Things which had a beginning, but never ſhall have an end, are ſaid to be *for ever*. And ſuch are the Angels, all of them Created in the beginning of Time, but their future Continuance is without bound or period. And the Saints after the Reſurrection are ſaid to be *made equal to the Angels*, becauſe they ſhall not die, *Luke* 20. 36. And Chriſt is ſaid to be *made a little lower than the Angels*, in that he taſted of Death, *Heb.* 2. 9. The good Angels live in eternal Beatitude, they *always behold the Face of God*, Matth. 18. 10. And the Evil Angels live in eternal Torments, and a never-dying Death; *They are reſerved in everlaſting Chains, under Darkneſs*, *Jude*, Verſe 6. And thus the Souls of Men are everlaſting. For being Spiritual Subſtances, and free from all Principles of Decay and Corruption, they ſhall for ever continue in that Eſtate and Condition for which their Actions in this Life have prepared them. And not the Soul alone, but the Body alſo, ſhall be eternally preſerved in its Being; *This Mortal muſt put on Immortality*, 1 Cor. 15. 53. And then *ſhall we for ever be with the Lord*, 1 Theſ. 4. 17. And yet all theſe had once their beginning by the Creating Word of God, but are eternal, *à parte poſt*, and ſhall always retain thoſe Natures and Beings.

Fourthly, That is moſt ſtrictly and properly ſaid to be eternal, and for ever, which neither hath beginning nor end, whoſe Proſpect both Ways is infinite and boundleſs. And thus God only is for ever, and it is an incommunicable Attribute of his Divine Eſſence to be ſo. But becauſe all the Perfections and Properties of God are God himſelf, therefore this Everlaſtingneſs here in the *Doxology* aſcribed to his *Kingdom*, his *Power*, and his *Glory*, are ſaid to be *for ever*. Yet not only theſe, but whatſoever is in God, is abſolutely Eternal. His *Righteouſneſs is an everlaſting Righteouſneſs*, Pſal. 119. 142. *His Truth endureth for ever*, Pſal. 117. 2. *His Mercy is for ever*, Pſal. 136. 1. His Mercy endureth for ever, which is there made the Burden of that moſt excellent Song, and the ſweet cloſe of every Verſe in it. *His Love is for ever*, Jer. 31. 3. *I have loved thee with an everlaſting Love.*

Now

Now in treating of the Attributes of God I ſhall endeavour to ſhew theſe Three Things.

Firſt, What the True and Proper Notion of Eternity is.

Secondly, That God is Eternal.

Thirdly, What Encouragement our Faith may have from this Attribute of God's Eternity, that thoſe Things which we pray unto him for ſhall be granted unto us.

Firſt, Let us ſee what Eternity is. And here though it be altogether impoſſible exactly to deſcribe what is Boundleſs and Infinite, yet to help our Weak and Shallow Conceptions we may take this Notion of it. Eternity is a Duration which hath neither Beginning, nor End, nor Succeſſion, of Parts: Or, according to the Common Deſcription of *Boethius*, *Eſt interminabilis vitæ tota ſimul & perfecta poſſeſſio*; it is the Compleat Poſſeſſion of an Endleſs Life all at once; ſo that it is diſtinguiſh'd from all other Durations whatſoever.

Firſt, In that other Durations have had their Beginnings; for all Things were Created either in Time, or with Time, but Eternity was before all Time, and ſhall be after it.

Secondly, In that all Temporal Durations are ſucceſſive, meaſured by the Motions of Heavenly Bodies, by Years, Days and Hours, but Eternity is Permanent; it is but one abiding Inſtant, and hath no Parts following one after another; and though it comprehends all Time within its infinite Circle, yet it doth not move along with Time. For as Rivers are contained within their Banks, and flow along by them Part after Part, without any Motion of the Banks themſelves; ſo Time is contained within Eternity, and flows along in it, without any Motion or Succeſſion of Eternity itſelf.

This I confeſs is hard, if not altogether impoſſible, to be formed into an Idea; yet conceiving Reaſon will infallibly demonſtrate that Being which neither hath Beginning nor End, can have no Succeſſion in its Duration; for where-ever there is Succeſſion, there muſt needs be a Priority, and where-ever there is a Priority, there muſt needs be Beginning. And if Eternity did conſiſt, and were made up of ſuch Parts as are equal and commenſurate to our Years and Days, it muſt needs follow that theſe Parts themſelves muſt be infinite; for if they be but infinite, we ſhall come to a beginning, whch is not to be granted in Eternity. And if they be infinite, then in Eternity there muſt be as many Millions of Years as of Minutes, and conſequently a Minute would be equal to a Million of Years; yea, the leaſt Part of a Minute would be equal to it; which is groſly abſurd.

But I ſhall not detain you with theſe Philoſophical Speculations: Only when we ſay that God is from everlaſting to everlaſting, we ought not to conceive that there is any Succeſſion in his Duration; that he grows older, or that he hath continued longer this Day than he was Yeſterday. For though when we ſpeak of God we are forced to uſe ſuch Expreſſions, and denote Succeſſion in his Being, as that he was from everlaſting, and that he ſhall be to everlaſting, yet to ſay that God was, or that he ſhall be, is only allowable by Reaſon of the Penury of our Conceptions: But in ſtrict Propriety theſe are Derogatory to him; for God neither was, nor ſhall be, but only is, and enjoys his Eternal Eſſence immutably and unſucceſſively. And therefore when *Moſes* demanded his Name, that he might inform the *Iſraelites* who that God was that would take Pity of their Sufferings, he tells him, thou ſhalt ſay unto them, *I AM hath ſent me to you*, Exod. 3. 14. And this indeed is the beſt and fitteſt Expreſſion of his Eternity and Unchangeableneſs.

Yea, and the *Scripture* hath given us one more high and lofty Expreſſion of it, *Pſal.* 90. 4. *A Thouſand Years in thy Sight are but as Yeſterday when it is paſt*; what is Yeſterday to this Day? But a meer Nothing. So a Thouſand Years, yea, all the Thouſand Years, and all the Time that ever the Orbs of Heaven ſhall ſpin out to the World, is all to God but as Yeſterday when it is paſt; he lives not by it, nor is his Being meaſured out by Days or Years, but it a Perpetual *Now*, a Standing *Moment*, an Indiviſible and Permanent Inſtant, without Flux or Viciſſitude. Indeed it is wholly inconſiſtent with Eternity, and an infinite Duration, that there ſhould be any Thing paſt, or any Thing to come, in it; for what is already paſt cannot be Infinite becauſe it is already ended, and what is to come cannot be Eternal becauſe there was ſomething going before it. And from hence it appears that a Duration which is Eternal muſt be without Beginning, without End, and without any Succeſſion of Parts.

Now, Secondly, That God is thus Eternal appears both from Clear Evidence of Scripture, and Invincible Demonſtrations of Reaſon itſelf.

First, The Scripture bears abundant Witness to the Truth of this Attribute, *Psal.* 102. 25, 26, 27. *The Heavens are the Works of thy Hands, they shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old as a Garment, but thou art the same, and thy Years shall have no end.* Psal. 90. 2. *Before the Mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the Earth and the World, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.* Isa. 43. 10. *Before me was there no God formed, neither shall there be after me.* 1 Tim. 1. 17. *Now to the King Eternal and Immortal, the only Wise God, be Honour and Glory.* But I cannot stand to cite all the Testimonies that might be alledged.

Secondly, The Eternity of God may be demonstrated by clear and irrefragable Reason. And that I shall give you in these several Gradations.

First, It is absolutely necessary that there be some First Cause of all Things that are made, which is not itself made or produced by any. For the Series of Causes is not infinite, otherwise no Effect could be produced, since what is infinite cannot be pass'd through. And if all Beings that are are caused by some pre-existent Being, then there is not, nor ever was, a Being, before which there was not another; and so this gross Absurdity will follow, that before there was a Being, there was a Being, which is a Contradiction. Therefore we must necessarily rest in some First Cause, from which all Things have their Origin, and is itself caused by no other.

Secondly, This First Cause of all is God. For whatsoever is the First Cause of all Things must needs be Almighty, in that it produceth them; and All-wise, in that it Governs and Maintains them; and Incomprehensible, for that Being which hath no Cause cannot be perfectly known, since a perfect and comprehensive Knowledge of Things is derived only from the Knowledge of the Causes of them. Now whatsoever is Almighty, All-wise, and Incomprehensible, is that God whom we adore.

Thirdly, God being the First Cause of all Things, and not produced himself by any other pre-existent Being, it is impossible that there should be any Time wherein he was not. For that which once was not, either shall never be, or must be made: And therefore it being wholly inconsistent with the Notion of a First Cause to be made or produced, it clearly follows that we can never conceive a Time wherein God was not.

Hence it appears that God is Eternal, *à parte ante*, or from Everlasting: And that he is also Eternal, *à parte post*, or to Everlasting, appears,

Fourthly, Because that which hath no beginning of its Duration, can have no end of it. For the First Cause of all not depending upon any for the Production of its Being, can depend upon none for the continuation of it, and therefore of Necessity must exist to all Eternity.

And thus you see how much Reason alone can speak for the Eternity of God. The Demonstrations which I have now given you are so clear and perspicuous, that would those Atheistical Spirits, who acknowledge no God but their Reason, duly ponder the force of them, they would even by their Deified Reason be inforced to acknowledge the Living and Eternal God, whom we adore. Possibly to some these Things may seem difficult, to others they may seem needless, because we all readily acknowledge the Eternity of God. But certainly if ever there were need to confirm the Doctrines and Articles of Faith by Arguments drawn from the Principles of Reason, it is now in these Days of ours, wherein Atheism had gotten Ground and Credit; and it is look'd upon as a Sign of a pregnant Wit, and mature and deep Judgment, daringly to dispute against the Being and Attributes of God, and whatsoever is most Sacred and Venerable in Religion.

But certainly if there be Reason in any Thing, there is Reason to believe the Existence of Perfection of the Deity, not only from the Oracles of the *Scripture*, which are enough to satisfie a Christian, but from the Dictates also of Natural Light, and the Evidence that Reason brings in; which are so cogent and demonstrative, that he that will notwithstanding be an Atheist, must also be Irrational; and whosoever will say in his Heart there is no God, or that God is not Eternal, or that God is not infinitely Perfect, we may well say of him as the *Psalmist* doth, that he is a Fool, *The Fool hath said in his Heart there is no God*, Psal. 14. 1.

And thus I have shewed unto you what Eternity is in its proper Notion, and have evinced likewise that God is in the strictest Sense Eternal.

And now before I come to the Third Thing propounded let us here make some few Practical Reflections upon this Eternity of God.

First,

First, Glorifie this Inconceivable and Glorious Attribute, extol and venerate it with your Higheſt Thoughts and Loweſt Proſtration, ſending your Adoring Thoughts as far in to the Eternity of God as poſſible a Humane and Finite Underſtanding can dart them; for though Eternity be ſuch a Deep as can never be fathomed, ſince it hath no Bottom, yet it is Sweet and Delightful to loſe our ſelves, and be ſwallowed in this Abyſs of Being. Thoſe Proſpects are moſt pleaſant to the Eye that have nothing to bound them, no Limits to reſtrain the Sight in its free range; ſo it is the moſt Pleaſant Proſpect to the Mind to contemplate ſuch an Object where there can be no Boundaries ſet to our Apprehenſions, and where we can ſee no farther, not for want of Object, but for want of Sight.

Secondly, Is God Eternal from Everlaſting to Everlaſting? Let us leave then the Care of all Future Events unto him, for he is the ſame Unchangable God; and although we be but of Yeſterday, and may not be to Morrow, and when we die then all our Thoughts periſh with us, yet the Everlaſting God can and will order all Affairs for his Glory, and carry on our Purpoſes if they be conformable unto his. We oftentimes are anxious and ſollicitous about what may happen after our Deceaſe, either to the World, or to thoſe we love beſt in it; but let us commit this Care to God; he ever lives, and hath the ſame ever Infinite Power, and Infinite Wiſdom, to diſpoſe of all Events as it ſhall pleaſe him. Let us therefore caſt theſe Burdens upon him, who ſhall ſtill ſurvive as a Father for our Children, as an Husband to provide for our Widows, as a King and Governour to provide for our Country, as the Univerſal Lord and Monarch to provide for the Affairs of the whole World, according to the All-wiſe Maxims of his Eternal Counſels.

Thirdly, Is God Eternal? Why then ſhould we not give unto him the ſame Honour, Reſpect, and Service, that his Saints have done in former Ages and Generations? He is ſtill the ſame God, his Holineſs, and his Juſtice, and his Sovereignty, ſtill the ſame. And if the Conſideration of theſe his Attributes had ſuch a Mighty Influence upon the Saints of former Times to engage them to a Strict and Holy Life, why ſhould they not now have the like Influence upon us? He is the Lord, he changeth not; and therefore as abſolutely as he requir'd Obedience from them, ſo abſolutely now doth he require it from us. But the Truth is, we live as if God were grown Old, as if his Juſtice were now out of Date, or his Power Decrepit; we live as if there were Decays in the *Deity*, yea, indeed as if there were no God in the World to take notice of and puniſh our Sins. Certainly that God, who once lived to denounce Threatnings, ſtill lives to execute them; he is the ſame Holy, the ſame Powerful, the ſame Juſt, God that ever he was, why then ſhould not we give him the ſame Honour, and Reſpect, and Service? Why ſhould we not Love and Fear him as the Saints of Old have done, ſince we have the ſame God whom they worſhipped, and a God who requires from us the ſame Duties and Obſervances?

Let us now proceed to the Third and Laſt Thing propounded, which was to ſhew you what Encouragement our Faith may have from this Attribute of God, Eternity, to expect the grant of thoſe Good Things which we pray for; for our Saviour hath taught us to uſe this as a Plea with God in our Prayers, *For thine is the Kingdom*, &c. *for ever.*

And indeed this Encouragement is great and manifold; for hence we may with Confidence rely upon God for Merciful Supplies in all our Wants, for Deliverance in all our Dangers, for Supports under all our Troubles, and for Comfort under all our Sorrows, becauſe he is Eternal; and therefore the ſame God who hath heretofore in all Ages of the World done great Things for all thoſe who truſt in him. And therefore *the Kingdom*, *and the Power*, *and the Glory*, which were a forcible Plea with God in former Times, a Plea to which he could deny nothing when urged in Faith, have ſtill the ſame Efficacy and Validity now; for theſe and all other of God's Attributes are his for ever. Therefore, O Chriſtian, now lay hold on God's Strength, and plead with him what he hath done for his Children in former Ages! How he hath forgiven the Penitent, revived the Contrite, reſtored Joy and Salvation to Dejected and Deſpondent, Spirits; how he hath wrought for the Sanctification of his great Name; by what Wonderful Providences and Wiſe Methods he hath eſtabliſhed and enlarged his Kingdom; how he hath ſtrengthened the weak Hands and feeble Knees, and made thoſe who were without Might able by his Grace to perform the hardeſt Duties in fulfilling his Will and Commandments; how he hath provided for all their Neceſſities, rebuked the Temptations

of

of the Wicked One, and kept them in the World from the Evil of the World. And then urge, Lord, thou art ſtill the ſame God, Eternal in thy Eſſence, Immutable in thy Attributes; thy Power, thy Wiſdom, and thy Mercy, are the ſame that ever they were, and therefore vouchſafe unto us the ſame Favour. This Plea offers an Holy Violence to Heaven, a Violence that is pleaſing and acceptable unto God, which he will not, he cannot, reſiſt. If we endeavour to be of the ſame Diſpoſitions and Affections with the Saints of Old we may be ſure to obtain of God's Hands the ſame Mercy and Salvation. See how *Aſaph* inſtructs the Church to make uſe of the Memorials of God's former Loving-kindneſſes, and the Great and Wonderful Works that he had wrought for their Fathers, *Pſal.* 78. 4, 6, 7. *We will ſhew to the Generations to come the Praiſes of the Lord, and his Strength, and the Wonderful Works that he hath done, that one Generation may declare them to another, that they may ſet their Hope in God.* And therefore the Conſideration of the Eternity and Unchangableneſs of God is of Vaſt and Infinite Comfort, and a Mighty Advantage for the Strengthening our Faith in pleading with God for the ſame Mercies which he hath formerly beſtowed upon others, becauſe he is the ſame Yeſterday, to Day, and for Ever.

And thus I have finiſhed the *Doxology*, and therein conſider'd the Four Glorious Attributes aſcribed unto God in it, his Sovereignty, his Omnipotence, his Excellency, and his Eternity.

There remains but One Thing more to be ſpoken of in this Prayer, and that is the Concluſion and Ratification of all in that ſhort Particle, *Amen.*

Of this I ſhall ſpeak but very briefly, and ſo ſhut up this whole Subject.

This Word *Amen* is ſometimes prefixed before a Speech, and ſometimes affixed after it: When it is prefixed before it is aſſertory, and ſo we find it very often in the *Evangeliſts*; for whereſoever our Saviour uſeth the Word *Verily*, it is no other but *Amen: Verily, Verily, I ſay unto thee*, i. e. *Amen, Amen, I ſay unto thee*, which is a Vehement Aſſertion of the Truth and Neceſſity of what he ſpeaks: And our Saviour uſeth it to gain the more Attention and Belief of what he deſires; thus John 3. 5. *Amen, Amen, I ſay unto thee, except a Man be Born of Water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* So *John* 16. 23. *Amen, Amen, I ſay unto you, whatſoever ye ſhall ask of the Father in my Name he will give it you.* And ſo in many other Places in the *Evangeliſts*. How backward are we to believe, ſince our Infidelity is ſuch that it conſtraineth the Son of God, who is Truth itſelf, to uſe Aſſeverations and Proteſtations to win our Aſſent unto him?

Secondly, As this Particle, *Amen*, uſed in the Beginning of a Speech is aſſertory of the Undoubted Truth of it, ſo when it is ſubjoin'd and us'd at the End of it is Precatory, and ſignifies our Earneſt Deſire to have our Prayers heard, and our Petitions granted. *Pſal.* 41. 13. *Bleſſed be the Lord God of* Iſrael *from Everlaſting to Everlaſting, Amen, and Amen.* Pſal. 72. 19. *Let the whole Earth be filled with his Glory, Amen, and Amen.* Pſal. 106. 48. *Bleſſed be the Lord God of* Iſrael *from Everlaſting to Everlaſting, and let all the People ſay Amen.* In the former Senſe of the Words, as it is prefixed to a Speech, it ſignifies *ſo it is*; in this latter, as it is added to a Petition or Requeſt, it ſignifies *ſo be it.*

Now this teacheth us to put up all our Petitions, Firſt, with Underſtanding, duly weighing and conſidering what it is we ask of God; for when we uſe Vain and Inſignificant Babbling how can we ſeal and cloſe them up with an Hearty *Amen?* And this condemns the Mockery of the *Papiſts*, who, becauſe God underſtands what is uttered in a Language to them unknown, think that they may lawfully pray to him in a Tongue which they themſelves underſtand not. But with what Zeal, with what Affection, can they cloſe up ſuch Prayers with an *Amen?* This is like ſetting a Seal to an Inſtrument which they know not what it contains; and is expreſly condemned by the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 14. 16. *How ſhall he that occupieth the Room of the Unlearned ſay Amen at thy giving of Thanks, ſeeing he underſtands not what thou ſayeſt?*

Secondly, It teacheth us to preſent all our Requeſts to the Throne of Grace with Fervent Zeal and Affection. *Amen* is a Wing to our Prayers; it is the Bow that ſhoots them up to Heaven. And although every Petition as we utter them before God ſhould be accompanied with an Earneſt and Hearty Deſire to have them heard and granted, yet at the Cloſe of them all we are to redouble and repeat this our Deſire in the Word *Amen*; wherein we do as it were briefly and ſuccinctly

pray

pray over again all that we had prayed before, and in one Word beg of God that he would give us all that he had before asked of him.

And therefore whether we pray our ſelves, or join in Prayers with others, and make their Petitions ours, we ought to atteſt our Underſtanding of, our Aſſent unto, and our earneſt Deſires after, the Mercies that are begged, by ſealing up the Prayers with an *Amen*. And certainly it would be a very beſeeming Thing if *Amens* were audible and ſounding, unleſs we are aſhamed to be thought to pray when others pray, and to make uſe of other Expreſſions to preſent our Petitions. When we come to the Publick Worſhip we are not to look upon the Miniſter only as praying for the People, but he is the Peoples Mouth unto God, and it is or ought to be the Prayer of the whole Congregation which he preſents. They pray with him, and by him; and every Petition that he makes to God ought to be ratified with an *Amen* ſent from our very Hearts: Which if we ſincerely and affectionately perform, we have abundant Aſſurance that what is confirmed by ſo many Suffrages on Earth, ſhall likewiſe be confirmed by our Father which is in Heaven. And how Beautiful, how Becoming, would this be when the whole Church ſhall thus Conſpire together in their Requeſts? St. *Jerom* tells us, *It was the Cuſtom in his Days to cloſe up every Prayer with ſuch an unanimous Conſent, that their* Amens *run and ecchoed in the Church, and ſounded like the Fall of Waters, or the Noiſe of Thunder.* This would be a Teſtimony of our hearty Conſent to the Things we pray for. And if any Two that ſhall agree upon Earth, touching any Thing that they ſhall ask, they ſhall have it granted them, as our Saviour hath promiſed, *Matth.* 18. 19. then certainly the joint Prayers of a whole Multitude of Chriſtians muſt needs have a kind of Omnipotency in them, and be able to do any Thing with God.

And thus I have, with God's Aſſiſtance, given you a brief *Expoſition* of this moſt Excellent Prayer of our *Saviour*; the Lord Sanctifie it unto you, and make it a Means to help you to pray with more Underſtanding, with ſtronger Faith, and with greater Fervency.

The End of the Larger Expoſition.

A Catechiſtical

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BY WAY OF

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Anſw. It is both: That it is to be uſed as a Form appears, *Luke* 11. 2. When ye pray, ſay, *Our Father which art in Heaven*, &c That it is a Pattern, *Matth.* 6. 9. After this Manner therefore pray ye: *Our Father which art in Heaven*, &c.

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2. The Petitions and Requeſts.
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Q. *What is the Preface of this Prayer?*

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A. That in the beginning of our Prayers we ought ſeriouſly to conſider, and reverently to expreſs, the Glorious Attributes of God, as an Excellent Means to compoſe us into an Holy Fear of his Divine Majeſty.

Q. *How many are the Petitions contained in this Prayer?*

A. Six, whereof the Three firſt reſpect God's Glory, and the Three laſt our own Good.

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A. One relates to our Temporal, the other to our Spiritual, Good.

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Q. *What obſerve you from placing the Petition for our Temporal Good in the midſt of this Prayer?*

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Q. *In what Reſpects may God be ſtiled Father?*

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1. Firſt, In reſpect of the Eternal Generation of his Son; and ſo this Title is proper only to the Firſt Perſon of the Trinity.
2. In reſpect of Creation and Providence; and ſo he is the Father of all. Mal. 2. 10. *Have we not all One Father? Hath not One God created us?*
3. In reſpect of Regeneration and Adoption; and ſo he is the only Father of the Faithful, *John* 1. 12, 13. *But as many as received him, to them gave he Power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believed on his Name*; which were Born not of Blood, nor of the Will of Fleſh, nor of the Will of Man, but of God, *Rom.* 8. 15, 16. *For ye have not received the Spirit of Bondage again to Fear, but ye have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry* Abba *Father. The Spirit itſelf beareth Witneſs with our Spirit that we are the Children of God.*

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Q. *But ſince God is everywhere preſent, why hath our Saviour taught us to direct our Prayers to our Father in Heaven?*

A. Firſt, Becauſe Heaven is the moſt Glorious Place of God's Reſidence, and therefore God is repreſented to us in Heaven to affect us with his Glory and Majeſty.

Secondly, Becauſe God nowhere hears our Prayers with Acceptation but only in Heaven; for there only are they repreſented by Chriſt's Interceſſion which he makes in both Natures.

Q. *What learn you from our being commanded to direct our Prayers to God in Heaven?*

A. That we ſhould ſo pray as to pierce Heaven, which cannot be done by the Strength and Intention of our Voice, but of our Zeal and Affection.

Q. *Is the Voice neceſſary in Prayer?*

A. It is only upon Three Accounts.

1. As that which God requires ſhould be employed in his Service.

2. When in ſecret it may be an Help to raiſe our Affections, ſtill keeping it within the Bounds of Decency and Secrecy.

3. In our joining with others it is an Help likewiſe to raiſe and quicken their Affections.

Q. *What is the Firſt Petition of the Lord's Prayer?*

A. Hallowed be thy Name.

Q. *What is meant by the Name of God?*

A. Firſt, God's Name is himſelf, *Pſal.* 20. 1. *The Lord hear thee in the Day of Trouble, the Name of the God of* Jacob *defend thee*; and many other Places.

Secondly, The Name of God is any Perfection aſcribed unto him, whereby he hath made himſelf known unto us.

Q. *What are the Names of God?*

A. His Titles, and his Attributes.

Q. *What are his Titles?*

A. They are many; as *Jehovah*, which ſignifies Being, and giving Being; *Creator*, denoting his Infinite Power; *Lord* and *King*, denoting his Authority and Dominion; *Father*, ſignifying his Care and Goodneſs towards his Creatures; *Redeemer*, noting his Mercy and Grace in delivering them from Temporal Evils, and eſpecially from Eternal Death.

Q. *What are the Attributes of God?*

A. They are of Two Sorts, either Incommunicable or Communicable.

Q. *Which are his Incommunicable Attributes?*

A. Such as are ſo proper to the Divine Eſſence that they cannot in any Meaſure or Reſemblance be aſcribed to the Creatures; ſuch are the Eternity, Immenſity, Simplicity, and Immutability.

Q. *What are his Communicable Attributes?*

A. They are ſuch as may in ſome Analogy and Reſemblance be found in the Creatures, as Holineſs, Juſtice, Mercy, Truth, Wiſdom, and Power.

Q. *Since they are to be found in the Creatures, how are then the Proper Names of God?*

A. They are the Proper Names of God when they are applied to him free from all thoſe Imperfections that attend them in the Creatures.

Q. *What are theſe Imperfections?*

A. They are Three.

1. Firſt, That all the Perfections of the Creatures are not originally from themſelves, but derivatively from God.

2. Secondly, They are not infinite, but limited.

3. Thirdly, They are not unchangeable, but mutable.

Q. *How then do theſe become the Names of God?*

A. When we aſcribe them unto God as originally from himſelf, and infinitely and unchangeably in himſelf.

Q. *What is it to hallow this Name of God?*

A. It ſignifies to make his Name Holy?

Q. *How can God, or his Name, be made Holy?*

A. Neither by Dedication to Holy Uſes, nor by Infuſion of Holy Habits, both which are frequently in Scripture called Hallowing or Sanctifying, but only by Declaration of his Glory and Holineſs.

Q. *How*

Q. *How do we Hallow the Name of God by Declaration?*

A. When in our moſt Reverend Thoughts we obſerve and admire the Expreſſions of his Attributes, and endeavour to ſet them forth to others both in Words and Actions.

Q. *What pray you for in this Petition,* Hallowed be thy Name?

A. For Three Things in the General.

1. Firſt, We beg ſuch Graces for our ſelves as may enable us to ſanctifie the Name of God.

Q. *What are they eſpecially?*

A. Knowledge and Underſtanding of his Nature, Will and Works, Thankfulneſs for every Mercy, Patience under every Affliction, Faith in his Word and Promiſes; for to believe God's Word gives Glory to his Name, *Rom.* 4. 20. *He ſtaggered not at the Promiſe of God through Unbelief, but was ſtrong in Faith, giving Glory to God:* An Holy and Exemplary Life, whereby we eſpecially glorified God, and enduce others to do ſo too. *Matth.* 5. 16. *Let your Light ſo ſhine before Men, that they may ſee your Good Works, and glorifie your Father which is in Heaven.* And laſtly, Savoury and Well-order'd Speech, that we may not prophane the Name of God by Oaths, or Curſes, or vain Uſing it, but ſpeak of him with all Holy Fear and Reverence.

Q. *What elſe do we beg of God in this Petition?*

A. We beg that others alſo may receive Grace to enable them to ſanctifie his Name. And, Thirdly, We beg that God would ſo over-rule all Things that his Glory may be promoted by them.

Q. *What learn you from Chriſt's making this the Firſt Petition of his Prayer?*

A. 1. Firſt, That the Glory of God is to be preferred by us before all other Things whatſoever. *John* 12. 27, 28. *Now is my Soul troubled, and what ſhall I ſay? Father, ſave me from this Hour; but for this Cauſe came I unto this Hour. Father, glorifie thy Name. Then came there a Voice from Heaven, ſaying, I have both glorified it, and will glorifie it again.*

2. Secondly, That in the Beginning of our Prayers we ought to beg Aſſiſtance from God to preſent them that his Name may be hallowed.

Q. *What is the Second Petition of the Lord's Prayer?*

A. Thy Kingdom come.

Q. *How manifold is the Kingdom of God?*

A. It is Twofold, either Univerſal, or his Peculiar Kingdom.

Q. *What is God's Univerſal Kingdom?*

A. The whole World, both Heaven and Earth, and Hell itſelf, and all Things in them: *Pſalm* 103. 19. *The Lord hath prepared his Throne in the Heavens, and his Kingdom ruleth over all.*

Q. *How doth God exerciſe his Dominion over this Kingdom?*

A. By the Power of his Providence, diſpoſing of all his Creatures, and all their Actions, according to his Will.

Q. *But ſince Wicked Men are Rebels againſt God how doth he maintain his Dominion over them?*

A. Three Ways.

1. Firſt, In that they cannot ſin without his Permiſſion.

2. Secondly, In that he reſtrains them when he pleaſeth.

3. Thirdly, In that he juſtly puniſheth them for their Sins, ſometimes in this Life, always in the next.

Q. *What is God's Peculiar Kingdom?*

A. His Kingdom of Grace, which is the Church, and that either Militant here on Earth, or elſe Triumphant in Heaven.

Q. *How is the Church Militant to be conſider'd?*

A. As it either Viſible or Inviſible.

Q. *What is the Viſible Church of God here on Earth?*

A. It is a Company of People openly profeſſing the Truths that are neceſſary to Salvation, and celebrating the Ordinances appointed by Jeſus Chriſt.

Q. *What is the Univerſal Kingdom or Church of God?*

A. It is a Company of True Believers, who have Eternal and Inviſible Communion with God by his Spirit, and their Faith.

Q. *What obſerve you of both?*

A. Its Mixture and Imperfection; for in the Visible Church there is a great Mixture of Persons, the Bad with the Good; in the Invisible there is a great Mixture in Persons of Evil with Good, and Sin with Grace.

Q. You have formerly told us that the Church of Christ in its Progress is the Church Militant, either Visible or Invisible; and that the Church of Christ in its Consummation is the Church Triumphant: What is this Church Triumphant?

A. The General Assembly of such Glorious Angels as never fell, and such Glorified Saints as are raised from their Fall.

Q. What is that Kingdom which in this Petition we pray may come?

A. Not the Universal Kingdom of God, which is the World, for his Dominion therein is always the same, but only the Peculiar Kingdom, which is his Church, and more especially that Part of it which is Militant on Earth.

Q. In what Respects may God's Kingdom be said to come?

A. In Three.

1. First, In respect of the Means of Grace and Salvation, which are the Word and Sacraments; for where these are dispers'd there God's Kingdom is erected.

2. Secondly, In respect of the Efficacy of this Means in the Conversion of Sinners, whereby they are brought into the Invisible Kingdom of Christ.

3. Thirdly, In respect of the Perfection of this Kingdom; for then God's Kingdom comes when the Saints Graves are encreased, when their Souls are received into Heaven, and when both Souls and Bodies are consummated in *Glory*.

Q. What do we pray for when we say Thy Kingdom come?

A. 1. First, That God should plant his Church where it is not; that all the Kingdoms of the Earth may become the Kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ.

2. Secondly, That his Ordinances may be purely and powerfully administred, his Word truly preached, which is the Law of his Kingdom, and his Sacraments duly dispens'd, which are the Seals of it.

3. Thirdly, That God would send into his Church Able and Faithful Ministers, to be Faithful Stewards of the Mysteries of the Gospel.

4. Fourthly, That the Ministry of the Word may be successful to the Conversion of those that hear it.

5. Fifthly, That all the Churches of Christ may be kept from Error, Schism, Superstition and Idolatry; and that True Doctrine and Due Discipline may be continued in them to the End of the World.

Q. But may we not pray also for the Church Triumphant in Heaven?

A. We may for the fulfilling of what is promised.

1. First, That the Number of them may be compleated.

2. Secondly, That their Persons may be compleated; that the Bodies of those Saints which now sleep in the Dust may be raised, united to their Souls, and both made eternally glorious in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Q. Is not this praying for the Dead so justly condemned of Popish Superstition?

A. No; for we pray not for another State, as the Papists do when they pray for Souls to be deliver'd out of Purgatory, but we pray for the Perfection of the same State in which the Souls of the Faithful already are; we pray not for their Release out of Torments, but for a Joyful Resurrection, which both they and we expect; and whatsoever may be the Object of our Faith and Hope may well be the Subject of our Prayers.

Q. Which is the Third Petition?

A. Thy Will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven.

Q. How is the Will of God distinguish'd?

A. Into the Will of his Purpose, or the Will of his Precept, or into his Secret and Revealed Will.

Q. What is the Will of God's Purpose?

A. His Eternal Counsels and Decrees whereby he hath fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass.

Q. What is the Will of God's Precept?

A. His Holy Laws contained in the Scripture of the Old and New Testament, wherein he hath revealed to us the Duties we ought to perform for the obtaining of Eternal Life.

Q. How do these Two Wills differ?

A. 1. Firſt, In that there are many Things which God wills by his Will of Purpoſe, that he hath not willed by his Will of Precept. For God commands nothing but what is Holy, yet he purpoſeth to permit many Things that are Evil.

2. Secondly, In that we may effectually reſiſt his Will of Precept, ſo as to hinder the Accompliſhment of it, as we do whenſoever we ſin; but we cannot reſiſt the Will of God's Purpoſe, though may times to endeavour it is our indiſpenſable Duty.

Q. *Ought not the Will of the Creature to be conformed to the Will of God in all Things?*

A. Yes, to the Will of his Precept, for that alone is the Rule of our Obedience: But in all Things to conform to the Will of his Purpoſe may involve us in the greateſt Guilt. Acts 2. 23. *Being delivered by the determinate Counſel and Foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked Hands have crucified and ſlain.*

Q. *Is there not then a manifeſt Repugnance between God's Will of Purpoſe and of Precept?*

A. No: For the Object of God's Will of Purpoſe is Event; but of his Will of Precept Duty; and it is no Contradiction for God to will or permit that to be which he hath willed or commanded us not to do.

Q. *Which of theſe do we pray may be done?*

A. VVe eſpecially and abſolutely pray that the VVill of God's Precept may be done in Earth as it is in Heaven.

Q. *What Conſiderations may excite us to be earneſt in this Requeſt?*

A. Firſt, Becauſe there is a great Reluctancy in our corrupt Nature againſt the Holy VVill of God, therefore we ought earneſtly to pray that he by his Grace would ſubdue it.

Secondly, Becauſe the Glory of God is deeply concern'd in doing his VVill, for by this we own his Sovereignty, and our Subjection to his Laws and Kingdom.

Thirdly, Becauſe our own Intereſt is deeply concern'd in it; for it is only by doing his VVill we can inherit the Promiſes. *Rev.* 22. 14. *Bleſſed are they that do his Commandments.*

Q. *Ought we not abſolutely to pray that God's Will of Purpoſe may be done?*

A. No: And that becauſe many Things are brought to paſs by this Will which we ought to pray againſt, as Temporal Evils, and the Permiſſion of Sin.

Q. *How then do the Saints in Scripture pray for the Accompliſhment of this Will of God?* As in 1 *Sam.* 3. 18. And *Samuel* told him every whit, and hid nothing from him: And he ſaid, It is the Lord, let him do what ſeemeth him good. 2 *Sam.* 15. 26. But if he thus ſay, I have no Delight in thee; behold, here am I, let him do to me as ſeemeth good unto him. *Acts* 21. 14. And when he would not be perſwaded, we ceaſed, ſaying, the VVill of the Lord be done. And our Saviour, *Luke* 22. 42. Saying, Father if thou be willing remove this Cup from me; nevertheleſs, not my VVill, but thine be done.

A. Theſe are not ſo much Prayers as Declarations of their Submiſſion unto, and Patience under, the Hand of God.

Q. *May we not pray at all that God's Will of Purpoſe may be done?*

A. Yes, it is for Temporal, or Spiritual, or Eternal, Bleſſings on our ſelves or others.

Q. *What Force doth the Particle* thy *carry in it when we pray* thy VVill be done?

A. It may be taken either emphatically, or excluſively.

1. Firſt, It ſignifies that God's VVill ought to be preferred above and before all others. *Acts* 4. 19. *But* Peter *and* John *anſwered and ſaid unto them, whether it be right in the Sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God judge ye.* Both becauſe it is moſt Sovereign, and becauſe it is moſt Holy and Perfect; ſo that we act moſt like Men when we act moſt like Chriſtians.

2. Secondly, It ſignifies excluſively that God's VVill, and not our own, may be done; for ours being carnal and corrupt we pray for the ſubduing it to his.

Q. *What mean you by praying that God's Will be done in Earth?*

A. Firſt, I pray that it may be done by my ſelf, and all others living on the Earth. Pſal. 67. 2. *That thy Way may be known upon Earth, thy ſaving Health among all Nations.*

Secondly, VVe pray that we may improve the few Days of this Mortal Life in the Service of God for there is no Device nor Operation in the Grave.

Q. *Having given this Account of the Petition in the Matter of it, what is next obſervable?*

A. The

A. The Proportion of it, *As it is in Heaven.*

Q. *But is it not impossible to do the Will of God in Earth, as it is done in Heaven, where the Holy Angels do perfectly perform it?*

A. It is as to the Equality of Perfection, but not as to the Similitude and Proportion of our Endeavours after it. For we are commanded to be Holy, as God is Holy, and Perfect, as our Heavenly Father is Perfect: Matth. 5. 48. *Be ye therefore Perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is Perfect:* Which Command we obey when we seriously endeavour it.

Q. *How then is the Will of God done in Heaven?*

A. First, Thine Obedience is absolutely Perfect, both as to Parts and Degrees; that is to say, they obeyed all God's Will enjoined them, and that with all their Might; and after this Perfection we ought to strive, and in this Petition pray for a greater Measure of it.

Secondly, Their Obedience is chearful, not extorted by Fears or Sufferings.

Thirdly, They do the Will of God with Zeal and Ardency. *Psal.* 104. 4. *Who maketh his Angels Spirits, his Ministers a flaming Fire.*

Fourthly, They do it with Celerity and ready Dispatch; and therefore the Angels are often in Scripture described to have Wings.

Fifthly, The Will of God is done in Heaven with all possible Prostration and Reverence. Rev. 4. 10. *The Four and Twenty Elders fall down before him that sat on the Throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their Crowns before the Throne, saying.*

Sixthly, The Will of God is done in Heaven with Constancy and Perseverance. Rev. 7. 15. *Therefore are they before the Throne of God, and serve him Day and Night in his Temple; and he that sitteth on the Throne shall dwell among them.* And thus we ought to pray and endeavour that we may do the Will of God on Earth.

Q. *What learn you from this?*

A. That we ought not to satisfie our selves in comparing our Obedience with other Mens, as the boasting Pharisee did; but to take the Examples for our Holiness from Heaven, and to endeavour to imitate the Purity of Angels, and the God of Angels. For St. *Paul* himself, when he prescribes his Life as an Example for Christians, doth it only as he followed the Pattern of Christ, 1 *Cor.* 11. 1. *Be ye Followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.*

Q. *We have already considered the Three First Petitions, which immediately relate to God's Glory, it remains now to treat of those which immediately concern our own Good: Which is the first of them?*

A. That wherein we beg the good Things of this present Life, in these Words, *Give us this Day our daily Bread.*

Q. *What is here meant by Bread?*

A. All Temporal and Earthly Blessings that contribute either to our Being or Well-being: For Bread being the most usual and useful Support of Life, it is often in Scripture put for all kind of Provision necessary for natural Life. *Gen.* 3. 19. *In the Sweat of thy Face shalt thou eat Bread, till thou return into the Ground, for out of it wast thou taken; for Dust thou art, and unto Dust shalt thou return.*

Q. *What learn we hence?*

A. That it is not below a Spiritual Christian to pray for Temporal Mercies, both because they are needful for us. Matth. 6. 32. (*For after all these Things do the Gentiles seek,*) *for your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these Things.* And God hath promised to bestow them. *Phil.* 4. 19. *But my God shall supply all your Need, according to his Riches in Glory, by Christ Jesus.*

Q. *How ought we to pray for them?*

A. Only conditionally; if it may consist with God's good Pleasure to bestow them; otherwise we do not pray, but invade; and if it may consist with our Good to receive them, otherwise we ask a Curse instead of a Blessing.

Q. *What learn you from the Word* Give?

A. That God is the Giver of every Temporal Mercy.

Q. *How is God said to give us our daily Bread?*

A. First, By producing it, and bringing it to us; for though the Chain of natural Causes be never so long, yet God holds the first Link of it in his own Hand. Hosea 2. 21, 22. *And it shall come to pass in that Day I will hear, saith the Lord,*

will bear the Heavens, and they ſhall hear the Earth. Verſe 22. *And the Earth ſhall hear the Corn, and the Wine, and the Oil, and they ſhall hear* Jezreel.

Secondly, By bleſſing it to us, without which our daily Bread can never nouriſh us; Deut. 8. 3. *And he humbled thee, and ſuffered thee to Hunger, and fed thee with Manna, (which thou knoweſt not, neither did thy Fathers know,) that he might make thee know that Man doth not live by Bread only, but by every Word that proceedeth out of the Mouth of the* Lord doth Man live.

Q. *What mean you when you pray for daily Bread?*

A. By this we pray that God would beſtow upon us daily thoſe Mercies which are ſufficient for the Day.

Q. *What learn you hence?*

A. That as in praying for Bread, we pray for Conveniencies, not for Superfluities or Delicacies: So in our praying for daily Bread, we pray for preſent Supplies, not Goods laid up for many Years. Which teacheth us to moderate our Cares and Deſires after Earthly Things, and to reſt ſatisfied in God's Providence and preſent Bleſſings.

Q. *May we not then carefully provide for the Time to come, and the Support of our Dependents?*

A. We may, and ought, but our Care muſt be only prudent and provident, not perplexing and deſponding.

Q. *Why is that Expreſſion,* this Day, *added?*

A. To ſhew us that every Day we ſtand in need of Supplies from God, and therefore ſhould daily pray to receive them.

Q. *Since we pray for daily Bread, why is it called our Bread?*

A. To note that we ought to uſe lawful Means to acquire what we pray for.

Q. *What pray you for in this Petition?*

A. 1. That God would give us the good Things of this Life, as the Acquiſitions of our lawful Endeavours.

2. That he would bleſs the Increaſe of what is lawfully ours.

3. That he would beſtow upon us a Spiritual Right in whatſoever we enjoy, thro' Jeſus the Heir of all Things.

4. We pray that we may not deſire nor covet what is another's.

5. We pray for Life itſelf, that it may be prolonged, whilſt God hath any Service for us to do in this World.

6. For all the Means that may lawfully preſerve our Life and Health.

7. That he would ſtrengthen our Faith and Dependance on his Providence, who is the Giver of all Good.

8. That he would give us Contentment in that Portion of Earthly Bleſſings which he allots us.

Q. *What is the Fifth Petition of the Lord's Prayer?*

A. Forgive us our Debts, as we forgive our Debtors.

Q. *What Things are obſervable in this Petition?*

A. The Order and the Matter of it.

Q. *What obſerve you from the Order of it?*

A. That after we have prayed for our daily Bread, we are taught to pray for Pardon of Sin. Which Method is moſt rational.

1. Becauſe the Guilt of Sin many times withholds from us thoſe Temporal Comforts which we ſtand in need of. Iſaiah 59. 2. *But your Iniquities have ſeparated between you and your God, and your Sins have hid his Face from you, that he will not bear.*

2. Becauſe without Pardon of Sin our Temporal Injoyments are but Snares and Curſes.

Q. *What obſerve you in the Matter of this Petition?*

A. Two Things; the Petition itſelf, *Forgive us our Debts:* And the Condition, or Proportion, or Plea and Argument, for obtaining this Forgiveneſs, *As we forgive our Debtors.*

Q. *What mean you here by* Debts?

A. The ſame which St. *Luke* 11. 4. calls Sins. *And forgive us our Sins, for we alſo forgive every one that is indebted to us.*

Q. *How ſtand we indebted to God?*

A. We ſtand indebted to God, both as we are his Creatures, and as we are Offenders; on the former Account we owe God the Debt of Obedience, on the latter the Debt of ſuffering Puniſhment.

Q. *Which*

Q. *Which Debt do we pray God to forgive?*

A. The latter only, for the former is irremissibly due to our Great Creator.

Q. *How come we to be thus indebted unto God?*

A. By the Sentence of the Law, which condemneth every Transgressor of it to undergo the Penalty it threatens, which Penalty is all manner of Woes, and Curses, and Everlasting Death. Gal. 3. 10. *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all Things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them.* Rom. 6. 23. *For the Wages of Sin is Death.* Ezek. 18. 4. *The Soul that sinneth it shall die.*

Q. *Since the Suffering of these is the Debt we owe to Divine Justice, why say you that Sin is that Debt?*

A. Because Sin alone is the Meritorious Cause of these, and we owe the Suffering of them only as we are Sinners.

Q. *Are there no Sins venial in their own Nature, so as not to deserve Eternal Damnation?*

A. No, not the least, for the Wages of every Sin is Death. All therefore are Mortal in their own Nature, and all are Venial through the Mercy of God in the Merits of Christ, excepting only the Sin against the Holy Ghost.

Q. *Can we no Way pay off these Debts, so as to satisfie the Justice of God?*

A. No: For neither can we do it by Obedience, nor yet by Sufferings. Not by the Duties of Obedience, for these are a Debt we owe to God's Holiness and Sovereignty, and therefore cannot pay the Debts we owe to his Justice; and we cannot pay Debts by Debts: Not by Suffering, for Sin being an infinite Evil, must be punished with an infinite Punishment; but we cannot suffer a Punishment infinite in Degrees, therefore it must be infinite in Duration, so that the Damned in Hell shall never be able to say it's finish'd.

Q. *How then may we hope to be acquitted of our numberless Debts?*

A. Only through the free Mercy and Grace of God, pardoning them in Jesus Christ, and therefore we pray, *Forgive us our Debts.*

Q. *What is Pardon or Forgiveness of Sin?*

A. It is the Removal of the Guilt of Sin.

Q. *What is the Guilt of Sin?*

A. The Guilt of Sin is either the intrinsecal Desert of Punishment, or else an Obnoxiousness and Liableness to it, through God's Designation of the Sinner to undergo it.

Q. *Doth Pardon of Sin remove both these Guilts?*

A. No: It removes not the former, for still the Sins of those who are pardoned do in themselves deserve Eternal Death: But it removes the latter, *viz.* it takes away our Appointment unto Death. 2 Sam. 12. 13. *And* David *said unto* Nathan, *I have sinned against the Lord; and* Nathan *said unto* David, *the Lord also hath put away thy Sin, thou shalt not die.*

Q. *How is it consistent with the Justice of God to pardon Offenders without Punishment?*

A. Though Believers are not personally appointed to Punishment, yet Mystically they are; which Punishment they have already suffered in Christ their Surety, with whom they are made One by Faith.

Q. *To whom is this Prayer for Pardon of Sin directed?*

A. To God only, whose Royal Prerogative is to forgive Sins, Isa. 43. 25. *I, even I, am he that blotted out thy Transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy Sins.* Mark 2. 7. *Who can forgive Sins but God only?*

Q. *Have not the Ministers of the Gospel Power to forgive Sins, according to that of* St. John 20. 23. *Whose soever Sins ye remit, they are remitted?*

A. They have a Ministerial and Declarative Power, as Officers; not an Authoritative and Judicial Power, as Sovereigns: As the Prince only Pardons, the Herauld Proclaims it: So God alone by the Prerogative of his Grace grants Pardon, the Minister by his Office publisheth it to all that repent and believe.

Q. *What then must we judge of that Absolute and Plenary Power which the Pope assumes of pardoning Sins?*

A. That it proves him to be Antichrist in exalting himself above God; 2 *Thess.* 2. 4. *Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped: So that he as God sitteth in the Temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.* For whosoever can forgive Wrongs done against another, must be superiour to him, and have

have Authority to cauſe the Perſon offended to ſurceaſe the Proſecution, and ſit down by the Wrong done him.

Q. *If God only can forgive Sins, how then are we bound to forgive thoſe who treſpaſs againſt us?*

A. We ought to forgive them ſo far forth as they have wronged us, but we cannot forgive the wrong they have done to God in wronging us, but muſt leave them to his Mercy, and their Repentance.

Q. *Since it is God's Prerogative and Glory to pardon Sins, what Inferences may we collect from hence?*

A. Firſt, That our Pardon is free and gratuitous, without reſpecting former Deſerts, or expecting future Recompence.

Secondly, That our Pardon is full and compleat, becauſe it is an Act of God within himſelf; whereas what he works in us is in this Life imperfect; nothing of Guilt is left upon the Soul when God pardons it, though ſtill there is ſomething of Filth left in it when he ſanctifies it; God does not pardon by Halves, nor leaves any Guilt to be expiated by Purgatory.

Thirdly, That upon our Faith and Repentance our Sins, whether greater or leſs, fewer or more, ſhall be forgiven; for this makes no Difference in Infinite Grace and Mercy.

Q. *But may not this encourage Men to continue in Sin?*

A. Many do ſo abuſe it, but their Damnation is ſure and juſt. *Deut.* 29. 19, 20. *And it come to paſs when he heareth the Words of this Curſe, that he bleſſeth himſelf in his Heart, ſaying, I ſhall have Peace though I walk in the Imagination of mine Heart, to add Drunkenneſs to Thirſt.* Ver. 20. *The Lord will not ſpare him.*

Q. *You have formerly obſerved that it is God alone who can forgive Sins, and from thence inferred both the Freeneſs and Fulneſs of Pardoning Grace; what obſerve you farther?*

A. 1. That though God's Pardoning Grace be altogether freely beſtowed in reſpect of us, *Iſaiah* 43. 25. *I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy Tranſgreſſions for mine own Sake, and will not remember thy Sins*; yet in reſpect of Chriſt's Purchaſe it is not free, but coſt him the Price of his Blood, *Heb.* 9. 29. *And almoſt all Things are by the Law purged with Blood, and without ſhedding of Blood is no Remiſſion.* Matth. 26. 29. *But I ſay unto you I will not drink henceforth of this Fruit of the Vine until that Day when I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom.*

2. That the obtaining of Pardon is not free from the Performance of Conditions on our Part.

Q. *What are the Conditions upon which Pardon is granted?*

A. They are Two, Faith and Repentance. *Acts* 10. 43. *That through his Name whoſoever believeth in him ſhall receive Remiſſion of Sins.* Acts 3. 12. *Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your Sins may be blotted out.*

Q. *Is therefore a meer Sorrow that we have ſinned a ſufficient Qualification for obtaining Pardon?*

A. No; for ſo *Judas* is ſaid to repent. *Matth.* 27. 3. *Then* Judas, *which had betrayed him, when he ſaw that he was condemned, repented himſelf, and brought again the Thirty Pieces of Silver to the Chief Prieſts and Elders.* But as True Repentance includes in it a Sorrow of Heart, ſo Reformation of Life and Manners is always join'd with a lively Faith.

Q. *Is Pardon of Sin an Act only of God's Mercy?*

A. It is likewiſe an Act of God's Juſtice to pardon the Sins of thoſe who perform the Conditions of the Covenant of Grace.

Q. *How prove you this?*

A. Both by Expreſs Scripture. 1 Epiſtle of *John* 1. 9. *If we confeſs our Sins, he is faithful and juſt to forgive us our Sins, and to cleanſe us from all Unrighteouſneſs.* And likewiſe by Scripture-Reaſon; becauſe Believers being made myſtically One with Chriſt, therefore their Sins being already puniſhed in him their Surety, and their Debts paid by him, cannot be again juſtly puniſh'd in their own Perſons, nor demanded from them.

Q. *Is Pardon of Sin our Entire Juſtification?*

A. No; but it is one Principal Part of it: For Juſtification conſiſts both in Remiſſion of Sins, and Acceptation of our Perſons; the former depends upon Chriſt's Paſſive, the other upon his Active, Obedience; his Satisfaction applied by Faith

Q. *Which Debt do we pray God to forgive?*

A. The latter only, for the former is irremiſſibly due to our Great Creator.

Q. *How come we to be thus indebted unto God?*

A. By the Sentence of the Law, which condemneth every Tranſgreſſor of it to undergo the Penalty it threatens, which Penalty is all manner of Woes, and Curſes, and Everlaſting Death. Gal. 3. 10. *Curſed is every one that continueth not in all Things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them.* Rom. 6. 23. *For the Wages of Sin is Death.* Ezek. 18. 4. *The Soul that ſinneth it ſhall die.*

Q. *Since the Suffering of theſe is the Debt we owe to Divine Juſtice, why ſay you that Sin is that Debt?*

A. Becauſe Sin alone is the Meritorious Cauſe of theſe, and we owe the Suffering of them only as we are Sinners.

Q. *Are there no Sins venial in their own Nature, ſo as not to deſerve Eternal Damnation?*

A. No, not the leaſt, for the Wages of every Sin is Death. All therefore are Mortal in their own Nature, and all are Venial through the Mercy of God in the Merits of Chriſt, excepting only the Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt.

Q. *Can we no Way pay off theſe Debts, ſo as to ſatisfie the Juſtice of God?*

A. No: For neither can we do it by Obedience, nor yet by Sufferings. Not by the Duties of Obedience, for theſe are a Debt we owe to God's Holineſs and Sovereignty, and therefore cannot pay the Debts we owe to his Juſtice; and we cannot pay Debts by Debts: Not by Suffering, for Sin being an infinite Evil, muſt be puniſhed with an infinite Puniſhment; but we cannot ſuffer a Puniſhment infinite in Degrees, therefore it muſt be infinite in Duration, ſo that the Damned in Hell ſhall never be able to ſay it's finiſh'd.

Q. *How then may we hope to be acquitted of our numberleſs Debts?*

A. Only through the free Mercy and Grace of God, pardoning them in Jeſus Chriſt, and therefore we pray, *Forgive us our Debts.*

Q. *What is Pardon or Forgiveneſs of Sin?*

A. It is the Removal of the Guilt of Sin.

Q. *What is the Guilt of Sin?*

A. The Guilt of Sin is either the intrinſecal Deſert of Puniſhment, or elſe an Obnoxiouſneſs and Liableneſs to it, through God's Deſignation of the Sinner to undergo it.

Q. *Doth Pardon of Sin remove both theſe Guilts?*

A. No: It removes not the former, for ſtill the Sins of thoſe who are pardoned do in themſelves deſerve Eternal Death: But it removes the latter, *viz.* it takes away our Appointment unto Death. 2 Sam. 12. 13. *And* David *ſaid unto* Nathan, *I have ſinned againſt the Lord; and* Nathan *ſaid unto* David, *the Lord alſo hath put away thy Sin, thou ſhalt not die.*

Q. *How is it conſiſtent with the Juſtice of God to pardon Offenders without Puniſhment?*

A. Though Believers are not perſonally appointed to Puniſhment, yet Myſtically they are; which Puniſhment they have already ſuffered in Chriſt their Surety, with whom they are made One by Faith.

Q. *To whom is this Prayer for Pardon of Sin directed?*

A. To God only, whoſe Royal Prerogative is to forgive Sins, Iſa. 43. 25. *I, even I, am he that blotted out thy Tranſgreſſions for mine own ſake, and will not remember thy Sins.* Mark 2. 7. *Who can forgive Sins but God only?*

Q. *Have not the Miniſters of the Goſpel Power to forgive Sins, according to that of* St. John 20. 23. *Whoſe ſoever Sins ye remit, they are remitted?*

A. They have a Miniſterial and Declarative Power, as Officers; not an Authoritative and Judicial Power, as Sovereigns: As the Prince only Pardons, the Herauld Proclaims it: So God alone by the Prerogative of his Grace grants Pardon, the Miniſter by his Office publiſheth it to all that repent and believe.

Q. *What then muſt we judge of that Abſolute and Plenary Power which the Pope aſſumes of pardoning Sins?*

A. That it proves him to be Antichriſt in exalting himſelf above God; 2 *Theſſ.* 2. 4. *Who oppoſeth and exalteth himſelf above all that is called God, or that is worſhipped: So that he as God ſitteth in the Temple of God, ſhewing himſelf that he is God.* For whoſoever can forgive Wrongs done againſt another, muſt be ſuperiour to him, and have

have Authority to cauſe the Perſon offended to ſurceaſe the Proſecution, and ſit down by the Wrong done him.

Q. *If God only can forgive Sins, how then are we bound to forgive thoſe who treſpaſs againſt us?*

A. We ought to forgive them ſo far forth as they have wronged us, but we cannot forgive the wrong they have done to God in wronging us, but muſt leave them to his Mercy, and their Repentance.

Q. *Since it is God's Prerogative and Glory to pardon Sins, what Inferences may we collect from hence?*

A. Firſt, That our Pardon is free and gratuitous, without reſpecting former Deſerts, or expecting future Recompence.

Secondly, That our Pardon is full and compleat, becauſe it is an Act of God within himſelf; whereas what he works in us is in this Life imperfect; nothing of Guilt is left upon the Soul when God pardons it, though ſtill there is ſomething of Filth left in it when he ſanctifies it; God does not pardon by Halves, nor leaves any Guilt to be expiated by Purgatory.

Thirdly, That upon our Faith and Repentance our Sins, whether greater or leſs, fewer or more, ſhall be forgiven; for this makes no Difference in Infinite Grace and Mercy.

Q. *But may not this encourage Men to continue in Sin?*

A. Many do ſo abuſe it, but their Damnation is ſure and juſt. *Deut.* 29. 19, 20. *And it come to paſs when he heareth the Words of this Curſe, that he bleſſeth himſelf in his Heart, ſaying, I ſhall have Peace though I walk in the Imagination of mine Heart, to add Drunkenneſs to Thirſt.* Ver. 20. *The Lord will not ſpare him.*

Q. *You have formerly obſerved that it is God alone who can forgive Sins, and from thence inferred both the Freeneſs and Fulneſs of Pardoning Grace; what obſerve you farther?*

A. 1. That though God's Pardoning Grace be altogether freely beſtowed in reſpect of us, *Iſaiah* 43. 25. I, *even I, am he that blotteth out thy Tranſgreſſions for mine own Sake, and will not remember thy Sins*; yet in reſpect of Chriſt's Purchaſe it is not free, but coſt him the Price of his Blood, *Heb.* 9. 29. *And almoſt all Things are by the Law purged with Blood, and without ſhedding of Blood is no Remiſſion.* Matth. 26. 29. *But I ſay unto you I will not drink henceforth of this Fruit of the Vine until that Day when I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom.*

2. That the obtaining of Pardon is not free from the Performance of Conditions on our Part.

Q. *What are the Conditions upon which Pardon is granted?*

A. They are Two, Faith and Repentance. *Acts* 10. 43. *That through his Name whoſoever believeth in him ſhall receive Remiſſion of Sins.* Acts 3. 12. *Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your Sins may be blotted out.*

Q. *Is therefore a meer Sorrow that we have ſinned a ſufficient Qualification for obtaining Pardon?*

A. No; for ſo *Judas* is ſaid to repent. *Matth.* 27. 3. *Then* Judas, *which had betrayed him, when he ſaw that he was condemned, repented himſelf, and brought again the Thirty Pieces of Silver to the Chief Prieſts and Elders.* But as True Repentance includes in it a Sorrow of Heart, ſo Reformation of Life and Manners is always join'd with a lively Faith.

Q. *Is Pardon of Sin an Act only of God's Mercy?*

A. It is likewiſe an Act of God's Juſtice to pardon the Sins of thoſe who perform the Conditions of the Covenant of Grace.

Q. *How prove you this?*

A. Both by Expreſs Scripture. 1 Epiſtle of *John* 1. 9. *If we confeſs our Sins, he is faithful and juſt to forgive us our Sins, and to cleanſe us from all Unrighteouſneſs.* And likewiſe by Scripture-Reaſon; becauſe Believers being made myſtically One with Chriſt, therefore their Sins being already puniſhed in him their Surety, and their Debts paid by him, cannot be again juſtly puniſh'd in their own Perſons, nor demanded from them.

Q. *Is Pardon of Sin our Entire Juſtification?*

A. No; but it is one Principal Part of it: For Juſtification conſiſts both in Remiſſion of Sins, and Acceptation of our Perſons; the former depends upon Chriſt's Paſſive, the other upon his Active, Obedience; his Satisfaction applied by Faith

makes us accounted guiltleſs of Death, and his Obedience worthy of Life, both which compleat our Juſtification, *Eph.* 1. 6, 7. *To the Praiſe of the Glory of his Grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved.* Ver. 7. *In whom we have Redemption through his Blood, the Forgiveneſs of Sins according to the Riches of his Grace.*

Q. *We have thus conſider'd the Petition,* Forgive us our Debts, *what remains further conſiderable?*

A. The Condition upon which we ask it, or the Plea we urge for obtaining it; *As we forgive our Debtors.*

Q. *Who are meant here by* Debtors?

A. Other Men.

Q. *How are Men Debtors one to another?*

A. Either, 1. By owing them a Debt of Duty, and thus all Men are mutually Debtors to one another; Superiors to Inferiors, and Inferiors to Superiors, and Equals owe one another Love, Reſpect, and Kindneſs.

2. By owing them a Debt of Satisfaction for Injuries, and Wrongs done to others.

Q. *Which of theſe Debts is here meant?*

A. The latter only; for we are bound to forgive thoſe who owe us Satisfaction and Reparation.

Q. *What learn you from hence, that thoſe who have wronged others are called their* Debtors?

A. That they who in any kind wrong others are obliged to make them Satisfaction; if in their good Names, by acknowledging the Offence, and ſtopping Slanderous Reports; if in their Good and Eſtates, by a full Reſtitution.

Q. *Is Reſtitution neceſſary to the obtaining of Pardon?*

A. It is; for Unjuſt Detainer is as evil as Unjuſt Seiſure; and it is a continued Theft; and our Repentance can never be true while we continue in the Sin we ſeem to repent of; and without True Repentance there can be no Pardon or Salvation.

Q. *But what if thoſe we have wronged be ſince dead?*

A. We ought to make Reſtitution to thoſe to whom it is to be ſuppoſed what we have detained would have deſcended.

Q. *If none ſuch can be found what muſt we then do?*

A. Then God's Right takes Place, as the Univerſal Lord of all, and we are obliged to reſtore it to him, that is, to his Servants, and to his Family, and in the Works of Piety and Charity.

Q. *We have already conſider'd the Debtor's Duty, which is to make Satisfaction and Reſtitution, what is the Duty of the Creditor or Perſon wronged?*

A. To forgive his Debtors; for we pray that God would forgive us as we forgive them.

Q. *Wherein doth this Forgiveneſs conſiſt?*

A. In Two Things.

1. Firſt, In abſtaining from the Outward Acts of Revenge upon them.

2. Secondly, In the Inward Frame and Temper of our Hearts towards them, bearing them no Grudge, nor Ill-will, but being as much in Charity with them as though they had never offended us.

Q. *Muſt we then ſit quiet under every Petulant Wrong that is done us, and ſo tempt others to the Sport of abuſing us?*

A. Private Revenge is in no Caſe whatſoever to be allowed. *Rom.* 12. 19. *Dearly Beloved, avenge not your ſelves, but rather give place unto Wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is mine, and I will repay, ſaith the Lord.* Revenge only belongs to God, and the Magiſtrate to whom he hath delegated it. *Rom.* 13. 4. *For he is the Miniſter of God, a Revenger to execute Wrath upon him that doth Evil.*

Q. *But if the Wrong done us tend to the Loſs of our Neceſſary Subſiſtence, or our Life, may we not reſiſt it, and require Satisfaction for it?*

A. We may; but it muſt be only in a Publick and Legal Way, and even then we muſt harbour no Malice againſt them, but be ready to perform all the Offices of Charity and Kindneſs within our Power.

Q. *May we not proſecute thoſe who have wronged us, unleſs the Injury be intolerable?*

A. We may when we cannot paſs by the Wrongs without wronging others; but where the Injuries are ſupportable, and we may forgive them without injuring of others, the Law of Chriſtianity commands us ſo to do. *Matth.* 5. 39. *But I ſay unto*

unto you, that ye reſiſt not Evil, but whoſoever ſhall ſmite thee on thy Right Cheek, turn to him the other alſo. Where the Scope of our Saviour is, that we ſhould rather be willing to ſuffer a Second Injury than to revenge the Firſt in Matters tolerable.

Q. *But ſince this is a Duty ſo contrary to the revengeful Humour of Fleſh and Blood, what Arguments can you produce to perſwade the Practice of it?*

A. 1. Firſt, That it is far more honourable to forgive a Wrong, than to revenge it.

Q. *How does that appear?*

A. 1. Firſt, Becauſe by pardoning Wrongs we act like God, and imitate him in that Attribute wherein he chiefly glories. *Exod.* 34. 6. *The Lord, the Lord God, Merciful and Gracious, Long-ſuffering, and abundant in Goodneſs and Truth.*

2. Secondly, Becauſe to Pardon is always the Act of a Superiour, and a Chriſtian expreſſeth the Royalty of his Calling by iſſuing out of Pardons.

Q. *What is the Second Motive?*

A. Conſider how many Offences God hath forgiven us, though the Diſtance between him and us is infinitely greater than only can be between Fellow-Creatures; and tho' our Offences againſt him are infinitely more and greater than which we are to forgive to others. Ours againſt him are but a few Pence.

Q. *Which is the Third Motive to enforce this Duty?*

A. The Conſideration of that binding Particle *As*, Forgive us as we forgive others.

Q. *Wherein lyes the Force of this?*

A. By this we ſeal the Guilt of our Sins upon our own Souls, unleſs we be ready and willing to forgive others. And ſo we turn our Prayers not only into Sin, but into a direful tremendous Curſe.

Q. *Which is the Sixth and Laſt Petition of the Lord's Prayer?*

A. Lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil.

Q. *What learn you from the Method of this Petition?*

A. In that it immediately follows the Petition wherein we prayed for Pardon of Sin, I learn that it ſhould be our Care not only to ſeek for the Pardon of our paſt Sins, but the Prevention of future.

Q. *How is this Petition divided?*

A. Into Two Branches, the one Negative, *Lead us not into Temptation*; the other Poſitive, but *deliver us from Evil.*

Q. *What ſignifies the Word* Temptation?

A. It ſignifies proving or trying. Which ſometimes is done only by Way of Search and Exploration, and ſometimes is joined with Suaſion and Inducement; ſo that Temptations are either meerly Probatory, or elſe they are likewiſe Suaſory.

Q. *How many Sorts of Temptations are there?*

A. Five in the General.

1. VVhereby one Man tempts another.
2. VVhereby a Man tempts himſelf.
3. Whereby we tempt God.
4. VVhereby God tempts us.
5. VVhereby the Devil tempts us.

Q. *How is one Man ſaid to tempt another?*

A. VVhen either he perſwades him to what is Evil. *Prov.* 1. 10. *My Son, if Sinners intice thee conſent thou not.* Or to do that which may bring him into Danger, Luke 20. 23. *Why tempt ye me?*

Q. *How is Man ſaid to tempt himſelf?*

A. Two VVays.

1. Firſt, VVhen he unneceſſarily ruſheth into Danger, and ventures upon the next Occaſions of Sinning.

2. Secondly, VVhen he is drawn away by his own Luſt, and inticed. *James* 1. 14. *But every Man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own Luſt, and inticed.*

Q. *How are we ſaid to tempt God?*

A. Two VVays.

1. Firſt, VVhen we by our Sins provoke him to take Vengeance upon us. *Pſal.* 95. 8. *Harden not your Hearts, as in the Provocation: And as in the Day of Temptation in the Wilderneſs.*

2. Secondly, VVhen we preſumptuouſly try the Providence of God, having no Warrant nor Neceſſity to caſt our ſelves upon the Extraordinary Effects of it.

Matth. 4. 6, 7. *And said unto him, if thou be the Son of God cast thy self down.* Verse 7. *Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.*

Q. *How is God said to tempt us?*

A. When in the Method of his Holy Providence he brings us into such Circumstances as will discover either our Graces or Corruptions. *Gen.* 22. 1, 2. *And it came to pass after these Things that God did tempt* Abraham, *and said unto him,* Verse 2. *Take now thy Son, and offer him for a Burnt-Offering upon one of the Mountains which I will tell thee of.* 2 Chron. 32. 31. *God left him to try him, that he might know all that was in his Heart.*

Q. *How doth the Devil tempt us?*

A. Alway by Swasion, enducing us by his Art and Subtilty to the Commission of Evil.

Q. *What Temptations do we especially pray against in this Petition?*

A. Three Sorts.

1. First, Such as proceed from our own Lusts and Corruption.

2. Secondly, Such as proceed from other Mens enticing us to Evil, or ensnaring us to Danger.

3. Thirdly, Such as proceed from the great Tempter, the Devil.

Q. *What learn we hence?*

A. That it is a Christian's Duty not only to keep himself from Sin, but also from Temptations to Sin.

Q. *What Reasons confirm this?*

A. First, Because it is the Design of a Rotten and Corrupt Heart to be content to lye under a Temptation, though it consents not to the Sin. That Soul is not chaste to God that is well-pleased with Sollicitations to violate its Duty.

Secondly, Because while a Temptation dwells upon our Hearts we are in imminent Danger of committing the Sin to which we are tempted.

Thirdly, Because most Temptations are not only Temptations but Sins too, as all Evil Thoughts and Desires: And as long as these abide in us with any Complacency and Delight, so long are we in the Actual Commission of Sin.

Q. *How is God said to lead Men into Temptation?*

A. Three Ways.

1. First, When he providentially presents Outward Objects and Occasions, which do sollicite and draw forth our Inward Corruptions.

2. Secondly, When he permits Satan, or Wicked Men, his Instruments, to tempt us. And in these Two Senses there is no Temptation whatsoever that befals us but God leads us into it.

3. Thirdly, When he withdraws the Influences of his Grace and Spirit from us, without which Dereliction no Temptation could prevail over us. 2 *Chron.* 32. 31. *God left him to try him, that he might know all that was in his Heart.*

Q. *What therefore do we pray for when we pray,* Lead us not into Temptation?

A. We pray for Three Things.

1. First, That God by his Providence would so order and dispose all the Occurrences of our Lives, as not to lay before us those Objects, nor offer us those Occasions, which might excite or call forth our Inbred Corruptions.

2. Secondly, That he would not permit the Devil to assault us, nor any of his Instruments.

3. That he would continue the Influences of his Grace unto us to enable us to stand when we are tempted.

Q. *For what Ends doth God thus lead Men into Temptation?*

A. For many Wise and Holy Ends, especially Four.

1. First, To exercise and break forth our Graces, to teach us the Wars of the Lord, to administer Matter for our Victory, and Occasion for our Crown and Triumph.

2. Secondly, To engage us to depend upon his Help and Assistance, and earnestly to implore Divine Succours and Supplies.

3. Thirdly, To glorifie his Justice, and his Mercy; his Justice in giving up Wicked Men to the Rages of Temptations to be hurried by them from Sin to Sin, punishing one Iniquity with another, till at last he punisheth all in Hell. And his Mercy, in supporting his Children under them, and delivering them out of all their Temptations, making his Strength perfect in their Weakness. 2 *Cor.* 12. 9. *And he said unto me, my Grace is sufficient for thee, for my Strength is made perfect in Weakness.*

4. Fourthly,

4. Fourthly, That by our Victory over Temptations he may confound the Malice of the Devil, and commend the Excellency of his own Ways and Service. Job 2. 3. *And the Lord ſaid unto Satan, haſt thou conſidered my Servant* Job, *that there is none like him in the Earth, a Perfect aud Upright Man, one that feareth God, and eſcheweth Evil?*

Q. *Which is the Poſitive Part of this Petition?*

A. But deliver us from Evil.

Q. *What obſerve you from the Order and Connexion of this Branch of the Petition with the former?*

A. I obſerve that the beſt Security againſt Sin is to be ſecured againſt Temptations to Sin.

Q. *Are not Strong Temptations to Sin an Excuſe for ſinning?*

A. No; for the Devil can only perſwade, he cannot conſtrain; for if he could compel he would likewiſe juſtifie, ſince there is no Sin where there is no Liberty. All our Sins are of our own Free Choice, and ſo by Conſequence is the Eternal Miſery they expoſe unto. *Hoſ.* 13. 9. *O* Iſrael, *thou haſt deſtroyed thy ſelf, but in me is thine Help.* John 5. 40. *And ye will not come to me that ye might have Life.* Mat. 23. 37. *O* Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, *thou that killeſt the Prophets, and ſtoneſt them which are ſent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy Children together, even as the Hen gathereth her Chickens under her Wings, and ye would not!*

Q. *Wherein conſiſts the great Danger of being tempted?*

A. In the Sympathy and Suitableneſs that is between Temptations and our Corrupt Natures, whereby they are apt to excite our Affections, and our Affections will ſway our Actions.

Q. *What mean you by the Word* Evil *when you pray,* Deliver us from Evil?

A. Firſt, Satan, whoſe Stile it is to be the Evil or the Wicked One. *Matth.* 13. 19. *When any one heareth the Word of the Kingdom, and underſtandeth it not, then cometh the Wicked One, and catcheth away that which was ſown in his Heart,* 1 John 2. 13, 14. *I write unto you Fathers, becauſe ye have known him that is from the Beginning. I write unto you Young Men, becauſe ye have overcome the Wicked One.* Verſ. 14. *I have written unto you Fathers, becauſe you have known him that is from the Beginning. I have written unto you Young Men, becauſe ye are ſtrong, and the Word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the Wicked One.*

Secondly, All other Evils, whether they be of Sin, or for Sin; whether Tranſgreſſions or Puniſhments; but eſpecially Sin, which is the greateſt of all Evils.

Q. *Why call you Sin the greateſt of all Evils?*

A. Becauſe it is ſo both in its Nature and Conſequents.

1. Firſt, In its Nature it is wholly Defect and Irregularity, and that only Thing which he always hates, and never made.

2. Secondly, Becauſe all other Evils are but the Effects and Conſequents of Sin; ſince the Devil could not hurt us but by Sin, and no other Evils befal us but for Sin.

Q. *What collect you hence?*

A. That in praying to be deliver'd from Sin we pray to be deliver'd from all Evils whatſoever.

Q. *What obſerve you from our Saviour's teaching us to direct our Prayers to our Father in Heaven that he would* Deliver us from Evil?

A. I learn hence that it is only the Almighty Power of God that can keep us from Sin.

Q. *Whence doth that appear?*

A. Firſt, From the Conſideration of the Almighty Advantages that our great Enemy the Devil hath againſt us.

Secondly, From the Conſideration of the Diſadvantages we lye under to oppoſe his Temptations.

Q. *What are his Advantages and our Diſadvantages?*

A. He is a Spirit, we are but Fleſh; he is Wiſe and Subtil, we Fooliſh and Ignorant; he long Experienc'd, we Raw and Unpracticed; he is Diligent and Watchful, we Carleſs and Negligent, he lays a Cloſe Siege to us without, and we Betray ourſelves within.

Q. *What Ways doth God take to keep Men from Sin?*

A. In the General Three.

1. Firſt, He doth it by Reſtraining Providence.

2. Secondly,

2 Secondly, By Common and Reſtraining Grace.

3. Thirdly, By Renewing and Sanctifying Grace.

Q. *What are the Methods of God's Providence, whereby he delivers Men from the Evil of Sin?*

A. They are manifold and various; but Five are moſt eſpecially remarkable.

1. Firſt, Sometimes Providence cuts ſhort their Power, whereby they ſhould be inabled to Sin; thus God withered *Jeroboam*'s Hand, which he ſtretch'd forth againſt the Prophet.

2. Secondly, Sometimes God cuts off their wicked Inſtruments, either for Counſel, as he did *Achitophel* from *Abſolom*, or elſe for Execution, as he did the Hoſt of *Sennacherib*.

3. Thirdly, Sometimes by raiſing up another oppoſite Power to withſtand the Sinner. Thus the Rulers would have put Chriſt to Death, but durſt not, for fear of the People.

4. Fourthly, By caſting in ſeaſonable Diverſions. Thus the paſſing by of Merchants altered the Patriarchs Reſolution from Killing *Joſeph* to Sell him.

5. Fifthly, Sometimes God removes the Object againſt which they intended to Sin. Thus he delivered *David* from *Saul*, and *Peter* from *Herod*.

Q. *We have ſeen how God preſerves Men from Sin by his Reſtraining Providence, ſhew now how he doth it by his Reſtraining Grace.*

A. By Reſtraining Grace God deals with the very Heart of a Sinner; and although he doth not change the habitual, yet he changeth the actual, Inclination of it, and takes away the Deſire of committing thoſe Sins which are unmortified and reigning.

Q. *To whom doth God vouchſafe this Grace?*

A To many unregenerate Perſons; as he did to *Eſau* and *Abimelech*.

Q. *To what End doth he vouchſafe it?*

A. That their Lives may be more plauſible, their Gifts more ſerviceable, and their Condemnation at laſt the more tolerable.

Q. *How doth God keep Men from Sin by his eſpecial Grace?*

A. By exciting the inward Principle and Habit of Grace implanted in his Children to the actual Uſe and Exerciſe of it.

Q. *Is not inherent Grace alone ſufficient to keep the Godly from ſinning?*

A. It is not without the continual Influence of God's quickning Grace; 2 Cor. 12. 7. *There was given to me a Thorn in the Fleſh, the Meſſenger of Satan to buffet me, leſt I ſhould be exalted above Meaſure.*

Q. *What are thoſe Graces that God doth eſpecially excite, to keep his Children from Sin?*

A. They are Three, Faith, Fear and Love.

Q. *How doth Faith keep them from ſinning?*

A. Many Ways, but more eſpecially by Two.

1. Firſt, As it lively repreſents unto us Eternal Rewards and Puniſhments, and makes them as real as they are certain. *Heb.* 11. 1. *Now Faith is the Subſtance of Things hoped for, the Evidence of Things not ſeen.*

2. Secondly, As it repreſents unto us God to be the Obſerver of our Actions, who muſt hereafter be the Judge of them. For by Faith we ſee him who is inviſible.

Q. *How doth the Fear of God keep Men from Sin?*

A. By poſſeſſing our Hearts with awful Thoughts of his dread Majeſty, whoſe Power is infinite, and whoſe Juſtice is ſtrict and impartial. Pſal. 4. 4. *Stand in Awe, and Sin not.*

Q. *How doth the Love of God keep Men from Sin?*

A. By working in them an Holy Ingenuity, and Sympathy of Affection with God: Loving what he loves, and hating what he hates, and therefore thoſe who love God, will certainly hate Iniquity. Pſal. 97. 10. *Ye that love the Lord hate Evil.*

Q. *What do we pray for in this Part of the Petition,* Deliver us from Evil?

A. We pray,

1. That if it ſhall pleaſe God to lead us into Temptation, yet he would not leave us under the Power of Temptation, but would make a Way for us to eſcape, that we might be able to bear it.

2. That if at any Time Temptations ſhould prevail over us, God would not leave us under the Power of Sin, but raiſe us again by true Repentance, that ſo we may at laſt be delivered from the great Evil of Obduration and Impenitency.

3. That

3. That God would not only deliver us from groſs and ſelf-condemning Sins, but from every Evil VVay and VVork.

4. That he would be pleaſed to deliver us not only from what is in itſelf ſinful, but from all the Occaſions and Appearances of Evil.

Q. *After the Petitions of the Lord's Prayer what next followeth to be conſidered?*

A. The Doxology or Praiſe, in theſe VVords, *For thine*, &c.

Q. *Of what conſiſteth this Doxology?*

A. Of Four of God's moſt Glorious Attributes. His Sovereignty, *Thine is the Kingdom*; his Omnipotence, *Thine is the Power*; his Excellency, *Thine is the Glory*; his Eternity, *All theſe are thine for ever.*

Q. *What obſerve you in the Manner of our Saviour's aſcribing theſe Attributes to God?*

A. Firſt, The Eminency of them, intimated in the Particle *The*, the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory; ſignifying his the higheſt and chiefeſt of all theſe. And,

Secondly, The Propriety of them in the Particle *Thine*, to note to us that they are God's only Originally, Independently, and Unchangeably.

Q. *What obſerve you from the Illative Particle* For, *when we ſay*, For thine is the Kingdom, *&c.*

A. This VVord carries in it the Force of a Reaſon, both why we ſhould pray unto God, and why we may expect to be heard when we pray.

Q. *How is it a Reaſon for us to pray unto God?*

A. VVe pray unto God, becauſe he alone is able to relieve us, *For his is the Kingom, and the Power, and the Glory, for ever.*

Q. *How is it a Reaſon for us to expect that God ſhould hear our Prayers?*

A. Many VVays.

1. His is the Kingdom, and we his Subjects; and therefore we may depend on him as our King for Help and Protection.

2. His is the Power, and therefore he is able to do for us abundantly above what we are able to ask or think.

3. His is the Glory, and therefore what we ask for his Honour and Praiſe ſhall be granted us.

4. All theſe are his for ever, and therefore we may be aſſured that at no time the Prayer of Faith ſhall be in vain.

Q. *What obſerve you from our Saviour's teaching us to uſe theſe Arguments and Pleas in our Prayers to God?*

A. Two Things.

1. In our Prayers we ought to plead with God by weighty and inforcing Reaſons.

2. That the moſt prevailing Arguments in Prayer are to be taken from the Attributes of God.

Q. *What Benefit is there in uſing ſuch Reaſons, ſince God cannot by them be moved to alter his Purpoſes?*

A. The ſtronger our Reaſons are to Sue for Mercies, the more fervent will our Prayers be, and the more confirmed our Faith.

Q. *How doth the Conſideration of the Kingdom's being God's confirm our Faith that we ſhall obtain what we pray for?*

A. Many Ways.

1. The Kingdom is God's, and therefore he will ſee that his Name be hallowed in it, for he is a King jealous of his Honour.

2. The Kingdom is God's, therefore he will take Care for the Eſtabliſhment and Enlargement of it, ſince it is his own Intereſt and Concern.

3. The Kingdom is God's, and therefore he will look to be obeyed in it, without which Royalty is but Pageantry.

4. The Kingdom is God's, and therefore we may expect our Daily Bread, and Temporal Accommodations, for it is a Kingly Office to provide Things neceſſary for their Subjects.

5. The Kingdom is God's, and therefore we pray to him for Pardon and Forgiveneſs, ſince it is a Royal Prerogative to forgive Offenders.

6. The Kingdom is God's, and therefore we may pray in Faith, that he would deliver us from Temptations, and the Evils to which we are tempted; for one great End of Government is to protect the Subjects from the Aſſaults of their cruel Enemies.

Q. *Which*

Q. *Which is the Second Attribute aſcribed unto God in the Doxology of the Lord's Prayer?*

A. Power; in theſe Words, *And the Power.*

Q. *How is the Power of God diſtinguiſhed?*

A. Into his Abſolute and his Ordinate Power.

Q. *What call you the Abſolute Power of God?*

A. The Abſolute Power of God is that whereby he is ſimply able to produce whatſoever is poſſible to be, *i. e.* all Things which imply not Contradiction.

Q. *What call you God's Ordinate Power?*

A. God's Ordinate Power is that whereby he is able to produce thoſe Things which according to his Will ſhall come to paſs.

Q. *Why is it called God's Ordinate Power?*

A. Becauſe the Effects of it are limited by the Ordination of his Wiſdom and Will. Pſal. 115. 3. *But our God is in the Heavens, he hath done whatſoever he pleaſed.* Pſal. 115. 6. *Whatſoever the Lord pleaſed that did he in Heaven and Earth, in the Sea, and all deep Places.*

Q. *Is God's Power in itſelf Infinite?*

A. It is, for his Power is his Eſſence.

Q. *How doth it appear that God's Power is Infinite?*

A. 1. By the Works of Creation, for it requires an Infinite Power to bring Something out of Nothing.

2. By the many Miracles which have been wrought in the World, above and contrary to the Courſe of Nature.

Q. *How then have many Men wrought Miracles, as* Moſes, Elijah, *and the Apoſtles?*

A. They wrought them not by any proper Vertue of their own, but only as the Moral Inſtruments, at whoſe Preſence or Interceſſion God was pleaſed to manifeſt his Power, as a Seal to that Commiſſion they had received from him.

Q. *Is God's Power Infinite likewiſe in the common Effects of Nature?*

A. It is; for it is no leſs Power that preſerves and moves the Creatures than did at firſt create them.

Q. *Is there nothing impoſſible with God?*

A. Yes, there are ſeveral Things which God cannot do, becauſe he is Omnipotent.

Q. *What are they?*

A. Such as in the general the doing of them would deny him to be God, or to be Holy, or to be VViſe.

Q. *What are they more particularly?*

A. God cannot do Things that are contradictory, or rather ſuch Things cannot be done, as to make the ſame Thing to be, and not to be, at the ſame Time; or that the ſame Body ſhould at once have Quantity and Extenſion in Heaven, and no Quantity nor Extenſion in the Hoſt, as the Papiſts affirm of their Breaden God, for this were contrary to his VViſdom.

2. God cannot do any Thing that may juſtly bring upon him the Imputation of Sin, for this were contrary to his Holineſs.

3. God cannot do any Thing that may argue him Mutable and Inconſtant, for this were contrary to his Being. 2 *Tim.* 2. 13. *If we believe not yet he abideth faithful; he cannot deny himſelf.* Heb. 6. 18. *That by Two immutable Things, in which it was impoſſible for God to lye.*

Q. *Is it not a Diminution of the Power of God that he cannot do thoſe Things?*

A. No; for theſe Things argue VVeakneſs and Defect, not Power.

Q. *Why hath our Saviour taught us to ſubjoin this Acknowledgment of the Power of God to our Petitions?*

A. To encourage our Faith, by conſidering that whatſoever we ask we ask it of a God who is able to give it us, yea, and to do for us abundantly above whatſoever we are able to ask or think.

Q. *What is the Third Attribute aſcribed to God in the Doxology?*

A. Glory in theſe VVords, *And the Glory.*

Q. *What is Glory?*

A. Glory is any Perfection or Excellency that either is, or deſerves to be, accompanied with Fame and Renown.

Q. *How is God's Glory diſtinguiſhed?*

A. Into

A. Into his Eſſential and Declarative Glory.

Q. *What is the Eſſential Glory of God?*

A. All thoſe Attributes which Eternally and Immutably belong unto the Divine Nature: So Holineſs is his Glory, *Exod.* 15. 11. *Glorious in Holineſs.* His Power is his Glory, 2 Theſ. 1. 9. *They ſhall be puniſhed from*, i. e. *by the Glory of his Power.* His Majeſty is his Glory, *Pſalm* 145. 11. *I will ſpeak of the Glorious Honour of thy Majeſty.* His Grace and Mercy is his Glory, *Epheſ.* 1. 6. *To the Praiſe of the Glory of his Grace.* And from all theſe united, reſults the Glory of his Name, *Deut.* 25. 58. *That thou mayeſt fear this Glorious and Fearful Name, the Lord thy God.*

Q. *What is the Declarative Glory of God?*

A. The Manifeſtation of his Attributes, ſo that they are obſerved to his Praiſe and Honour.

Q. *What is it to glorifie God?*

A. To glorifie God is to admire and celebrate the Divine Attributes, ſhining forth in thoſe Ways and Works wherein he is pleaſed to expreſs them.

Q. *Do we by glorifying God add any Thing to his Glory?*

A. We can neither add unto, nor diminiſh from, the Eſſential Glory of God, for his Infinite Perfections are the ſame for ever. But we may add to his Declarative Glory by ſetting forth his Attributes, and we detract from it by hindering the Manifeſtation of them.

Q. *By what Means doth God declare his Glory?*

A. By Three eſpecially.

1. By his Works, *Pſalm* 19. 1. *The Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament ſheweth his Handy-work.*

2. By his Word, which diſcovers to us thoſe Attributes which we could never have known by the Works of Creation and Providence; and therefore both the Law and Goſpel are ſaid to be Glorious. 2 *Cor.* 3. 9. *For if the Miniſtration of Condemnation be Glory, much more doth the Miniſtration of Righteouſneſs exceed in Glory.*

3. By his Son, who is the Brightneſs of his Glory. *Heb.* 13. *Who being the Brightneſs of his Glory, and the Expreſs Image of his Perſon*; and in whom the Perfections of the Godhead are moſt viſibly diſplay'd.

Q. *Why doth our Saviour in the Doxology peculiarly appropriate Glory unto God,* Thine is the Glory?

A. For Three Reaſons.

1. Becauſe all that is Excellent and Glorious in the Creatures is in God infinitely more Perfect than in them, being neither limited by his Nature, nor allayed with Contraries. 1 *John* 1. 5. *That God is Light, and in him is no Darkneſs at all.*

2. Becauſe all Glory in reſpect of God is but Darkneſs and Obſcurity. *Job* 25. 5. *Behold even to the Moon, and it ſhineth not, yea, the Stars are not pure in his Sight.*

3. Becauſe all the Excellencies and Glories of Creatures ſerve only to ſet forth and declare the Glory of God.

Q. *Why hath our Saviour addeth the Acknowledgment of God's Glory at the End of the Petitions he hath taught us to preſent?*

A. That the Conſideration therefore may be a Means to ſtrengthen our Faith for the obtaining thoſe good Things which we pray for.

Q. *How is the Conſideration of the Glory of God an Argument to ſtrengthen our Faith in Prayer?*

A. Many Ways, according to the Petitions we prefer.

1. The Glory is God's, therefore his Name ſhall be hallowed; for to ſanctifie the Name of God is to glorifie him. *Lev.* 10. 3. *I will be ſanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the People I will be glorified.*

2. The Glory is God's, therefore his Kingdom ſhall come; for where ſhould a King be honour'd but in his Kingdom?

3. The Glory is God's, therefore his Will ſhall be done; for our Obedience is the greateſt Glory we can give. *John* 15. 8. *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much Fruit, ſo ſhall ye be my Diſciples.*

4. The Glory is God's, and therefore he will provide for us Daily Bread; for it is not God's Honour that any of his Family ſhould want Things convenient for them. Exod. 16. 7. *And in the Morning then ſhall ye ſee the Glory of the Lord.*

5. The Glory is God's, and therefore he will forgive our Treſpaſſes; for it is his Honour and Royalty to pardon Penitent Offenders. *Prov.* 19. 11. *And it is his*

Glory to paſs over a Tranſgreſſion. Epheſ. 1. 6, 7. *To the Praiſe of the Glory of his Grace.* Verſe 7. *In whom we have Redemption through his Blood, the Forgiveneſs of Sins, according to the Riches of his Grace.*

6. The Glory is God's, and therefore he will deliver us from the Aſſaults of our Enemies; for it is his Honour to protect his own Subjects.

Q. *What obſerve you from that Particle* For ever?

A. That God and his Attributes are Eternal.

Q. *What is Eternity?*

A. Eternity is a Duration that hath neither Beginning, nor End, nor Succeſſion of Parts; or it is the Compleat Poſſeſſion of an Endleſs Life all at once.

Q. *What collect you hence?*

A. Two Things.

1. The Duration of God is not to be meaſured by Days or Years; and that he waxeth not Elder, neither hath continued longer this Day than from the Beginning of Time.

2. That in Strict Propriety of Speech God only is; and that it is only allowable for want of Expreſſions to ſay that he either was, or ſhall be; and therefore he calls his Name, *I am*, Exod. 3. 14. *I am hath ſent me unto you.*

Q. *How prove you that God is Eternal?*

A. Both by Scripture and Reaſon.

Q. *What Scriptures prove the Eternity of God?*

A. Several; eſpecially *Pſalm* 102. 25, 26, 27. *Thou art the ſame, and thy Years ſhall have no End.* Pſalm 90. 2. *From Everlaſting to Everlaſting thou art God.* 1 Tim. 1. 17. *To the King Eternal, Immortal, be Honour and Glory.*

Q. *How do you demonſtrate the Eternity of God by Reaſon?*

A. There muſt of Neceſſity be a Firſt Cauſe of all Things; but that which is the Firſt Cauſe of all Things cannot be made by any, and therefore is from Everlaſting; neither can it ceaſe to be, becauſe it is not dependent on any, and therefore muſt be to Everlaſting.

Q. *What Duties doth the Serious Conſideration of God's Eternity oblige us to?*

A. 1. To venerate and adore ſo great and inconceivable an Attribute.

2. To leave the Care of all future Events, whether concerning our own Private or the Publick Intereſts, to his Eternal Wiſdom and Providence, who for ever lives to mind them.

3. To give unto him the ſame Honour, Reſpect, and Service, as his Saints have done in former Generations.

Q. *What Encouragement hath our Faith to expect the Mercies we pray for from the Conſideration of God's Eternity?*

A. That becauſe he is the ſame God, who in all Ages hath heard the Prayers of thoſe who truſt in him, therefore we may be aſſured that if we have the ſame Diſpoſitions and Affections with the Saints of Old, we ſhall obtain the ſame Mercies and Favours. *Heb.* 1. 12. *But thou art the ſame, and thy Years ſhall not fail.*

Q. *What ſignifies that Particle* Amen, *which is the End and Cloſe of the Lord's Prayer?*

A. As in the Beginning of a Speech it is Aſſertory, and ſignifies *ſo it is*, ſo in the End of it it is Precatory, and ſignifies *ſo be it*, which denotes our Earneſt Deſires to have our Prayers heard, and our Petitions granted.

Q. *What learn you from hence, that our Saviour hath taught us to conclude our Prayers with* Amen?

A. I learn Two Things.

1. That we ought to pray with Underſtanding, and therefore not in an Unknown Tongue; for who can ſay *Amen* to what he underſtands not? 1 *Cor.* 14. 16. *How ſhall he that occupieth the Room of the Unlearned ſay* Amen *at the giving of Thanks, ſeeing he underſtandeth not what thou ſayeſt?*

2. That all our Prayers ought to be preſented to God with Fervent Zeal and Affection, 1 *Theſ.* 5. 17. *Pray without ceaſing.*

Q. *What is Prayer?*

A. Prayer is an Humble Repreſentation of our Wants and Deſires to God through the Aſſiſtance of the Holy Ghoſt in the Name of Chriſt, for Things according to his Will, with reference to his Glory.

Q. *What is it to pray by the Spirit, or by the Aſſiſtance of the Holy Ghoſt?*

A. To pray by the Spirit is to preſent our Requeſts to God with Holy and Fervent Affections, excited in us by the Holy Ghoſt. *Rom.* 8. 26. *But the Spirit itſelf maketh Interceſſions for us with Groanings which cannot be uttered.*

Q. *May*

Q. *May thoſe have the Spirit of Prayer who have not the Gift of Prayer?*

A. Yea, they may; and on the contrary, ſome may have the Gift of Prayer who pray not by the Spirit; for they who uſe preſcribed and ſet Forms of Prayer pray by the Spirit, when their Petitions are accompanied with fervent Affections, ſtirred in them by the Holy Ghoſt; and again, ſome who are more fluent in concerted Prayer, may pray only from the Strength of their Natural Parts and Endowments.

Q. *But doth not the uſe of Forms damp and quench the Spirit of Prayer?*

A. Forms indeed are too often uſed formally, and ſo is any other kind of Prayer; yet it is the trueſt Teſt, and the higheſt Excellency, of praying by the Spirit, when we are fervent in putting up theſe Requeſts to God, where neither Novelty, Variety, nor Copiouſneſs of Expreſſions, can be ſuſpected to move our Affections, but only the genuine Importance of the Matter which we pray for, though in preſcribed Words.

Q. *To whom muſt our Prayers be directed?*

A. To God only, and not to Saints or Angels.

Q. *How ought we to conceive of God when we pray to him?*

A. As an infinitely Glorious, Wiſe, Powerful, and Gracious, Being, whoſe Preſence is everywhere, whoſe Providence and Goodneſs is over all Things; and thus we pray at once to each Perſon of the Ever-bleſſed Trinity.

Q. *May we not particularly addreſs our Prayers to ſome one Perſon of the Trinity?*

A. We may, eſpecially in thoſe Caſes wherein their particular Offices and Diſpenſations are more immediately concerned.

Q. *What Things ought we to pray for?*

A. Only ſuch as are according to the Will of God. 1 *John* 5. 14. *That if we ask any Thing according to his Will he heareth us.*

Q. *What are thoſe Things which are according to the Will of God?*

A. Chiefly Spiritual Bleſſings. 1 *Theſ.* 4. 3. *For this is the Will of God, even our Sanctification, that we ſhould abſtain from Fornication.* And for theſe we ought to pray abſolutely and importunately.

Q. *May we not alſo pray for Temporal Mercies?*

A. We may: But as theſe are promiſed only conditionally, ſo we ought to pray that God would be pleaſed to beſtow them upon us, if it may ſtand with his Will and Glory, and our Good and Benefit.

Q. *How muſt we direct our Prayers to God?*

A. 1. In the Name of Chriſt, truſting only in his Merits and Mediations for Acceptance and Anſwer. *John* 15. 16. *That whatſoever ye ſhall ask of the Father in my Name he may give it you.*

2. In Faith and Perſuaſion of being heard. *James* 1. 6. *But let him ask in Faith, nothing wavering.* Mark 11. 24. *What Things ſoever ye deſire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye ſhall have them.*

3. With Fervency and Affection. *James* 5. 16. *The effectual fervent Prayer of a Righteous Man availeth much.*

Q. *What Ends ought we to propound to our ſelves in begging Bleſſings at God's Hands?*

A. Chiefly the Glory of God, ſincerely purpoſing to improve thoſe Bleſſings which by our Prayers we ſhall receive in his Service, and to his Praiſe. *Pſal.* 50. 15. *And call upon me in the Day of Trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou ſhalt glorifie me.*

Q. *What Directions have we concerning the Seaſons and Frequency of Praying?*

A. The Scripture commands us to pray without ceaſing. 1 *Theſ.* 5. 17. *Pray without ceaſing.* To pray always, and not to faint. *Luke* 18. 1. *And he ſpake a Parable to this End, that Men ought always to pray, and not to faint.* To pray always with all Prayer and Supplication. *Eph.* 6. 18. *Praying always with all Prayer and Supplication in the Spirit.*

Q. *Muſt we therefore be always ſo actually ingaged in this Duty as to do nothing but pray?*

A. No: For therefore we pray that we may obtain Grace from God to perform other Duties of Religion, and a Chriſtian Life; neither ought the Duties of our particular Callings to be neglected by us, for we juſtle out one Duty by another; beſides the ſinful Omiſſion of what we ſhould perform, that which we do perform becomes unacceptable, becauſe unſeaſonable, and ſo we commit Two Sins in doing One Duty.

Q. *What then is it to pray without ceaſing?*

A. Prayer may be ſaid to be without ceaſing Four VVays.

1. VVhen

1. When we observe a constant Course of Prayer at fix'd and appointed Times. Thus *Gen.* 8. *ult.* God promised that *Winter and Summer, Day and Night, should not cease*. And so the daily Sacrifice is called a continual Burnt offering, *Exod.* 29. 42. and yet it was offered only Morning and Evening.

2. When we are frequent and importunate in our Prayers. So *Acts* 12. 5. the Church is said to make Prayers for *Peter* without ceasing. And our Saviour spake the Parable of the importunate Widow to this End, *That Men ought always to pray, and not to faint*, Luke 18. 1.

3. When we frequently dart up short mental Prayers and Ejaculations unto God; which we may and ought to do, whatsoever else we are employed about. *Neh.* 2. 4. *So I prayed to the God of Heaven.*

4. When we keep our Hearts in a praying Frame and Temper, so that they are on all Occasions fit and ready to pour out themselves before God in Prayer; and thus we habitually pray always.

Q. *What must we observe to maintain and cherish such a praying Spirit?*

A. Two Things especially.

1. That we ingulf not our selves too deeply in the Businesses and Pleasures of this Life, for these will dark and deaden the Heart to Prayer.

2. That we fall not into the Commission of any known and presumptuous Sin, for Guilt will fill us with slavish Fear and Shame, and both will drive us from God.

Q. *What are the Kinds of Prayer?*

A. Three.

1. Publick, As we are Members of the Church.

2. Private, As we stand engaged in Family Relation. And,

3. Secret, As we are particular Christians.

Q. *Who is to send up Publick Prayers?*

A. The Minister, and all the Congregation joining with him. And these Prayers, tho' they must needs be more general, yet withal are more effectual, than any other. Matth. 18. 19. *Again, I say unto you, that if Two of you shall agree on Earth, as touching any Thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in Heaven.*

Q. *Who is to make Private or Family-Prayers?*

A. Every Master and Governour of a Family. And this he is not to do seldomer than every Morning and Evening. In the Morning Prayer is the Key that opens the Treasury of God's Mercies, in the Evening it is the Key that shuts us up under his Protection and Safeguard.

DIS-

DISCOURSES
OR
SERMONS
ON SEVERAL
SCRIPTURES.

THE
Folly of SINNERS, &c.

SERMON I.

PROV. xiv. 9.
Fools make a Mock at Sin.

WE are not generally to expect any Connexion either of Senſe or Sentences in this Book of the *Proverbs*. Other parts of Scripture are like a rich *Mine*, where the precious *Ore* runs along in one continued *Vein*: But this is like a heap of *Pearls*; which, tho' they are looſe and unſtrung, are not therefore the leſs excellent or valuable.

The *Text* I have now read is one of them, an entire Propoſition in it ſelf, without Relation to, or Dependance upon any Context. *The Diviſion of the Words.*

In it we have theſe things conſiderable.

Firſt, The *Character* or *Periphraſis* of wicked and ungodly Men; and they are ſaid to be ſuch as *make a Mock at Sin.* I.

Secondly, Here is the Cenſure paſt upon them by the All-wiſe God, and the wiſeſt of Men; they are *Fools* for ſo doing: *Fools make a Mock at Sin.* II.

The Words are plain and obvious; only the Phraſe of making a *Mock*, may ſeem ſubject to ſome Ambiguity, and various Acceptations; and indeed the *Scripture* uſeth it in divers Senſes. Sometimes it ſignifies an abuſing of others, by violent and lewd Actions: So we read that *the Hebrew Servant*, ſays *Potiphar's* Wife *came in unto me to mock me.* Gen. 39. 17. Sometimes it ſignifies an expoſing of Men to Shame and Diſhonour: So the wiſe Man tells us, *Wine is a Mocker.* Prov. 20. 1. Sometimes it ſignifies an impoſing upon the Credulity of others, things that ſeem incredible and impoſſible: So we read in *Geneſis*, when *Lot* had declared to his Sons-in-law the Deſtruction of *Sodom*, it is ſaid, *He ſeemed unto them as one that mocked.* Gen. 19. 14. Sometimes it is taken for a failing in our Promiſes, and thereby defeating, and fruſtrating the Expectations of others: And thus *Herod* is ſaid to be *mocked by the wiſe Men*, in *Matth.* 2. 16. But none of theſe are at all congruous to our preſent purpoſe, nor applicable to the Words of the *Text.* Matth. 2. 16.

There are therefore two other Acceptations of this Expreſſion, frequently occurring in the *Holy Scriptures.* *What's meant by Mocking.*

Firſt, This Word *Mock* is commonly taken for ſcoffing, or bitter taunting at others. Thus our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt ſuffered the Flouts and Deriſions of an inſolent Rabble, who *ſet him at nought, and mocked him*, as St. *Luke* ſpeaks: Thus thoſe bleſſed *Martyrs* and *Confeſſors*, that followed his Steps, are ſaid to have endured *the trial of cruel Mockings*, as the Apoſtle tells us. And indeed I. Luke 23. 11. Heb. 11. 36.

deed this is the difference between a wiſe Reprover, and a bitter Mocker; that the Words of the one are like *Balm*, both ſoft and ſanative; but the Words of the other are like *ſharp Swords*, which cut deep into the Minds of Men, and commonly make them rankle into Hatred and Malice. And doubtleſs there are very many Spirits can ſooner put up an Injury done them, than a cutting bitter ſcoff; becauſe nothing expreſſeth ſo much Contempt, nor ſhews how deſpicable we account them, as a fleering Gibe.

II. *Secondly*, Mocking may be taken for ſlighting, and making no account of, looking upon Things or Perſons as trivial and inconſiderable. And thus it is
Job 39. 2. uſed in *Job*, where the *Horſe* is ſaid to *mock at Fear*, when he ruſheth into the Battel, and is not terrified, but rather enraged by all the Horrors of War, *When the Quiver rattleth againſt him, the glittering Spear and the Shield.* And ſo it is ſaid
Job 41. 29. of the *Leviathan*, *He laugheth at the ſhaking of the Spear, for he eſteemeth Iron as Straw, and Braſs as rotten Wood.*

Now in either of theſe Two Senſes may the Words of the *Text* be taken; when they tell us, they are *Fools that make a Mock at Sin.*

A Twofold Conſideration of Sin. For Sin may be conſidered, either as committed by others, or as committed by our ſelves; and it is egregious *Folly* to make a *Mock* of either, ſo as to ſport at the one, or to ſlight the other.

I. *Firſt*, They are *Fools* that make a *Mock* at other Mens Sins, ſo as to turn them into a Matter of Jeſt and Raillery.

II. *Secondly*, They are *Fools* that make a *Mock* at their own Sins, ſo as to think the Commiſſion of them a ſlight and inconſiderable thing.

I ſhall very briefly ſpeak of the *Firſt*, and ſo paſs on unto the *Second* Particular.

I. *Firſt* therefore, They are *Fools* that make a *Mock* at other Mens Sins, ſo as to make them a matter of Mirth and Paſtime. This indeed is Sport for *Devils*, all whoſe Recreation, and Helliſh Solace, is the Sin and Wickedneſs of Men. The Damnation of Souls is the Sport of Hell: And thou who canſt rejoice in their Joy, deſerveſt likewiſe to howl under their Woes and Torments. We juſtly condemn it, as a moſt barbarous and inhumane Cuſtom amongſt the ancient *Romans*, who brought many ſelected Pairs of miſerable Men into their publick *Theatres*, only to delight the Spectators with their Blood and Death. But this was an innocent Recreation in compariſon of thine, who takeſt pleaſure to ſee thy poor Brother wounding and ſtabbing, yea, damning his precious Soul. Go laugh at a wretched Man upon the *Rack*, or upon the *Wheel*; laugh at the odd diſtorted Poſtures of *Epilepticks*, or the Convulſive Motions of *Dying* and *Expiring Men*; Sport thy ſelf with their writh'd Looks, and antick Shapes of Miſery: This is far more civil, more humane, more pious, than to make thoſe Sins thy Mirth, which will be thy Brother's Eternal Woe and Anguiſh. What thinkeſt thou? Could'ſt thou look into Hell, that Place of Torment? Could'ſt thou ſee there all the Engines of God's Juſtice, and the Devil's Cruelty, ſet on work in the eternal Torture of thoſe, who perhaps once made as light of their own Sins, as thou doſt of other Mens; would'ſt thou think this a pleaſant Spectacle? Would'ſt thou ſport and divert thy ſelf to ſee how they wallow in Fire and Brimſtone, or how they circle and twiſt themſelves in unquenchable Flames? Certainly ſuch a Sight as this would affect thee with a cold Horror, and a ſhivering Dread: And how then canſt thou ſport thy ſelf to ſee thy Brother damning himſelf, ſince it would fright thee to ſee him damned? Believe it, Sirs; The Sins that now abound in the World challenge our Tears and Pity: We ought to mourn and repent for thoſe who do not, who will not, repent for themſelves. It is a ſad, and a doleful Sight to ſee ſo many every where diſhonour God, diſgrace their Natures, and deſtroy their Souls; to ſee ſome come reeling home, diſguis'd in all the brutiſh Shapes that Drunkenneſs can put upon them, ready to diſcharge their Vomit in the Face of every one they meet: Others frantick with Wrath and Rage, and, like a Company of Mad Men, flinging about
Prov. 26. 18. *Firebrands*, *Arrows*, and *Death*: To ſee ſuch woful Transformations, and the dire Effects that Sin and Wickedneſs have cauſed in the World, certainly he that can entertain himſelf with Mirth at theſe things, hath not only forſworn his *Religion*, but his *Humanity*; and may, with much more Reaſon, make the Miſeries of poor diſtracted People, chain'd up in *Bedlam*, to become his Sport and Paſtime.

They are Fools that make a Mock at other Mens Sins.

I know it will be here pretended, that ſurely it can be no ſuch great Crime to explode and hiſs Sin off the *Stage*; nay, it were a proper Means to keep Men from being generally ſo wicked, could we but make Wickedneſs more Ridiculous in them.

But, alas! *Vice* is now-a-days grown too impudent to be laughed out of Countenance; and thoſe Methods of a ſcurrilous Mockery, which ſome plead for, as rendring Vice ridiculous, have, I doubt, only made it the more taking and ſpreading, and encouraged others to be the more openly ſinful, by teaching them to be the more wittily Vile and Wicked. Few will be deterred from ſinning, when they think they ſhall but gratifie others, by making Sport for them; and ſtir up, not their Indignation and Abhorrence, but their Mirth and Laughter. 'Tis true, we read that *Elijah* mock'd the Idolatrous Worſhippers of *Baal*, and his Scoffs and Taunts at them were very biting and *ſarcaſtical*, and cut them much deeper than they are ſaid to cut themſelves: But this he did in a ſerious and zealous reproving of their Sins, not in a jocular and ſportive Merriment. There are two things in Sin, Impiety and Folly; we may lawfully enough ſcorn the one, while we are ſure to hate and deteſt the other: And a due Mixture of both theſe together, Scorn and Deteſtation, are very fit to enkindle our Zeal for God, and may oftentimes be a requiſite Temper for him who is to reprove confident and audacious Sinners. But to laugh and ſport at others Wickedneſs, and to make the Guilt and Shame of others our Mirth and Recreation, is both unchriſtian and inhumane; and we may as well laugh at their Damnation, as at that which will lead them to it. Thus to make a Mock at Sin, is to make our very Mocks to be our Sins; and argues us, not only profane, but fooliſh; for this is to laugh and rejoyce at our own Stain and Diſhonour, and to abuſe our own Nature, that Nature which is common to us as well as others; that Nature which, were it not debaſed with Sin, renders us but a little lower than the *Angels*.

What a fair and glorious Creature was Man, before Sin debaſed and ſullied him! A Friend to his God, Lord of the Creation, made a little lower than the *Angels*, being akin to them, though of a younger Houſe, and meaner Extract; adorn'd with all both natural and divine Perfections, till Sin deſpoil'd him of his Excellency, and made him who was almoſt *equal to the Angels*, worſe than the very *Brutes* that periſh, ſottiſh and miſerable. And canſt thou laugh and ſport thy ſelf at that which hath ruin'd and undone thee, as well as others? Thy Nature is blemiſh'd and corrupted as much as theirs. When we look abroad in the World, and obſerve the abominable Wickedneſſes that are every where committed, the Murthers, Uncleanneſs, Blaſphemies, Drunkenneſs, and all thoſe Prodigies of Impiety that every where ſwarm amongſt Men; how *by Lying, Stealing, Swearing, and Committing Adultery, they break out, until Blood toucheth Blood.* What elſe ſee we now in all this, but the woful Effects of our own corrupt Nature: Here we ſee our ſelves unbowelled, and diſcover what we our ſelves are, at the price of other Mens Sins; *For as in Water, Face anſwereth unto Face, ſo doth the Heart of Man to Man.* We have therefore more reaſon to lament the Sins and Miſcarriages of others, than to make a Sport and Mock at their Wickedneſs, ſince we our ſelves are the very ſame, and prone enough, without the Reſtraining Grace of God, either to imitate, or exceed them.

Hoſ. 4. 2.

Prov. 27. 19.

Hence then, *Firſt*, Conſider what an accurſed, horrid thing it is to tempt others to Sin, only that thou mayeſt afterwards make Sport with them, and raiſe a *Scene* of Mirth out of the Ruins of their Souls. I wiſh this were not as common a Practice, as it is damnable. See what dreadful Woes God denounceth againſt ſuch, by the Prophet: *Woe unto him that giveth his Neighbour Drink; that putteſt thy Bottle to him, and makeſt him drunken alſo, that thou mayeſt look upon his Nakedneſs;* his Shame and Diſhonour. *Thou art filled with Shame, for Glory: Drink thou alſo, and let thy Fore-skin be uncover'd; the Cup of the Lord's Right Hand ſhall be turned unto thee, and ſhameful Spewing ſhall be on thy Glory.* Hence have theſe *Devils* (for that Name belongs to them who do his Work) invented all thoſe Artifices of Exceſs and Drunkenneſs, to draw on others to debauch themſelves, and their Reaſon, that they may have Matter to laugh at their ſottiſh Actions, and to boaſt how many they have made to fall under the Puiſſance of their Riots. But certainly, if there be an *Hell*, as it is certain there is; or if that *Hell* were not made in vain, as it was not; theſe wretched Sinners can expect nothing

I. *Uſe. Shews the Evil of tempting others to Sin.*

Habak. 2. 15, 16.

elſe, but to have their Portion therein with thoſe *Devils*, whoſe induſtrious Factors they have been: And there the Cup of God's Right Hand, a Cup of pure Wrath, and unmix'd Fury, ſhall be given them, and they be forced to drink it off, to the very Dregs and Bottom of it, ſpewing out Fire and Brimſtone eternally.

II. *Uſe. Shews the Wickedneſs of thoſe that ſin, only to tempt others to ſin.*

Secondly, Hence think how deſperately impious, wicked Wretches they are, who Sin only to make others Sport; that buffoon themſelves into *Hell*, and purchaſe the pleaſing others with the dreadful Damnation of their own Souls: And yet, How frequent is this in the World? How many are there, that will neither ſpare *God*, nor *Heaven*, nor *Scripture*, nor *Religion*, nor common Modeſty, if they come but in the way of a Jeſt? Nothing, how ſacred, how venerable ſoever it be, can eſcape them, if they can but turn it into Drollery.

I need not mention what *Tropes* and *Metaphors* Men have found out to talk laſciviouſly by; almoſt every one is perfect in that piece of Rhetorick: Nor what ſtrange, monſtrous Lies ſome will averr openly, to raiſe either Mirth or Wonder in Company. And that which is worſt of all is, that now the *Holy Bible* is become a meer Jeſt-Book with them, a Common-Place for Wit, and merry Diſcourſe. And the *Devil* again ſpeaks *Scripture* out of theſe Mens Mouths; they know no more of it, than what they abuſe; and all their Meditations and Comments upon it, are only how ſuch and ſuch Paſſages may be ingeniouſly perverted, and turned into Burleſque, to heighten the Mirth of the next profane Company they meet. Impious Wretches, that dare to violate the moſt tremendous Myſteries of Religion, and expoſe their God to Scorn, his Oracles to Contempt, and their own Souls to Eternal Perdition, only for a little Grinning and Sneering of a Company of vain, yea, mad *Fools*, who think they commence Wits by applauding Blaſphemy! But theſe Wits, as they are profane and impious, ſo they prove themſelves very Fools, thus to ſport themſelves to death: Their Laughter is rather ſpaſmodical and convulſive, than joyous; a *Riſus Sardonicus*, cauſed by Venom and Poyſon; They go down merrily to Hell, and frolick themſelves into Perdition.

And thus I have done with the *firſt* ſort of *Fools*, namely, thoſe that make a Sport and *Mock* at other Mens Sins.

II. *They are Fools that make a Mock at their own Sins.*

The *Second* Particular is to ſhew, that they are *Fools* who make a *Mock* at their own Sins, ſo as to think the Commiſſion of them but a ſlight inconſiderable Matter. And here I ſhall ſhew you,

Firſt, That wicked Men do generally account Sin a ſmall ſlight Matter.

Secondly, What it is that induceth and perſuades them to account ſo ſlight of it.

I.

II. *Thirdly*, Their groſs and inexcuſable *Folly* for ſo accounting of it.

III.

I. *Firſt*, That wicked Men do generally account Sin a ſmall inconſiderable Matter, may appear from theſe three Things.

1. *Slight Temptations make ſome Men ſin.*

I. Slight Provocations and eaſie Temptations are ſufficient to make them rush boldly into the Commiſſion of Sin: Any ſlight inconſiderable Gain, and tranſitory, fading, waſhy Pleaſure; yea, oftentimes, a meer Gallantry and Humour of Sinning, is enough to make them venture upon any Crime, that the Devil, or their own wicked Hearts ſhall ſuggeſt to them: Yet thoſe very Things, for which they would ſcarce ſuffer a Hair of their Heads to be twitch'd off, are yet forcible enough to perſuade them to lie or ſwear, Sins that murder and deſtroy their precious Souls for ever! What is this but a plain Demonſtration, that they account Sin a meer Trifle, and look upon it as a ſmall and ſlight thing to offend the moſt high God.

2. *Hard to work Sinners to a True Sorrow for Sin.*

II. It is very hard and difficult to work theſe Men to any true Sorrow and Compunction for their Sins: Turn the Mouth of all the terrible Threatnings that God hath denounced in his Holy Word againſt them, and let them thunder out all the Woes and Curſes that are in the Magazine of God's Juſtice againſt them, yet theſe wicked Wretches are not ſtartled at it, but ſtill hold faſt their Confidence and Boldneſs, when they have loſt their Innocency and Integrity, and cannot, nor will not be perſuaded that God ſhould be ſo angry and incenſed for ſuch ſmall matters.

3.

III. If they are at all moved with theſe things, yet they think that a ſlight and formal *Repentance* will ſuffice to make amends for all: They pacifie their Conſciences, and think they appeaſe God alſo, by crying him Mercy; and find it as eaſie a matter to repent of their Sins, as it is to commit them. And therefore certainly

tainly these Men must needs have very slight Thoughts of Sin, who can be so easily tempted to commit it, and are so hard to be brought to repent of it; or if they do, yet is it so slightly and superficially, as if they feared the Amends would be greater than the Injury.

I come now to the *Second* Thing, and that is, to shew what it is that induceth and persuadeth wicked Men to make so light of their Sins.

II. *Causes of Sinners making light of Sin.*

Now there are these Two things that make Sinners to account their Sins slight and trivial Matters.

I. Because they see so few Instances of God's dread Wrath and Vengeance executed on Sinners in this Life; and those rare Ones that are extant and visible, they impute rather to Chance, than to the Retribution of Divine Justice: And therefore, upon their own Impunity, and the Impunity of others, they conclude, That certainly Sin is no such heinous thing as some sower tetrical People would fain persuade the World to believe: And so they cry *Peace, Peace, to themselves, though they go on in the Frowardness of their Hearts, adding Iniquity to Sin.* Because God so long winks at them, they conclude him blind, or at least, that he doth not much disallow those Sins which he doth not presently punish. Indeed, it would be somewhat difficult to *answer* this *Argument*, were this present Life the appointed Time of Recompence. No, but God reserveth his Wrath and Vengeance to a more publick, and more dreadful Execution of it, than any can be in this Life. Though now thou feelest no Effects of God's Wrath, yet believe it, the Storm is but all this while gathering: But when thou launchest forth into the boundless Ocean of Eternity, then, and perhaps never before then, will it break upon thee in a Tempest of Fury, and drown thy Soul in Perdition and Destruction.

1. *Sinners not being exemplarily punished, causes them to make light of Sin.* Deut. 29. 19.

II. Another thing that makes wicked Men think so slight of Sin, is, that it cannot affect God with any real Injury; for as he is not benefited by our Services, so he is not wronged by our Iniquities. 'Tis true, could our Sins reach God, could they dethrone him, or rend off any of his glorious Attributes from his immutable Essence, there might then be great Reason why God should so severely revenge them, and we for ever detest and abhor them: But since his Glory is free from any Stain, and his Being from any Wrong and Prejudice, our Sins are nothing to him, nor is there any Reason we should judge them heinous and provoking.

2. *Sinners make light of Sin, because it is no real Injury to God.*

'Tis true, *O Sinner*, thy Sins can never invade God's Essence; that is infinitely above the Attempts of Men or Devils; but yet every wicked Wretch would, if he could, dethrone God: Sinners would not have him be so holy, nor so just as he is; not so holy in hating of their Sins, nor so just in punishing of them; that is, they would not have him be God; for it is necessary that God should be as he is. Sinners do really contradict God's Purity, rebel against his Sovereignty, violate his Commands, defie his Justice, provoke his Mercy, despise his Threatnings, and hinder the Manifestations of his Glory to the World: And is all this nothing? Every Sinner hath so much Poyson and Venom in him, that he would even spit it in the Face of God himself, if he could reach him: But because God is in himself secure from their impotent Assaults, Sin shews its Spight against him in what it can; defaceth his Image where-ever it comes, abolisheth all Structures and Lineaments of God in the Soul, and would banish his Name, his Fear, his Worship from off the Face of the whole Earth: And therefore thou who art guilty of this Rebellion against the great Majesty of Heaven, canst thou yet think thy Sins to be slight and inconsiderable, and not worth either the Cognizance or the Vengeance of the Almighty? Believe it, the *Day* is coming, and will not tarry, when that Guilt which thou now carriest so peaceably in thy Bosom, and which, like a frozen and benumb'd *Serpent*, stirs not, nor stings not, shall when heated with the Flames of Hell, fly in thy Face, and appear in all its native and genuine Deformities and Horrour, and overwhelm thy Soul with Everlasting Anguish and Torment; and then, but too late, then wilt thou exclaim against thy self, as being worse than a *Fool*, or Mad-man, for thinking so slightly of, and making a *Mock* at that which hath eternally ruin'd and destroyed thee.

And having thus shew'd you briefly, that wicked Men do make light of Sin, and the Inducements that tempt them to it; I shall now, in the *Third* place, shew you their great and inexcusable *Folly* in so doing. And certainly never was any insensate Man, never any that was wholly abandon'd by his Reason and Understanding, guilty of a greater *Folly* than this is: For,

III. *The Folly of Sinners in making*

I. Is

light of Sin, appears in that they

I. Is it not moſt egregious *Folly* and Madneſs for any to do that, which yet they hope they ſhall live to repent that ever they did it? This is ſuch a *Folly*, as all the Extravagances of *Fools* could never match; and yet this moſt wicked Men are guilty of: They boldly ruſh into Sin, only upon this preſumptuous Confidence, that they may hereafter be ſorry that now they did it. In which their Folly is doubly notorious, in that,

1. *Hope to repent of it.*

1. They venture upon a certain Guilt, in hope of an uncertain Repentance. And,

2. In that they take up their unprofitable Sins upon ſo great and burthenſome an Intereſt.

1. *Sinners Folly great, in venturing upon a certain Guilt, in hopes of an uncertain Repentance.*

1. In that they venture upon a certain Guilt, in hopes of an uncertain Repentance. For either God may cut thee off, O Sinner, in the very Act of that Sin which thou intendeſt to *repent* of hereafter; or, if he afford thee Time for *Repentance*, he may withhold his Grace, and in his juſt and righteous, but yet fearful Judgment, ſeal thee up under Hardneſs and Impenitency, that thou ſhalt *go on, treaſuring up to thy ſelf Wrath againſt the Day of Wrath.* And if either of theſe, through the righteous Judgment of God, ſhould happen unto thee, what a deplorable *Fool* wilt thou prove thy ſelf to be, that ſinneſt out of Hopes of Repentance, and of a Repentance which perhaps will never be granted? Alas! How many hath God, in his ſignal Vengeance, cut off, by ſome remarkable ſtroke, with an *Oath*, or *Curſe*, *or Blaſphemy* in their Mouths, ſcarce fully pronounced? How many, with their drunken Vomits gogling in their very Throats? How many, while their Souls have been burning with their luſtful Embraces, have even then been caſt into Hell, and burnt up with Everlaſting Fire? Or, if Vengeance ſhould ſpare thee for a while, O Sinner, yet thou knoweſt not how ſoon it will ſtrike thee: It is great Folly to expect the Warning of a ſick Bed; *Death* often ſurprizes by ſudden Caſualties, or by ſome Diſeaſes as ſudden as Caſualties; and there are many Ways of *Dying*, beſides *Conſumptions*, *Agues*, and *Dropſies*; the lingring Fore-runners of an approaching Diſſolution. But if God ſhould caſt thee down upon a ſick Bed, he may juſtly viſit thee, who haſt neglected thy Soul in thy Health, with ſuch Diſtempers as may make thee not only unfit, but ſuch as may render thee uncapable of doing thy laſt kind Office for it. It is Folly to expect the Admonition of Old Age: Alas! the *Almond-Tree* doth not every were *flouriſh*; and it is not one, to many Thouſands, that lay down an *Hoary Head* in the Bed of the Grave. But grant thou couldſt be aſſured of the Continuance of thy Life, yet is it not egregious *Folly* to ſin in hope of repenting, when every Act of Sin will make thy *Repentance* the more difficult, if not impoſſible? The older thou groweſt, ſtill the more deſperate is thy Caſe; for thy Sins will be the more rooted and habituated in thee, and thy Heart the more hardned to reſiſt the Grace of God: So that, upon all Accounts, thy Repentance is moſt uncertain; and the longer thou continueſt in Sin, ſtill the more unlikely and improbable. And then judge thou thy ſelf, whether it be not extream Madneſs and Folly, to make ſo light, or no Account of Sinning, becauſe thou makeſt account of Repenting. But,

Rom. 2. 5.

Eccleſ. 12. 5.

Prov. 16. 31.

2. *Sinners great Folly to purchaſe the Pleaſures of Sin with a bitter Repentance.*

2. Suppoſe it were moſt infallibly certain that thou ſhalt *repent*, yet none but *Fools* will take up the Pleaſures of Sin upon the Sorrow, Anguiſh, and Bitterneſs of a true and hearty *Repentance*. Doſt thou ſeriouſly conſider what *Repentance* is? It is not a tranſitory Wiſh, a warm Sigh, or a languiſhing *Lord have Mercy*, in a Diſtreſs, or on a ſick Bed; (and yet even theſe cannot be without judging and condemning themſelves for *Fools*, when they ſinned:) No, but *Repentance* is the breaking of the Heart, a rending of the very Soul in pieces: The uſual Preparatives to it are ghaſtly Fears and Terrours, ſharp and dreadful Convictions, that will even ſearch thy very Bowels, break thy Bones, and burn up thy very Marrow within thee. More eſpecially doth God deal thus terribly with veteran, old confirmed Sinners, making *Repentance* more bitter to them than to others, that they may ſee and confeſs themſelves *Fools*, in indulging themſelves in their Sins in hopes of repenting for them. Say then, when the *Devil* and thine own Luſts tempt thee to any Sin; ſay, If I commit this Sin, either I ſhall repent of it, or I ſhall not; if I never repent of it, as it is a hazard whether I ſhall or no, what is there in Sin, that can recompence the everlaſting Pain of Damnation? If I ſhall repent, what is there in the Sin, that can recompence the Anguiſh and

Bitterneſs

Bitterneſs of *Repentance?* This is ſuch an unanſwerable *Dilemma*, that all the Craft and Subtilty of Hell can never ſolve. And if we would but always keep this fixed in our Minds, it were impoſſible that ever we ſhould make ſlight of Sin. While thou thus argueſt, thou argueſt ſolidly and wiſely; but to ſay I will ſin, becauſe perhaps I may repent, is quite below the meaneſt Capacity that ever own'd the leaſt Glimpſe of Senſe and Reaſon.

II. Is it not *Folly* to make a *Mock* at that which will be ſure to pay thee home, and to make a publick *Mock* and Scorn of thee to the whole World? How many have their Sins and Vices made infamous among Men? They are a Shame, and a Reproach to all that are but of a civil and ſober Converſe; and as much loſt to Reputation, as they are to Vertue? But however, certainly all wicked and ungodly Men ſhall be made a publick Scorn and Deriſion to all the World, both God, Angels, and Men: God will *mock* at them, he tells them ſo expreſly, for ſo the Wiſe Man ſpeaks; *Becauſe you have ſet at nought all my Counſel, and would none of my Reproof; I alſo will laugh at your Calamity, and mock when your Fear cometh; when your Fear cometh as a Deſolation, and your Deſtruction cometh like a Whirlwind.* All their Sins and Deeds of Wickedneſs ſhall then be expoſed to the open View and Contempt of *Saints* and *Angels*, who ſhall ſubſcribe to the righteous Doom of their Condemnation. *Devils* will then upbraid their *Folly*, and triumph that they have outwitted 'em into the ſame moſt miſerable and deplorable State with themſelves. Think now, *O Sinner!* How wilt thou be able to hold up thy guilty Head, and thy amazed and confuſed Face? Whither, Oh whither canſt thou cauſe thy Shame to go, when Men and Angels ſhall point and hiſs at thee, and thy *Folly* ſhall be proclaimed as loud as the laſt Trumpet, which Heaven, and Earth, and all the World ſhall hear?

2. *Sin will make Sinners a publick Scorn to the whole Word.*

Prov. 1. 25, 26.

III. Is it not the Fooliſhneſs of *Folly* it ſelf, to make light of that which will for ever damn thee? Art thou ſuch an *Idiot*, as to account *Hell* a Trifle, and *Damnation* it ſelf a ſlight Matter? What is it then that makes thee think Sin ſo ſmall and trifling a thing? For *Hell*, and *Death*, and Eternal Wrath are certainly entail'd upon it. Conſider what a moſt cutting Reflexion it will be to thee in *Hell*, when thou ſhalt for ever cry out upon, and curſe thy ſelf for a wretched *Fool*, that ever thou ſhould'ſt make ſlight of thoſe Sins which would damn thee: What was there in them, for which thou haſt forfeited Heaven, and Everlaſting Happineſs, but only a little impure brutiſh Pleaſure? And now that it is paſt and gone, what remains of it, but only the bitter Remembrance? Certainly thou wilt ten thouſand times, and for ever call thy ſelf an accurſed Fool for ſo doing, when it is too late to help it. Be perſuaded therefore now to be wiſe betimes for your Souls; elſe you alſo will, when there is no Redreſs, curſe your own *Folly*, that hath brought upon you all thoſe Extremities of Woe and Anguiſh.

3. *The Folly of Sinners to damn their Souls for Sin.*

True Happineſs, *&c.*

SERMON II.

REV. xxii. 14.

Bleſſed are they that do his Commandments, that they may have Right to the Tree of Life, and may enter through the Gates into the City.

THESE Words which I have now read, conſiſt of theſe Two Parts: *Firſt*, A Propoſition. And,
Secondly, A proof of this Propoſition.

Diviſion of the Words.

Firſt, A propoſition in theſe Words, that *They that do God's Commandments are Bleſſed.*

Secondly, Here is the Proof of this Propoſition, in theſe Words, that *They have a Right to the Tree of Life, and ſhall enter through the Gates into the City.*

It is the Connection of both theſe together, that I intend chiefly to ſpeak unto. Only give me leave, as a Preliminary to the enſuing Diſcourſe, to ſhew you what is contained in the firſt and great Word in my *Text*; and that is, the Word *Bleſſed*.

There is therefore a Twofold *Beatitude*, or *Bleſſedneſs*: The one is *perfect* and *conſummate*, the other *initial* and *incompleat*. The former is the Complection of all Good perfective of our Natures, and our entire and ſatisfying Enjoyment of it. This Bleſſedneſs now is only attainable in Heaven; for God alone is the Centre of all Good; and all the Good that is deſirable in this World, are but ſo many Lines drawn from the Centre, to the utmoſt Circumference of the Creation. There is nothing that can ſupply the Wants, perform the Hopes, fulfil the Deſires, without Confinement circumſcribe, without cloying ſatisfie the moſt enlarged Capacities of a Rational Soul, but only that God who is infinitely, univerſally, and indefectively good; and therefore he alone is our Objective Happineſs: And our formal Happineſs is our Relation to, and Union with this All-comprehenſive and Incomprehenſible Good. Our Aſſimilation to him, and Participation from him, of all thoſe Perfections which our Natures are capable of enjoying, but our Underſtandings not now capable of knowing. But this *conſummate Bleſſedneſs*, is reſerved for our unknown Reward hereafter, and is not that which my *Text* here ſpeaks of.

There is therefore an *imperfect* and *initial Bleſſedneſs*, which conſiſts in a Preparation for, and a Tendency unto the other: As thoſe are ſaid to be accurſed, whoſe Sins and Vices prepare them for Eternal Perdition; ſo thoſe likewiſe are ſaid to be bleſſed, whoſe Grace and Holineſs prepare them for Eternal Bliſs and Happineſs.

Such as do God's Commandments are bleſſed in Four reſpects.

Now ſuch as theſe are bleſſed in a Fourfold Reſpect.

I. *In the Seed.* Pſal. 97. 11.

Firſt, They are bleſſed, *in Semine*, in the Seed: *They go forth bearing precious Seed*, and ſhall doubtleſs rejoyce in a plentiful Harveſt: So the *Pſalmiſt* tells us, *Pſal.* 97. 11. *Light is ſown for the Righteous, and Gladneſs for the Upright in Heart.* And though they often appear Clods of Earth ploughed up, harrowed, and broken with Affliction; yet is there that bleſſed Seed caſt into them, that will certainly ſprout up to Immortality, and Eternal Life, as all the Beauties of a Flower lye couched in a ſmall unſightly Seed: And ſo truly Grace is Glory in the Seed; and Glory is but Grace full blown.

II. *In the Firſt-Fruits.* Rom. 8. 23. 2 Cor. 1. 22. Eph. 1. 14. Eph. 1. 3.

Secondly, they are bleſſed *in Primitiis*, in the Firſt-Fruits. They have already received ſome part of their Eternal Felicity, in the Graces and Conſolations of the *Holy Ghoſt*; which are therefore called *the Firſt-Fruits of the Spirit*, by the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 8. 23. and *the Earneſt of the Spirit*, 2 Cor. 1. 22. and *the Earneſt of our Inheritance*, *Epheſ.* 1. 14. Now, as the Earneſt is always part of the Bargain, and the Firſt-Fruits are always of the ſame kind with the whole Harveſt, ſo is it here; the Graces and Comforts of the *Holy Ghoſt*, are the very ſame now, that they ſhall be in Heaven it ſelf: And therefore the *Apoſtle bleſſeth God, who hath bleſſed us with ſpiritual Bleſſings in heavenly Things in Chriſt.* Better indeed they ſhall be in Heaven, but not other. Here our Graces often languiſh under the Load and Preſſure of Corruption, but in Heaven they ſhall be for ever vigorous and triumphant: Here our Waters of Comfort often fails us, our Ciſtern is often dried up, and our Bottle ſpent; but in Heaven we ſhall for ever lye at the Fountain of Living Waters, and take in Divine Communications, as they immediately flow from the Divine Eſſence, without having them deadned or flatted in the Conveyance. But yet, both by theſe imperfect Graces and Comforts, we do truly and properly enjoy God; the Enjoyment of whom in any meaſure is Happineſs, but in the higheſt meaſure is Heaven it ſelf. If therefore the Maſs and Lump be Bleſſedneſs, the Firſt-Fruits muſt be bleſſed alſo.

III. *Bleſſed in Hope.* Titus 2. 13.

Thirdly, They are bleſſed *in Spe*, in Hope; whence it is called by the Apoſtle, *That bleſſed Hope.* A bleſſed Hope it is, becauſe that which we hope for is *Eternal Bleſſedneſs.* The Hope of worldly Things is commonly more tormenting, than the Enjoyment of them can be ſatisfying. It is an Hope that vitiates and deflowers its Object, and ſo mightily over-rates them in the Fancy, that when they come to paſs, our Hope is rather fruſtrated than accompliſhed: And were it not for that Impatience, which is the conſtant Attendant of this Hope, it would be a Problem hard to be reſolved, whether Expectation or Fruition were the more eligible Eſtate. Vain therefore and wretched muſt needs

needs be the Hopes of thoſe things, which cannot anſwer what is expected from them; like a Golden Dream to a Beggar, or the Dream of a furniſhed Table to one that is Hunger-ſtarv'd. But now the Hopes of Heaven can never impoveriſh the Glories of it, for they are infinite and inexhauſtible; and God hath laid up for his, that which the Heart of Man cannot conceive.

A Chriſtian's Hope hath Two Prerogatives above any worldly Hope. *Two Properties of a Chriſtian's Hope.*

One is, That it may attain to a full and final Aſſurance, as the *Apoſtle* ſpeaks to the *Hebrews*, where he calls it, *The full Aſſurance of Hope unto the End.* An Hope it is, becauſe the Object of it is a future Good deſired and expected. But yet it is an Hope that is joined with a full Aſſurance of the Event; an Hope that may flower up into ſuch a Certainty, as to have no Mixture of Fear or Doubting in its Compoſition; but may be as ſure of the Heavenly Inheritance, as if our Reverſion were already in actual Poſſeſſion: Whereas Worldly Hope can never be ſecure, but ſome Providence or other may interpoſe to diſappoint it. Heb. 6. 11.

The other *Prerogative* of a Chriſtian's Hope, is, that though it be thus fully aſſured, yet the Accompliſhment of it ſhall always have the ſweet Reliſh of Surprize and Wonder; for the Happineſs will be far greater than the Hope, and the Inheritance larger than the Expectation; whereas Earthly Hopes, if they grow to any degree of Confidence of Succeſs, upon Fruſtration they turn into Impatience and Rage: Or if perhaps they do ſucceed, the Sweetneſs of the Accompliſhment was long before ſuck'd out and devoured by our greedy Expectation; the *Game* is torn and eaten, before the *Huntſman* can come in. And upon both theſe Accounts, the pious and obedient Chriſtian is bleſſed in Hope. It is a bleſſed Hope that ſhall certainly be accompliſhed, and a bleſſed Hope, the accompliſhing of which ſhall infinitely exceed our Expectations, and fill us not with Shame, but Eternal Admiration and Wonder.

Fourthly, They are bleſſed in *Right* and *Title*: And upon this very Account eſpecially my *Text* pronounceth thoſe bleſſed *that do God's Commandments*, becauſe *they have a Right to the Tree of Life, and to enter in through the Gates into the City.* IV. *Bleſſed in Right.*

Now theſe Expreſſions, according to the Genius and Style of this whole Book, myſtical and alluſive; and for the explaining of them I muſt ſhew,

Firſt, What the Tree of Life is. I.

Secondly, What is this City, into which they have a Right to enter. II.

Thirdly, What it is *to enter through the Gates into the City.* III.

Fourthly, What *Right* it is which *Obedience to God's Commandments gives us to the Tree of Life, and to enter into the City.* IV.

For the *Firſt* of theſe, *What the Tree of Life is?* I.

What the Tree of Life is.

I anſwer, We find Mention made of this *Tree of Life* in Two other places of this dark *Prophecy*; the one is in *Ver.* 2. of this *Chapter: On either Side of the River was there the Tree of Life, which bare twelve manner of Fruits, and yielded her Fruit every Month; and the Leaves of the Tree were for the healing of the Nations.* Rev. 22. 2. But this, very probably, may be only an Enigmatical Repreſentation of the Doctrine of the Goſpel; let us then conſult the other place, where Mention is made of this *Tree of Life*, and that is in *Rev.* 2. 7. *To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the Tree of Life that is in the midſt of the Paradiſe of God.* Rev. 2. 7. Now this carries a plain Alluſion to that Deſcription of the Earthly Paradiſe of which we read, *Gen.* 2. 9. where it is ſaid, *God planted the Tree of Life in the midſt of the Garden.* Gen. 2. 9. Now this *Tree of Life* was ſo called, not that it had any natural Vertue to perpetuate Man's Life to Immortality, but only from its *typical* and *ſacramental* Uſe; God having appointed the Eating thereof as a Sign and Pledge of our Immortality, had we continued in our Innocency and Obedience. And therefore we find, that upon the Fall, God ſet a Guard upon this Tree, and as it were excommunicates ſinful *Adam* from partaking of this *Sacrament* of the *Covenant of Works*, which was both a Sign and Seal of Immortality; ſignifying thereby, that Sinners have no Right to Eternal Life, according to the Terms of the firſt Covenant: But this Right being again reſtored to us by Jeſus Chriſt, therefore they are pronounced bleſſed *that do God's Commandments*, becauſe *they have a Right to the Tree of Life*; that is, to that Eternal Life and Immortality which is brought to light by the Goſpel, and to which the *Tree of Life* in Paradiſe was a Sacrament and Emblem.

II. *What is meant by City.* Rev. 21. 10, 14. Rev. 22. 15.

Secondly, Let us enquire what is *this City*, into which thoſe that *do God's Commandments ſhall enter?* And we have a moſt large and glorious Deſcription made of it in *Chap.* 21. of this Book from *Ver.* 10. to the end of the *Chapter*. And, in brief, it is nothing elſe but *Heaven; the New* Jeruſalem, *that Holy City, the City of the Living God, into which no unclean thing ſhall enter. For without are Dogs, and Sorcerers, and Whoremongers, and Idolaters, and whoſoever loveth and maketh a Lie.*

III. *What is it to enter through the Gates into the City?* Mat. 7. 14. Pſal. 119. 96.

Thirdly, What is it to enter through the Gates into the City.

I anſwer, Though in the foregoing *Chapter* this *City* is deſcribed to have *twelve Gates, and in them the Names of the Twelve Tribes of* Iſrael, to ſignifie to us, that through the Grace of the Goſpel, there is a Paſſage and an Inlet into Heaven for all thoſe that are true *Iſraelites*; yet, in true propriety of Speech, there is but one Way, and but one Gate to Heaven: Yea, and our Saviour tells us, that Way is narrow, and that Gate is ſtrait; for ſo we find his Words, *Strait is the Gate, and narrow is the Way, that leadeth unto Life, and few there be that find it.* The Commandments of God are this Gate to the Heavenly City, and the two Tables of the Law are the two Leaves of this Gate, through which every one muſt paſs, that hopes to be admitted into the *New Jeruſalem.* And although *David* ſeems to make this Gate very large, when he tells us, *Thy Commandments are exceeding broad*; yet that is only to be underſtood concerning the Authority of its Injunctions, not of the Liberty of its Indulgence. It is exceeding broad in the Extent of its preceptive Power, for it preſcribes Rules to all our Thoughts, Words, and Actions, and to every Circumſtance of each; but it is exceeding narrow and ſtrait in the Scope and Allowance that it gives us; that as ſoon may *a Camel go through the Eye of a Needle*, as we paſs through this Gate with the Burthen of one unmortified Luſt, or one unrepented Sin.

Queſt. Rev. 3. 7.

But why is it ſaid, *That thoſe that do God's Commandments may enter through the Gates into the City?* Can any enter in as a Thief, or a Robber, over the Wall? Or can any, as an Enemy, ſcale thoſe Eternal Ramparts, and take it by Invaſion?

Anſw.

I anſwer: This is ſo expreſſed, to denote the free Acceſs and Admiſſion of thoſe in Heaven, who are careful to obey the Commandments of God upon Earth: Such as theſe are freeborn Citizens of Heaven; their whole Eſtate, their whole Traffick, all their Treaſure and Livelihood is laid up there; they are free *Denizens* by the Charter of the New Covenant, they may challenge Ingreſs as their Right and Due; and he who hath the *Keys of* David, *who openeth and no Man ſhuteth, and ſhuteth and no Man openeth*, opens the Door to theſe, and lets them into thoſe Eternal Manſions, which he hath purchas'd and prepar'd for them.

IV. *What Right Obedience giveth to the Tree of Life, and to the Heavenly City.*

The *Fourth* and laſt Query to be enquir'd into, is concerning that Right which Obedience to God's Commands gives us unto this *Tree of Life*, and to this *Heavenly City*; that is, to Eternal Life and Glory. Now here I ſhall branch out this Query into Two; and ſo I ſhall ſhew you,

I. What that *Obedience* is, which gives us a *Right* to Heaven.

II. What that *Right* is, that this *Obedience* doth confirm.

I. What that *Obedience* is, which gives us a *Right* to Heaven.

1. 2. *What that Obedience is that is mentioned in the Text.*

I anſwer: It is not a Legal *Obedience*, or a Perfect Perſonal Righteouſneſs, that now gives up this *Right* to Heaven; this is very plain, becauſe to conſtitute this, it is neceſſary that there be both Original Purity in our Natures, which ſince the Fall is miſerably vitiated and corrupted; and alſo a Sinleſs Perfection in our Lives, in the conſtant Obſervation of every *Iota* of the Law, both as to its Extention, and Intention; that we obey it in every part and tittle of it, and that our Obedience unto every part be raiſed to the higheſt degree of Love, Zeal, and Charity. This *Title* was once good, but it is now loſt, by the Fall, in the common Ruine and Rubiſh of Mankind; and he who hath not another *Title*, upon better and eaſier Terms, will find *Cherubims*, and the Flaming Sword of Divine Juſtice, ſet to guard the *Tree of Life* from his Approaches, as one once they did from guilty *Adam*.

1. *Not Legal Obedience.*

2. *It is Evangelical Obedience.*

II. There is therefore another *Obedience* which gives a *Right* unto the *Tree of Life*, and that is an Evangelical Obedience, which according to the Grace, Condeſcenſion, and Equity of the Goſpel, ſhall be accepted unto, and rewarded with Everlaſting Happineſs. Now this Evangelical Obedience conſiſts not indeed in Innocency and Perfection, but in ſincere Deſires, and porportionable Endeavours after it; when we ſtrive to the utmoſt to live holily, and to walk more

ſtrictly

ſtrictly with God, according to the Rules that he hath preſcribed us in his holy Word: And it conſiſts of Two Parts; *Mortification* of our corrupt and ſinful Affections, whereby we die daily unto Sin: And the *Spiritual Renovation*, and Quickning of our Graces, whereby we increaſe daily in ſpiritual Strength, and make farther Progreſſes in Holineſs and true Piety. And as it conſiſts of theſe Two Parts, ſo hath it alſo theſe Two Adjuncts.

1. The one is, True Repentance for our paſt Sins, reflecting upon them with Shame and Hatred, confeſſing and bewailing them with Sorrow and Contrition, and endeavouring, with all Earneſtneſs and Sincerity, to abſtain from the Commiſſion of the like for the future. 1.

2. The other is, A True and Lively Faith, whereby we rely on the Blood and Satisfaction of Jeſus Chriſt, for the Remiſſion of our Sins; and upon his perfect Righteouſneſs, and prevalent Interceſſion for the Acceptation and Reward of our imperfect Obedience. 2.

Whoſoever doth thus ſincerely do the Cammandments of God, univerſally and conſtantly, with his whole Strength and Mind, as though he expected to be ſaved by the Merits of his own Works; and yet, after all, doth ſo entirely rely on the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt for Salvation, as though he had never done any thing: He it is, and he alone, who hath this *Right unto the Tree of Life, and ſhall enter through the Gates into the Heavenly City.* For he doth his Commandments out of a ſincere Love; and God, who is Love, will own his Sincerity.

Secondly, I come now to conſider what that *Right* is, which this Evangelical Obedience, or doing the Commands of the Law, according to the Favour and Mercy of the Goſpel, doth confer upon us, by vertue of which we may aſſuredly expect Eternal Life. And here, II. *What Right Obedience gives to Eternal Life.*

I. It cannot be a *Right of Purchaſe, or Merit.* It is a fooliſh Preſumption, and intollerable Arrogance, to think we can deſerve any thing at the Hands of God, unleſs it be his Wrath by our Sins. For, I. *Not a Right of Purchaſe.*

1. In all proper Merit there muſt be an Equivalence, or at leaſt a proportion of Worth between the Work, and the Reward: Which to imagine between our Obedience, and the Heavenly Glory, is to exalt the one infinitely too high, and to abaſe the other infinitely too low. What proportion is there between a *Cup of cold Water given to a Diſciple of Chriſt*, and that *Ocean* of Everlaſting Joy and Pleaſure, which ſhall be the Reward of it? A Man might more reaſonably expect to buy *Stars* with *Counters*, or to purchaſe a Kingdom with Two Mites, than think to purchaſe the Heavenly Kingdom by paying down his Duties, and good Works, which are no way profitable unto God, (*For is it any Pleaſure to the Almighty that thou art righteous; or is it any Gain unto him, that thou makeſt thy Way perfect?*) and bear no more proportion to the infinite Glory of Heaven, than a ſingle *Cypher* doth to the numberleſs *Sands* of the *Sea*. 1. *In Merit there muſt be an Equivalence.* Job. 22.3.

2. The very Grace that enables us to do the Commandments of God, is freely beſtowed upon us by himſelf; and therefore the Obedience we perform unto him, meerly by his own Aſſiſtance, cannot be ſaid (without a grand Impropriety) to merit any Reward from him. Such kind of Merit is but an idle and frivolous pretence: For certainly, he who gives me Money to by an Eſtate of him, doth as freely give me that Eſtate, as if I had never bought it of him, but he had immediately beſtowed the Land upon me, and not the Sum of Money. 2. *Grace to obey is given freely.*

3. All our *Obedience* is imperfect, and therefore, if it deſerve any thing, it is only Puniſhment for the Defects and Failures of it. This Coin is not currant, this Metal is baſe and adulterated, the King's Stamp defaced and obliterated, the Edges clipp'd, and the Superſcription, which ſhould be on both ſides *Holineſs to the Lord*, is on the Reverſe at leaſt, *A Sacrifice to Hypocriſie, Formality, and Vain Glory*; and therefore this counterfeit and baſe Alloy will not paſs for Purchaſe-Money; and had it what it deſerves, it would be melted down in the Furnance of Hell. 3. *All our Obedience is imperfect.*

4. Suppoſe it were perfect, which it is not, yet is it no more than our bounden Duty; and Duty can never be meritorious. We are bound by the Law of Nature, and, as we are Creatures who have received our Beings, and the Continuance and Preſervation of them from God, to employ our ſelves faithfully and aſſiduouſly in his Service; and if, for our greater Encouragement therein, he hath promiſed, and will beſtow upon us a vaſt and unconceivable Reward, we 4. *Obedience is due from us.*

muſt attribute it wholly to the Superrogation of his free Bounty; for without this, all our Services were due to him before. Thus our *Saviour* tells us, Luke. 17. 9, 10. *Doth the Maſter thank the Servant becauſe he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. So likewiſe ye, when you ſhall have done all thoſe things that are commanded you, ſay,* (not in a complemental way, but with Truth and Sincerity) *we are unprofitable Servants, we have but done that which was our Duty to do.* And therefore certainly, if we cannot deſerve Thanks, much leſs can we deſerve ſo ample a Reward as *Eternal Life:* And therefore thoſe that think to purchaſe *Heaven* and *Eternal Life* by doing that which is not commanded, nor their Duty, will find a fearful Diſappointment of their preſumptuous Hopes, when they ſhall hear that ſad Greeting, *Who hath required theſe things at your hands?*

This *Right* then of Merit and Purchaſe is excluded, and no Man can have a *Right* to Heaven upon the Account of the Worth and Value of his Works.

A threefold Right to Heaven. There is therefore a *Threefold Right* which they *that do the Commandments of God,* have to Heaven, and Eternal Happineſs.

1. *They have a Right of Evidence.*
2. *They have a Right of Inheritance.*
3. *They have a Right of Promiſe.*

1. 1. Obedience to God's Commandments gives us a *Right of Evidence* to *A Right of Evidence.* Eternal Life. He is judged to have the beſt Right to an Eſtate, who can produce the beſt Evidence for it. Now the beſt *Evidence* that can be ſhewn for Heaven is our unfeigned *Obedience:* All other things that Men may rely upon to juſtifie their Title, will prove but forged Deeds, to which only the Spirit of Preſumption or Enthuſiaſm hath ſet his Seal, and not the Spirit of God; and therefore we find how miſerably the Confidence of thoſe Wretches were diſ- Mat. 7. 22. mounted, and their Hopes fruſtrated, who came with *Lord, Lord, Have we not propheſied in thy Name, and in thy Name caſt out Devils, and in thy Name have done many wonderful Works?* All this may be, and yet be no good Title, no good Evidence for Heaven; for if thoſe who caſt out *Devils,* have not caſt out their Luſts; if thoſe who *propheſie* in his Name, by their Sins diſhonour and blaſpheme that Name; if thoſe who are Workers of *Miracles,* are yet Workers of Iniquity, he profeſſeth againſt them, that *he knows them not;* and commands Mat. 7. 22, 23. them *to depart from him for ever, as Workers of Iniquity;* whereas on the contrary, we find a joyful and Bleſſed Sentence pronounced upon others, according to the Evidence brought in for them by their good Works; ſo our Mat. 25. 30. Lord himſelf tells us, *Come ye Bleſſed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you; for I was hungry, and ye gave me Meat; for I was thirſty, and ye gave me Drink; a Stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye cloathed me; ſick and in Priſon, and ye viſited me.* This Particle [*For*] is not a Note of *Cauſality* or *Merit,* but only of *Evidence;* for as *Evediences* prove our *Right* to our Poſſeſſions, ſo likewiſe our *Obedience* and good Works do effectually prove the *Right* which we have to Eternal Life, through Chriſt's Purchaſe, and God's free Donation; and therefore the Evidence being clear, the *Sentence* muſt in Equity proceed accordingly. God, as a juſt and righteous Judge, inſtates them in the Poſſeſſion of the Kingdom of Heaven, becauſe they *viſited,* and *relieved,* and *cheriſhed* his Son in his Members: Not that their Love to him, or their Charity to them, purchaſed any ſuch *Right;* but only proves and evinceth it: It is not the Cauſe of their Juſtification; but a Reaſon why God declares them juſtified; as the Deeds which I produce are the Reaſon why an Eſtate is adjudged mine, though the Cauſe of my *Title* to it be either my own Purchaſe, or another's Gift. As therefore thoſe are ſaid to have no Right nor *Title* to what they pretend, who can ſhew no Evidence for it; ſo thoſe who *obey* not the holy Will and Commands of God, have no *Right* to the *Tree of Life,* becauſe they have no Evidence to ſhew, nor no Plea to urge for it, but will certainly be caſt in their Suit.

2. 2. Thoſe that do God's Commandments have a *Right* of *Heirſhip,* and *In-* *A Right of Heirſhip.* *heritance* unto *Eternal Life;* for they are born of God, and therefore Heaven is their Partimony, their Paternal Eſtate, for ſo are the Words of the Apoſtle, *Every* 1 John 2. 29. *one that doth Righteouſneſs, is born of God:* And if they are born of God, then, according to the Apoſtles Argumentation, *If Children, then Heirs, Heirs of God, and Joint* Rom. 8. 17. *Heirs with Chriſt, who is the Heir of all things.* The Trial of thy Legitimation, whe-

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ther thou art a true and genuine Son of God, will lye upon thy *Obedience* to his Commands; *For in this*, ſays the *Apoſtle*, *the Children of God are manifeſt, and the Children of the Devil. Whoſoever is born of God doth not commit Sin; and whoſoever doth not Righteouſneſs, is not of God.* Now if by our Obedience and Dutifulneſs it appears that we are indeed the Children of God, our *Father* will certainly give us a Child's Portion, and that is no leſs than a *Kingdom*. So ſaith our Saviour, *Fear not, little Flock; it is your Father's good pleaſure to give you the Kingdom.* 1 John 3. 9, 10. Luke 12. 32.

3. Thoſe that do God's Commandments have a *Right* to Eternal Life, by *Promiſe* and *Stipulation*; and therefore it is called *Eternal Life, which God that cannot lie hath promiſed.* Indeed, the whole Tenour of the Goſpel is nothing elſe but the Exhibition of this Promiſe, and a Comment upon it. This is the Sum of the Goſpel, the Terms of the Covenant, the Indenture made between God and Man; *If thou wilt enter into Life*, ſays our Saviour, *keep the Commandments.* And in another Place our Lord tells us, *Not every one that ſaith unto me, Lord, Lord, ſhall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doth the Will of my Father which is in Heaven.* 3. *A Right of Promiſe.* Tit. 1. 2. Mat. 19. 17. Mat. 7. 21.

And thus you ſee what *Right* it is, that Obedience to the Commands of God gives us to Eternal Life: *A Right of Evidence, a Right of Heirſhip, and a Right of Promiſe.*

But, may ſome ſay, Is not this again to eſtabliſh the antiquated Covenant of Works; Do this, and live? *And doth not this aboliſh the Law of Faith*, He that believeth ſhall be ſaved? *Is it not the Office of Faith alone to convey unto us a Right and Title unto Eternal Life?* Object.

I anſwer, No, it doth no prejudice unto Faith; for we ſtill affirm, that our original and fundamental Right to Heaven is grounded, not upon our Obedience, but Chriſt's; not upon our Works, but upon his; his Merits and Purchaſe, which, through Faith, are imparted and imputed to us. Yet give me leave to ſay, that I think the Notion of Juſtifying and Saving Faith is very much, if not generally miſtaken by us: And as the Soul is the moſt noble, and moſt vital Principle of Man, and yet is moſt unknown to him what it is, and how it operates; ſo Faith, which is the vital Principle of Chriſtians, and by which the Juſt are ſaid to live, is yet moſt unknown, both as to its Nature and Operations, unto the Generality of them: Some place it in Aſſurance, ſome in Affiance and Recumbence; ſome in one Act of Faith, and ſome in another; which are either the Effects of Faith as true, or the Degrees of it as ſtrong, rather than the proper and adequate Nature and Eſſence of it; and then they mightily puzzle themſelves how to accord and reconcile Faith and Obedience in carrying on the great Work of our Salvation, which yet were never at a variance about it, but only in their miſtaken *Hypotheſis*: For what is Faith, but an Aſſent to a Teſtimony? The very force and import of the Word can carry no other Senſe: And he that ſaith he believes, muſt needs mean he believes ſome Record or Teſtimony; or elſe he ſpeaks that which neither himſelf, nor any other can underſtand. Conſequently therefore a Divine Faith muſt be an Aſſent to a Divine Teſtimony; that is, to the Word of God contain'd in the Holy Scriptures. But now if this Faith reſt only in a bare and naked Aſſent to the Truth of Divine Revelation, it is but Hiſtorical and Dogmatical; which, though it be a Divine Faith in reſpect of the Objects believed, yet is it but Humane and Natural in reſpect of its Principle and Motives. But when this Aſſent to the Truths of the Scripture is joined with proportionable Affections to thoſe Truths, and doth excite us to Actions conformable to the Diſcoveries of the Divine Will, there this Faith is Juſtifying and Saving. And certainly this is not ſo very diſtant from Obedience, as to be thought hardly reconcileable with it. As for Inſtance, A Man may give a bare Aſſent to this great Goſpel-Truth, that *Jeſus Chriſt came into World to ſave Sinners*, and yet this Faith may not ſave him, becauſe it may be unoperative, and paſs no farther than the Act of the Underſtanding: This is a dead Faith, which can never bring any Man to Heaven; yea, ſuch a Faith as the very *Devils* and *Damned Spirits* in Hell have, *who believe and tremble.* Another Man believes the ſame Truth, and aſſents to the ſame Propoſition; but this his Aſſent influenceth his Affections, and governs his Actions, in Conformity to the Nature and Conſequences of ſuch a Belief: And becauſe he is aſſured that Jeſus Chriſt came into the World to be the Saviour of it, therefore he loves him, truſts in him, relies upon him, hopes in his Promiſes, and obeys his Com- Answer. Jam. 2. 19.

What Saving Faith is.

Commands. And this, indeed, is a true Saving, Juſtifying Faith; for Saving Faith is a firm Aſſent unto the Truths of God revealed in the Holy Scriptures, working in us proportionable Affections and Actions. He who ſo believes *the Glory of Heaven*, as to have his Endeavours thereby quickned to uſe his utmoſt Diligence for the obtaining of it: He who ſo believes *the Torments of Hell*, as thereby to be terrified from doing any thing that might expoſe him to ſo great and fearful a Condemnation: He who ſo believes *the Attributes of God*, as thereby to be excited to fear him for his Greatneſs, to love him for his Goodneſs, to imitate him in his Bounty, Purity, and Holineſs: He who ſo believes *the All-ſufficiency, Merits, and Mediatory Office of Jeſus Chriſt*, as thereby to be engaged with all his Soul to love him, to truſt in him, to rely upon him alone for Salvation, and to yield to him all ſincere Obedience, as the Law requires; ſuch an one's Faith is Saving and Juſtifying. So that you ſee there is no ſuch Diſcord between Faith and Works, as ſome would imagine; for that Faith that ſaves us, *muſt work by Love*; and thoſe Works which capacitate us for Salvation, muſt be *the Obedience of Faith*, as it is called, *Rom.* 16. 26.

Gal. 5. 6.
Rom. 16. 26.

Uſe.

Now, what is the End of all this, but to preſs you to true practical Holineſs, and a ſtrict Obedience to the Commandments of God? If I ſhould go from one Perſon to another, aad ask you one by one, Do you hope to be ſaved? Where is the Man that would not teſtifie the Confidence of his Hopes, by his Diſdain at the *Queſtion*? Yea, but remember that Salvation is a litigious Claim, and you have a powerful Adverſary that puts in a ſtrong Plea againſt you, even the Juſtice of God, and his Eternal Wrath and Vengeance; whoſe Title to us, were it but better weighed and conſidered, would wofully ſtagger the Hopes of moſt Men, and make their Faces gather Blackneſs, and ſmite their Hearts with Amazement, and their Knees with Trembling. In a Matter of ſuch infinite Importance, it highly concerns us to examine our *Right* and *Title*, and to peruſe and try our *Evidences*, leſt at the Day of Trial we be caſt in our Suit, and pay dreadful Damages unto the Juſtice of God.

Only thoſe who *do God's Commandments* have this *Right to the Tree of Life.* Chriſt hath indeed purchaſed Salvation for all, but *he is the Author of Salvation only to thoſe who obey him*, as the Author to the *Hebrews* ſpeaks: And, *Without Holineſs no Man ſhall ever ſee the Lord.* The Inheritance is indeed purchaſed, but where are your Evidences of your *Heirſhip*? Sirs, flatter not your ſelves with any vain Conceits of the Mercy of the Goſpel, in prejudice to the Authority of the Law: The Commandments are the Statute-Law of God's Kingdom, the Goſpel is his Court of Chancery; but neither Juſtice nor Equity will relieve thoſe who have not done their utmoſt to obſerve his Statute-Law; and therefore thoſe who indulge themſelves in their Sloth, and wilful Neglect, both of what they ought, and might have done, do but deceive their Souls with vain Hopes; they have no *Right* to the *Eternal Inheritance*, but their Portion muſt for ever be with *Dogs and Swine*, without the *Holy City*, into which no unclean thing ſhall ever enter. And if any think this Legal Preaching, let mine ever be ſo.

Heb. 5. 19.
Heb. 2. 14.

THE

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THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST, &c.

SERMON III.

ACTS ii. 24.

Whom God hath raiſed up, having looſed the Pains of Death, becauſe it was not poſſible that he ſhould be holden of it.

CHriſtian Religion is founded upon ſuch Myſterious and Supernatural Truths, and the Principles of it are ſo paradoxal to the received Opinions of Mankind, that the greateſt Perſecution it ever found in the World, was not ſo much from Fire and Sword, Racks and Tortures, the evident Cruelties of the firſt Oppoſers of it, as from the Magiſterial Dictates of partial and corrupt Reaſon. *Introduction.*

The *Philoſophers*, whom *Tertullian* calls the *Patrons of Hereticks*, have eſtabliſhed Two peremptory *Maxims*, utterly repugnant unto what the *Scripture* reveals to us, both concerning our Happineſs and Comfort: The one is, *Ex nihilo, nihil habetur: Out of nothing, nothing can be made*; directly levell'd againſt the Creation of the World. And the other is, *A privatione ad habitum non datur Regreſſus: There is no Reſtoration of the ſame Being, after a total Corruption and Diſſolution of it*; which ſtill continues a great Prejudice againſt the Reſurrection of our Bodies; which the *Oracles* of *Reaſon* have ſo much troubled the World with, that whatſoever ſeem'd in the leaſt contradictory to it, they judged contradictory to common Senſe, and exploded it as ridiculous and impoſſible. Under theſe great Diſadvantages the *Chriſtian Religion* labour'd, whilſt it not only own'd the Creation of the World out of nothing, formerly deſcribed by *Moſes*; but more clearly and openly atteſted the Reſurrection of the Dead, which before was not either ſo clearly known, or ſo clearly proved; for theſe Doctrines were held ſo abſurd by the great *Sophiſters* of the World, whoſe Minds were too deeply tinctur'd with contrary Notions, that they look'd upon the *Chriſtian Religion* as a Deſign rather to deſtroy *Reaſon*, than to ſave the Soul; accounting it a very abſurd thing to believe in a crucified Saviour, as being a Perſon weak and impotent; or the future Reſurrection, as being a thing utterly impoſſible.

We find the *Apoſtle* to the *Corinthians* complaining, that the *Greeks*, who were then the great Maſters of Wiſdom and Learning, eſteemed a crucified Chriſt Fooliſhneſs, and thought thoſe Men little befriended by *Reaſon*, that would depend for Life upon one that loſt his own; and venture to take off the Shamefulneſs of the *Croſs*, or to ſilence thoſe Scoffs that were caſt upon them for their Credulity, who affirm the wonderful *Reſurrection* of a dead Saviour, and his glorious Triumph over *Death* and the *Grave*. For this ſeemed to them no other than to ſolve an Abſurdity by an Impoſſibility, and make Reaſon more ſuſpicious, in that they judged the Fundamentals of *Reaſon* muſt be overthrown, to make the Fundamentals of *Chriſtianity* any way tolerable or poſſible. Wherefore we find that even at *Athens*, that great Concourſe of Wits, where all the *Sect* of *Philoſophers* made their common Retreat; yet when Saint *Paul* preached to them *Jeſus*, and the *Reſurrection*, this Doctrine ſeem'd ſo abſurd and fooliſh to them, and ſo contrary 1 Cor. 1. 24.

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to all Principles of right *Reason*, that they forgot that Civility that usually is found in Men of inquisitive Spirits, and brake out into open Reproaches and Revilings; *What will this Babler say? Because he preach'd to them Jesus, and the Resurrection.* No doubt they wanted not very specious Arguments to urge against the *Resurrection* of the Body: As first, The Impossibility of a Recollection of the dispersed Particles of Men, resolv'd into their Elements, and scatter'd by the Four Winds of Heaven; though it might be very well retorted on the *Epicureans*, who disputed with Saint *Paul* against the *Resurrection*, that it was not so unlikely a thing, that there might be a Re-union of the scatter'd Parts of the same Man, as the fortuitous Concourse of *Atoms* at the first making of the World: Yet this *Objection* overbore and prevail'd with *Heathens*, that when they burnt the Bodies of *Christians*, they cast their Ashes into the Rivers, to confute their Hopes of ever being raised again; from whence they should be carried away into an unknown *Ocean*, and there be made the Sport of Winds and Waves. But what our *Saviour* says upon the same Occasion to the *Sadduces*, may be said unto these Men; *You err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the Power of God:* For unless their Parts could be scatter'd beyond the reach of *Omnipoteney*, unless they could be ground so small, as to 'scape the *Knowledge* and *Care* of God, who ordereth and rangeth every Mote that plays up and down in the *Sun-beams*, this Dispersion of the Body proves not the Impossibility of their Union, because the *Power* and *Providence* of God will gather up every Dust, and rally them together again into the same Place and Order as now they are.

Act. 17. 18.

Matth. 22. 29.

Objection. Another Argument against the *Resurrection of the Body*, may be the various Changes dead Bodies undergo; being first turn'd into Earth, that again turn'd into Grass and Herbs, that becoming Nourishment for other Men or Beasts, that Nourishment again passing into their Substance, making a kind of *Transmigration* of *Bodies*, as *Pythagoras* would have there was of Souls: Which is very evident in the Case of *Anthropomorphites*, and *Men-eaters*, who have, of several parts of other Men's Bodies, compounded their own. And so the same *Question* may be demanded, which the *Sadduces* asked our *Saviour*, concerning the seven Brethren that married the same Woman, *whose Wife of the seven she should be at the Resurrection?* So here, those Parts that belonged to so many Men, to which of them belong they in the *Resurrection*, without detriment to the rest? Here the same Answer occurrs, that Christ gave them: *You err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the Power of God;* who is the best Judge of Property, and can resolve all those Parts, by which any Nourishment hath been receiv'd by any other Creatures, unto their own proper *Bodies* again.

Matth. 22. 29.

And thus it appears, these *Arguments* against the *Resurrection* of the Body, amount not to prove the Impossibility of the Effect; but only the supernatural Almighty Power of the Efficient. Wherefore, granting the *Resurrection* impossible, according to the Original Course of natural Things, yet when an Omnipotent Arm doth interpose, which gives Laws unto it, who dares to say, the Creature may be brought to such a State of Dissolution, as may out-reach the Dominion of the Almighty Creator.

Acts 26. 8. Upon these Grounds it is, that the *Apostle* urgeth, *why it should be thought a strange and incredible thing, that God should raise the Dead;* and in the *Text*, that he asserts the *Resurrection* of *Christ*. And to prevent any fallacious Cavils against it, he shews,

Division of the Words.

I. *First*, That *God raised him from the Dead;* and therefore it was not to be accounted a thing impossible, since to God nothing could imply a Contradiction.

II. *Secondly*, He doth not only assert the Possibility, but the Impossibility of his final Continuance under the Power of Death. The Grave that grasps and retains all other Mortals, was not able to detain him who hath Immortality and Life dwelling in himself: *It was not possible he should be holden of it*, therefore God hath raised him up, *loosing the Pains of Death. Whom God raised up:* Here is the Efficient Cause of *Christ's Resurrection*, in the concurrent Action of the whole *Trinity*; for all that God doth out of himself, is ascribed to all the Three Persons. Sometimes it is ascribed to the *Father*, as the *Apostle* speaks, *The God of* Abraham, *and of* Isaac, *and of* Jacob, *the God of our Fathers, hath glorified his Son* Jesus, *whom ye delivered up, and denied the Holy One, and the Just, desiring a Murtherer; and killed the Prince of Life, whom God hath raised from the Dead.*

Acts 3. 13, 15.

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Sometimes it is aſcribed to the *Son*, who by the infinite Power of his Divinity, raiſed up his Humane Nature from the Grave: So our Saviour himſelf tells us, *I lay down my Life of my ſelf: I have Power to lay it down, and I have Power to take it up again.* Joh. 3. 18. The ſame may be collected of the *Holy Ghoſt*, from the Words of the Apoſtle; *If the Spirit of him that raiſed up Jeſus from the Dead dwell in you, he that raiſed up Chriſt from the Dead, ſhall alſo quicken your mortal Bodies by his Spirit.* Rom. 8. 11. Now if the Spirit of God can quicken our Bodies, the ſame Spirit alſo can quicken the Body of Chriſt, ſince it is the ſame Spirit that quickens both the Head and the Members.

Having looſed the Pains of Death: In ſome Copies it is, *Having looſed the Pains of Hell*; which poſſibly gave Occaſion to that fond Opinion of ſome, that Chriſt deſcended into Hell, and there underwent the Pains and Penalties of that infernal Place, as full Satisfaction to the Juſtice of God; and that theſe were the Pains God raiſed or looſed him from in his *Reſurrection*. But this Conceit is erroneous and extravagant, and deſerves no ſerious Confutation, eſpecially becauſe it plainly contradicts Chriſt's *Conſummatum eſt* upon the Croſs; for when Chriſt had undergone his Sufferings on the Croſs, he ſaid, *It is finiſhed, and ſo gave up the Ghoſt.* Joh. 18. 13. If Chriſt therefore did undergo any farther Sufferings and Pains than thoſe Sufferings he underwent on the Croſs, thoſe Sufferings would have been ſo far from being compleated and finiſhed, that they would have been but the *Præludium*, and Beginning of his Sorrows. *Having looſed the Pains of Death*, it implies no more but that God raiſed Jeſus Chriſt from Death, which, after many dolorous Pains, he ſuffered. It follows, *It was not poſſible he ſhould be holden of it.* This is that I intend principally to inſiſt upon; and here I ſhall ſhew upon what Accounts it was altogether impoſſible for Chriſt to be detained under the Power of *Death*; and my *Arguments* for the Proof hereof are theſe that follow.

Reaſons why Chriſt could not be held under the Power of Death.

First, It was impoſſible Chriſt ſhould be held under the Power of Death, becauſe of that great and ineffable Myſtery of the Hypoſtatical Union of the Divine and Humane Nature in the Perſon of Chriſt. There are three *Unions*, the Belief of which are the Foundation of the greateſt part of the *Chriſtian Religion*, which are wholly beyond the reach of Reaſon: The *Myſtical Union*, of a Believer unto Chriſt: The *Union*, or rather *Unity* of the three Glorious Perſons, *the Father, the Son*, and *the Holy Ghoſt*, in one Nature; and this *Hypoſtatical Union* of two Natures in one Perſon, in the Mediator. It is a Myſtery *Angels* pry into, and adore, with Wonder and Aſtoniſhment, how the Eternal, only begotten Son of God ſhould aſſume Fleſh to himſelf, in ſo cloſe and intimate a Conjunction, that though he be Eternal, yet he ſhould be born; though he be immortal, yet he ſhould truly die; and though he were truly dead, yet he ſhould raiſe himſelf to Life again. Theſe are things that ſeem very inconſiſtent one with another, yet they truly come to paſs through this miraculous Union, which tranſcends the Reach of *Reaſon*, as far as theſe things do that of Nature. That the ſame Perſon that is Eternal, ſhould be young; yea, be born in the fulneſs of Time: That the ſame Perſon that hath Immortality and Life dwelling in himſelf, ſhould alſo die a ſhameful and accurſed Death. That the ſame Perſon that was truly and really dead, yet had a Power to quicken and recover himſelf, *John* 10. 18. And this was it which *declared him to be the Son of God with Power*, as the *Apoſtle* ſpeaks, *even by his Reſurrection from the Dead.* Rom. 1. 4. And indeed, if he had not riſen from the Dead, the Deity would have ſuffered in the Opinion of the World; nor would they have believed him to be the Son of God, who would ſuffer himſelf to lye under the Dominion of *Death*, longer than the End of his *Death* required it: And this I ſhall demonſtrate to you by two Arguments; only premiſing this, which is a common and true Maxim among Divines; *That when the Natural Union between Chriſt's Body and Soul was diſſolved, yet both Soul and Body did retain the Hypoſtatical Union to the Divine Nature. The Divine Nature was united to the Body of Chriſt, when the Soul was ſeparated from it.*

I. *Becauſe of the Hypoſtatical Union.*

I. If Chriſt could not have raiſed himſelf, it muſt have been either from a Want of Power, or from a Want of Will to do it. He could not want Power to raiſe himſelf, becauſe he was God, equal in Power, and in all other Divine Attributes, with the Father. As the *Reſurrection of the Dead* is not impoſſible to the infinite Power of God, ſo neither can it be that that God who had a Will to aſſume our Fleſh, ſhould want a Will to raiſe it up: That that God who ſo lov'd the Humane

Nature, as to aſſociate it into Oneneſs of Perſon with himſelf, ſhould yet ſuffer it to continue under the Power of *Death*, which is of all things moſt contrary to his natural Inclinations. We ſee Chriſt, in his Agony, prayed moſt fervently that the bitter Cup might paſs from him, inſomuch that he ſtrained clotted Blood through him; and certainly, one Ingredient into that Cup was the Separation of Soul and Body by *Death*; which is that which even innocent Nature it ſelf abhorred, as deſtructive to him; yet having taken our Nature upon him for this very
Heb. 2. 14. End, that *by Death he might deſtroy him that had the power of Death, that is, the Devil*, he voluntarily ſubmitted himſelf to undergo it; and this End being fully accompliſh'd by his *Death*, and the Truth of his *Death* likewiſe atteſted by his lying three Days in the Earth, it was altogether impoſſible that that Perſon who had an Abhorrence of Death, and a Power to raiſe himſelf, ſhould continue longer under the Arreſt and Dominion of it. And this is the *firſt* Demonſtration of the Neceſſity of the Reſurrection of Chriſt, upon the Account of both Natures in one Perſon: As Man, ſo he abhorred the Separation of Soul and Body; as God, ſo he was able to re-unite them: So that having, as Man, a Deſire to live, and as God a Power to live, it was impoſſible for him to be holden of *Death*.

2. II. Becauſe of the Union of the Divine and Humane Nature in the Perſon of Chriſt, it was impoſſible that his Fleſh ſhould ſee Corruption; which yet it muſt certainly have done, had he not been raiſed in a ſhort ſpace after his Death. For ſince Chriſt's Body was not a phantaſtical Body, as ſome of old held, but made of true Fleſh, and of the ſame Temper and Conſtitution with ours, it muſt, without a *Miracle*, have undergone ſuch Changes after *Death* as ours ſhall do; and to imagine the contrary, is but to feign one *Miracle*, to avoid the neceſſity of another, even of the *Reſurrection*. But now, it was utterly impoſſible that that Body that was united to both Natures by ſo cloſe and unconceivable a Bond, ſhould ever ſee Corruption; that is, a Putrefaction in the Grave: This the *Scripture*
Act. 2. 28. clearly aſſerts to us; *Thou wilt not leave my Soul in Hell, neither wilt thou ſuffer thine Holy one to ſee Corruption.* And alſo, becauſe all Bodies that are corrupted turn into ſome other Thing, and ſome other Nature, according to that undoubted Maxim of the *Philoſophers*, *Corruptio unius eſt Generatio alterius:* And ſo this horrid and blaſphemous Conſequence would follow, that the Divine Nature of the Son of God might have been joyned to ſome other. So that it was neceſſary that Chriſt ſhould be raiſed again, before any Corruption or Putrefaction, by ordinary Courſe of Nature, ſeized upon him.

Thus I have proved by theſe *two Arguments*, that becauſe of the *Hypoſtatical Union* of the Divine and Humane Nature of Chriſt in one Perſon, it was altogether impoſſible he could be holden of *Death*.

II. *Secondly*, Another *Argument* is this, It was impoſſible Chriſt ſhould be holden of *Death*, becauſe of God's Veracity, and the Truth of thoſe Predictions which were before made concerning Chriſt, in thoſe many *Types* and *Prophecies* of the *Old Teſtament*; all which God's Faithfulneſs ſtood engaged to fulfil. I ſhall only mention that famous *Prediction* which St. *Peter* here ſubjoins, as a Proof of the Subject I am now
Act. 2. 25. treating upon: *It was not poſſible*, ſays he, *that Chriſt ſhould be holden of Death*; for
27. God, ſaith the *Apoſtle*, as *David* ſaith concerning him; *Thou wilt not leave my Soul in Hell, nor ſuffer thine Holy One to ſee Corruption.* And this *Prophecy* the *Apoſtle* quotes out
Pſal. 16. 10. of the *Pſalmiſt*; which, that it did not belong to *David*, nor did he ſpeak it
Acts 2. 29. 30. concerning himſelf, when he indicted that *Pſalm*, the *Apoſtle* proves, *Ver.* 29. 30. of this *Chapter*; where he proves that *David* was dead and buried, and underwent the common Lot that all other dead Bodies did, putrefying and moulder-ing away in the Earth; and therefore he was not that *Holy One* that ſhould never ſee Corruption, becauſe that *Prophecy* muſt belong to ſuch an one who muſt taſte of *Death*. And this is clearly implied in the former Expreſſion, *Thou wilt not leave my Soul in Hell*, that is, in the State of the Dead, for ſo is Hell to be underſtood there, as I ſhall ſhew more at large: Neither could it belong to any of thoſe, who before Chriſt, were raiſed miraculouſly from the Dead, and brought back out of the State of *Death*; yet was it not in ſuch a manner, that they were not to return again to it: So that if they did not in the firſt, yet in their ſecond Dying they ſaw Corruption. This then could belong to none of them, and therefore muſt of neceſſity belong to Chriſt. And ſince the *Apoſtle* lays ſo much ſtreſs on this Argument, give me leave a little to conſider the meaning of it, and how

is applicable to him. And here I ſhall not trouble you with the various *Opinions* of thoſe that have attempted to interpret theſe Words, *Thou wilt not leave my Soul in Hell*, that by this *Hell*, into which Chriſt deſcended, is meant the Place of the Damned, where he preached the *Goſpel* to them, freeing thoſe that would believe from their Pains. Others think that this Hell, into which Chriſt deſcended, was one great Partition of it, called *Limbus Patrum*, the Repoſitory of the Souls of thoſe *Fathers* who died in Obedience to God, and in Faith to the *Meſſias*, before Chriſt came in the Fleſh: And the Reaſon of his Deſcent thither was, that he might releaſe thoſe Souls from Chains, and carry them with him to Heaven; ſo that ever ſince, that *Manſion* in *Hell* hath been left void, without any Inhabitants. But this *Opinion* is not capable of any ſufficient Proof; I ſhall therefore give you that Interpretation and Judgment which carries with it the ſtrongeſt Current, both of *Scripture* and *Reaſon*. The Words *Hades*, that we *tranſlate Hell*, is very often, by the *Septuagint*, in the *Old Teſtament*, uſed to ſignifie the *Grave*, or the State of the Dead. So in *Gen.* 44. *Iſhades*, we *tranſlate* it the *Grave*, but it is the ſame Word that is uſed for *Hell* in the *Text*. And thus the Word is uſed in other Places of *Scripture*, as alſo in other *Authors*, to ſignifie the Place and State of the *Dead*, and of ſeparate Souls. And for the leaving the Soul of Chriſt in *Hades*, or in *Hell*, we muſt know, that it is a thing that is not unuſual in *Scripture*, to call a Man that is *dead* by the Name of *Soul:* So the *Septuagint* tranſlate that Place in *Leviticus*, *They ſhall not be defiled with dead Souls*, meaning dead Carcaſes, *neither ſhall they go into any dead Souls*, the Word is dead Bodies. But not to detain you any longer on this Speculation, though of great uſe for the right underſtanding of this excellent Place of *Scripture:* If we take *Hell* for the *Grave*, we muſt take the *Soul* for the *Body*; *Thou wilt not leave my Body in the Grave:* But if by *Hell* be here underſtood the State of *Death*, that is, the State of Separation of *Soul* and *Body*, the Interpretation will be more eaſie and natural, *Thou wilt not leave my Soul* in a State of Separation from the *Body*, but wilt certainly unite them together again, and raiſe me up before I ſhall feel Corruption. Thus I have given you the Interpretation of the *Prophecy* of *David*, which, upon the Account of God's Truth and Veracity, was to take effect in the *Reſurrection* of our Saviour; and therefore being foretold *he ſhould not ſee Corruption*, the Faithfulneſs of God was obliged within that time inviolably to raiſe him up. And that is the ſecond Reaſon why it was impoſſible Chriſt ſhould be holden of *Death*, becauſe it was foretold of him, *that his Soul ſhould not reſt in Hell*; that is, either his Body in the Grave, or his Soul in a State of Separation from his Body.

Gen. 44. 31.

Lev. 21. 11.

III. *God's Juſtice would not ſuffer Chriſt to lye in the Grave.*

Thirdly, Another *Argument* is this: *It was impoſſible Chriſt could be holden by Death, upon the Account of God's Juſtice.* For Juſtice, as it doth oblige to inflict Puniſhment upon the Guilty, ſo alſo to abſolve and acquit the Innocent. Now, though Chriſt *knew no Sin*, yet was he *made Sin for us*, that is, our Sins were imputed to, and charged upon him, and ſo, through a voluntary Suſception and Undertaking of them, he became guilty of them: Hereupon Divine Juſtice ſeized upon him, as being our Surety, and demanded Satisfaction from him for our Offences: Now no other Satisfaction would be acceptable unto God, nor commenſurate to our Sins, but the bearing of an infinite Load of Wrath and Vengeance; which if it had been laid upon us, muſt have been prolonged to an Eternity of Sufferings; for becauſe we are finite Creatures, we cannot bear infinite Degrees of Wrath at once, and therefore we muſt have lain under thoſe infinite Degrees of Wrath to an infinite Duration: But now Chriſt being God, he could bear the Load of infinite Degrees of Wrath at once upon him. In that one bitter Draught, the whole Cup of that Fury and Wrath of God, that we ſhould have been everlaſtingly a drinking off, by little Drops, Chriſt drank off at once. Now it is the *Nature* and *Conſtitution* of all *Laws*, that when a Perſon by undergoing the Penalty that thoſe require, hath made Satisfaction for the Offence committed, the Perſon ſatisfying ought to be protected as innocent. It could not therefore conſiſt with the *Juſtice of God*, that when Chriſt had ſatisfied his utmoſt Demands, that any of the puniſhment due to our Sins, for which he ſatisfied, ſhould have lain upon him longer; for that would have been no other than puniſhing without an Offence. Now nothing is clearer in *Scripture*, than

Rom. 6. 23. and 5. 12. that *Death* is a Puniſhment inflicted upon us for Sin: So ſays the Apoſtle; *The Wages of Sin is Death.* And in another Place, *By Sin Death enter'd into the World, and Death paſſed upon all, becauſe all have ſinned.* From all which it follows, that as Chriſt taking upon him our Sins, became thereby liable to *Death*; ſo having ſatisfied for our Sins, and thereby freed himſelf from the Guilt that he lay under by Imputation, he was no longer liable unto *Death*, which is one part of the Puniſhment he underwent; ſo that it could not have been agreeable to infinite Juſtice, that Chriſt ſhould have been holden of *Death*, who by his undergoing of *Death*, hath ſuſtained the whole Load of God's infinite Wrath and Diſpleaſure, and fully ſatisfied for all thoſe Sins that were imputed to him, and therefore ought in juſtice to be acquitted from all Penalties, and conſequently from Death.

IV. *Chriſt could not be holden of Death, becauſe of his Mediatorſhip.*

Fourthly, It was impoſſible Chriſt ſhould be holden of Death, in reſpect of his Office of *Mediatorſhip*: For having as our Mediator undertaken the deſperate Service of bringing ſinful and fallen Man to Life and Happineſs, he muſt of neceſſity not only *die*, but *riſe again* from the *dead*, without which his Death, and whatever elſe he did or ſuffered for us, would have been of no avail. There are two Things requiſite, before any real or eternal Benefit can become ours.

Firſt, A meritorious purchaſe, procuring the Thing it ſelf for us.

Secondly, An effectual Application of that Benefit to us. The Purchaſe of Mercy was made by the *Death of Chriſt*, by which a full Price was paid down to the Juſtice of God. But the effectual Application of Mercy is by the *Life* and *Reſurrection* of *Chriſt*. Wherefore if Chriſt had only died, and not riſen again; if he had not overcome *Death* within its own *Empire*, and triumph'd over the *Grave* in its own *Territories*, it would have been to his Diſappointment, and not at all to our Salvation. The Loſs of Chriſt's Life would not have procured Life for us; unleſs as he laid it down with Freedom, ſo he had again reſumed it with Power. Our hope of Salvation otherwiſe would have been buried in the ſame Grave with himſelf; but what he died to procure, he lives to confer. It was Ignorance of *Chriſt's Reſurrection from the Dead*, that ſo ſtagger'd the two *Diſciples*, going to *Emaus*: They tell Chriſt himſelf a ſad Story of one *Jeſus of Nazareth*, that was condemned and crucified, who, while he lived among us, by his Word and Works teſtified himſelf to be the true *Meſſiah*: We little thought of his Dying; and when he told us of his *Death*, he likewiſe foretold us of his *Reſurrection the third Day*; and behold, the *third Day* is already come, and yet is there no Appearance of this Jeſus: *Verily, we truſted that it had been he which ſhould have redeemed* Iſrael; but now our Hopes grow faint, and languiſh in us; for certainly there can be no *Redemption* for *Iſrael* by him who cannot redeem himſelf from Death. There was nothing in the World did ſo much prejudice the *Goſpel*, and hinder its taking place in the Hearts of *Heathens* in the *Primitive Times*, as this of the Croſs and Death of Chriſt; for believing that he was lifted up upon the *Croſs*, but not believing that he was raiſed up from the *Dead*, they aſſented to their *Natural Reaſon*, which herein taught them, That it was Folly to expect Life from him who could not either preſerve or reſtore his own.

Luke 24. 16, 19, 20, 21.

It is true, it was Folly thus to hope, but that his Life applies what his Death deſerved; and our Salvation begun on the Croſs, is perfected on the Throne. And therefore the *Apoſtle* tells us, our Faith in a crucified Saviour, and our Obedience to him is all vain, if he had not riſen again from the Dead: For unleſs he had riſen from the Dead, he could not have acquitted us from the Guilt of Sin, becauſe he could not have been juſtified himſelf. We are juſtified by the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt, as the *Apoſtle* ſpeaks, in his Epiſtle to the *Romans*; which Righteouſneſs he wrought out for us, both by his perfect Obedience to the Law, and by his Submiſſion to the Puniſhment of the Law: But yet this Righteouſneſs could not have availed to our Juſtification, had he not, after the Fulfilling of it, riſen again from the Dead; becauſe he himſelf had not been juſtified, much leſs could we have been juſtified by one who could not have juſtified himſelf. And therefore we read, *Great is the Myſtery of Godlineſs*, ſays the *Apoſtle*; *God manifeſted in the Fleſh*, in his Incarnation; *juſtified in the Spirit*, by his Reſurrection; *ſeen of Angels*, in his Aſcenſion. Had he not been raiſed and quickned by the Spirit, that is, by the glorious Power of his Divine Nature, he had not been declared juſt, nor could he have juſtified us: For this Declaration, that Chriſt was juſt, was made upon the Re-

1 Cor. 15. 17.

Rom. 4 25.

1 Tim. 3. 16.

Reſurrection of his Body from the Dead, by which he was ſet free from all thoſe Penalties due to our Sins that were imputed to him. If therefore the Juſtification and Salvation of Sinners was a Deſign laid by the infinite Wiſdom of God, it muſt needs follow, that it was impoſſible for Chriſt to be kept under Death, becauſe that would have obſtructed their Juſtification and Salvation, and ſo would have brought a Diſappointment upon the infinite Wiſdom of God, which was impoſſible to be done; and therefore conſequently Chriſt could not be holden of Death.

The Application of this great Truth ſhall be briefly in theſe following Inferences.

Firſt then, If it was impoſſible for Chriſt not to have riſen from the Dead, it is evident then that Chriſt is the true *Meſſiah*: For had he been an Impoſtor, or *Falſe Prophet*, it would have been ſo far from an Impoſſibility that he ſhould not have been raiſed, that it would have been a very Impoſſibility for him to have riſen again; for neither could he have raiſed himſelf, being a meer Man; neither would God have raiſed him, being a meer *Impoſtor* and *Cheat*. When therefore the *Jews* call'd for a *Sign* from Chriſt to prove him to be the true *Meſſiah*, he gives them the Sign of his Reſurrection, *in Matth.* 12. 38, 39. *Maſter*, ſay they, *we would ſee a Sign from thee. He anſwered and ſaid unto them, An evil and adulterous Generation ſeeketh after a Sign, and there ſhall be no Sign given to it, but the Sign of the Prophet* Jonas: *For as* Jonas *was three Days and three Nights in the Whale's Belly, ſo ſhall the Son of Man be three Days and three Nights in the Heart of the Earth.* So again, when they tempted him at another time, for a *Sign* of his being the *Meſſiah*, he ſtill inſtances in his powerful Reſurrection from the Dead, in *Joh.* 2. 18, 19. *The Jews anſwer'd and ſaid unto him, What Sign ſheweſt thou unto us, ſeeing thou doeſt theſe things? Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, Deſtroy this Temple, and in three Days I will raiſe it up.* So that ſtill he made his *Death* and *Reſurrection* to be the infallible Proof of his being the true *Meſſiah*. *Uſe* I. Mat. 12. 38, 39. John 2. 18, 19.

Secondly, If it were neceſſary that Chriſt ſhould riſe from the Dead, and that he did do ſo, then certainly Sin is conquer'd; for the Sting of Death, and that envenom'd Weapon Death hath, whereby it wounds, yea, kills the Sinner, is Sin; and as long as Death hath this Sting in it, it could not have been conquer'd by any Sinner. It is Sin that gives Death its Power to hold faſt all thoſe that come within its reach; which ſince it could not do with Chriſt, it is evident Sin is ſubdued by Chriſt, who was in its Arms and Graſp, but yet came ſafe out from it, taking away the Sting and Weapon of Death with him. *Uſe* II.

Thirdly, If the *Reſurrection* of *Chriſt* be thus neceſſary, and hath been thus effectually accompliſhed, we may comfortably from thence conclude the Neceſſity of our own *Reſurrection*; for the Head being raiſed, the Members ſhall not always ſleep in the Duſt. Chriſt's *Myſtical* Body ſhall certainly be raiſed, as well as his *Natural* Body; and every Member of it ſhall be made for ever glorious, with a glorious and triumphant Head. *Uſe* III.

Brotherly ADMONITION, *&c.*

SERMON IV.

LEV. xix. 17.

Thou ſhalt not hate thy Brother in thy Heart: thou ſhalt in any wiſe rebuke thy Neighbour, and not ſuffer Sin upon him.

WAving all *Prefaces* and *Introductions*, we may obſerve in theſe Words, Three Parts. *Diviſion of the Words.*

Firſt, A Negative Command, *Thou ſhalt not hate thy Brother in thy Heart*: which implies in it the contrary poſitive Precept, Thou ſhalt love thy Brother. 1.

Se-

2. *Secondly*, A Direction how we ſhould preſerve our ſelves from this rancoured Vice of Hatred, and expreſs our more cordial Love, in the beſt Service we can do for him; *Thou ſhalt in any wiſe rebuke thy Neighbour.*

3. *Thirdly*, A forcible Motive to excite us unto the performance of this Duty, drawn from the Conſideration of the great Benefit which will in likelihood redound to him by the conſcientious diſcharge of it. By this means thou wilt not *ſuffer Sin to lye upon him:* implying, That if this charitable Duty of *Fraternal Reproof* be neglected, he will ſtill continue in his Sins, his Guilt will remain upon him, and thou wilt be acceſſory to it.

I ſhall not conſider any of theſe Particulars by themſelves, but treat only of what is here chiefly intended, namely, the neceſſity of that much neglected Duty of *Brotherly Reproof and Admonition.*

And here I ſhall proſecute this Method with all poſſible Brevity and Perſpicuity.

1. *Firſt*, Shew you what *Brotherly Correption* is.
2. *Secondly*, The Difficulty of it.
3. *Thirdly*, The Neceſſity of it.
4. *Fourthly*, Lay down ſome Rules and Directions how it ought to be performed.
5. *Fifthly*, Lay before you ſome Conſiderations that may be powerful Motives and Engagements to it.

1. *Firſt*, What *Brotherly Reproof or Correption is.*

What Brotherly Reproof is. To this I anſwer in brief. It is an Act of Love and Charity, whereby we endeavour to reduce our offending Brother to Repentance and Reformation: And there are two ways of doing it, either by *Words* or *Actions.*

1. *Reproof is by Words.* *Firſt*, By *Words*; remonſtrating to them the greatneſs of their Sin, the Scandal they give to others, either by encouraging or ſadning them, the Reproach they bring upon Religion, and the Danger they bring upon their own Souls. But if they be deaf to all theſe *Admonitions*, and continue obſtinate and reſolv'd in their evil Courſes, we are then to reprove them.

2. *Reproof may be by Actions.* *Secondly*, By *Actions*; that where Words have proved ineffectual, we may try how Deeds can prevail. Prevail, I ſay, either to deliver them, or at leaſt, to deliver thine own Soul from Death. And this alſo muſt be done theſe two ways.

1. *Reproof of Inferiours is to be by Authority.* *Firſt*, If they be our Inferiours over whom we have Authority, either as *Magiſtrates*, or *Parents*, or the like; we ought, when *Admonition* and *Correption* is fruitleſs, to reprove them by *Correction* and *Puniſhment:* If they will not hear, they muſt feel Rebuke. This *Diſcipline*, if it be ſeaſonably and prudently uſed, is ſo far from being any Act of Cruelty, that it is an Act of the greateſt Kindneſs and Charity that can be both to them and to others.

Reproof tends to reſtrain from Sin. To them: As it may reſtrain them from the commiſſion of thoſe future Crimes, to which their Impunity would elſe embolden them. And thus to fall into the Hands of Men, may be a means to keep them from falling into the Hands of God.

To others: As it may terrifie them from following the *Examples* of ſuch an one's Vices, by ſeeing the *Examples* of his Suffering. Thus the Puniſhment of ſome is made to become the Innocence of others.

2. *If Equals continue obſtinate under Reproof, we muſt withdraw Society from them.* *Secondly*, If they be our Equals, over whom we have no Juriſdiction, nor coercive Power, we are then to rebuke them, if they continue obſtinate after *Chriſtian Admonition*, by withdrawing our ſelves from all neceſſary Converſe with them; not ſo as to deny them the Offices of Civility, Courteſie, and our charitable Aſſiſtance to promote their temporal Good; but to break off all Familiarity and Intimacy with them: Not to make ſuch lewd and diſſolute Perſons our Friends and choſen Companions. Thus the *Apoſtle* charges us, *We command you, Brethren, in the Name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that you withdraw your ſelves from every Brother that walketh diſorderly, and not after the Tradition which he received of us.* 2 Theſ. 3. 6. And this way of reproving them ought to be ſo managed by us, that it may appear it doth not proceed from any ſowre, moroſe, ſurly Humour, diſdaining or hating of their Perſons, but meerly from Conſcience of our Duty towards the Glory of God, and to do an Act of Love and Charity, as indeed it is, both towards them, and towards our ſelves.

Firſt, Towards

First, Towards them: When you thus endeavour to ſhame them out of their Wickedneſs, by diſcountenancing them in it. So ſays the *Apoſtle*, *If any Man obey not our Word, note that Man, and have no Company with him, that he may be aſhamed.* And indeed, if a Man be not altogether profligate, if he be not utterly loſt to Modeſty, it muſt needs make him reflect upon himſelf with Shame and Bluſhing, that certainly he is grown a ſtrange vile Wretch, a loathſome and odious Monſter, when all good and ſober Men do thus carefully ſhun and avoid him. Now Shame is a good ſtep to Amendment: And a Bluſh the firſt colour that Virtue takes. 1. 2 Theſ. 3. 14.

Secondly, Towards your ſelves: You are obliged to abandon them, as to reclaim them, ſo to ſecure your ſelves: For *Vice* is very contagious, and it is unſafe to converſe with thoſe, who have ſuch Plague-Sores running upon them, leſt you be alſo infected. 2.

Thus you ſee what this Duty of *Brotherly Reproof* is, and how in the general it is to be performed, either in Words or Actions. And to theſe, Two Things are neceſſarily previous and antecedent.

First. Inſtruction and Conviction. We ought to bring them to ſee their Fault before we rebuke them for it; otherwiſe while we chide and do not inform them, it will rather ſeem a proud deſign of quarrelling with them, than a conſcientious deſign of bettering them. And therefore we find how artificially *Nathan* inſinuates into *David* the Heinouſneſs and Inhumanity of his Sin, and works in him a Hatred and Deteſtation of that Perſon who was ſo cruel and devoid of Compaſſion, before he comes to deal downright with him, *Thou art the Man.* And could we but skilfully convince our Brother, by thus repreſenting the Odiouſneſs of ſuch and ſuch Sins, to which we know he is addicted, poſſibly we might ſpare our ſelves in that which is the moſt ungrateful and diſpleaſing part of this Work, I mean perſonal Reflection, and leave it to his own Conſcience to reprove himſelf, and to apply it home, with, *Thou art the Man.* And, 1. *Conviction of the Fault.*

Secondly, It is neceſſary that we watch over our Brother, not ſo as to be inſidious Spies upon him, officiouſly to pry into his Actions, and buſily concern our ſelves in all he doth. This pragmatical Temper is juſtly hateful. And thoſe who thus arrogate to themſelves to be publick Cenſors, and to inſpect the Lives and Manners of others, making it their whole Imployment to obſerve what others ſay or do, that they may have Matter either to reprove or reproach them, are a Company of intolerable buſie Bodies. But yet, 2. *We ought to watch over our Brother.*

First, We ought ſo to watch over our Brother as to give him timely Caution if we ſee him in any Danger through Temptation or Paſſion, and to admoniſh him to ſtand upon his guard, to recollect himſelf, and beware he be not ſurprized or injured by ſuch an approaching Sin. 1. *By Caution.*

And *Secondly*, If we have obſerved any Miſcarriages in him, we are to watch the beſt Seaſons, and all the fitteſt Circumſtances in which to remind him of it, that ſo our Reproof may be well accepted, and become effectual. For he that will venture raſhly to reprove without this Circumſpection, may do more Miſchief to his Brother by rebuking him, than he had done to himſelf by offending: Exaſperating and Imbittering his Heart againſt Piety, for the Impertinencies, at leaſt the Indiſcretions, of thoſe who profeſs it, and provoking him to ſin the more out of meer Oppoſition and Contradiction. And I am verily perſwaded, and have in ſome Caſes obſerved it, that very many Sins owe themſelves to the Imprudence of thoſe who have taken upon themſelves to be Reprovers, and would never have been committed, if they had not indiſcreetly gainſay'd it. Thus we ſee what this Duty of reproving is, and what is neceſſarily required thereunto. 2. *The beſt Seaſon.*

But indeed, which is the Second Thing, It is not ſo hard a Matter to know what it is, as it is difficult conſcientiouſly and faithfully to practiſe it. How few are there in the World, I will not ſay skilful enough to do it well, but zealous and conſcientious enough to do it at all? Do we not every day ſee God fearfully diſhonoured, obſerve his Name blaſphemed, his Laws violated, his Worſhip denied? Do you not daily ſee multitudes of wretched Creatures, whoſe Crimes not only defie and outrage God, but ſtab and murther their own Souls; and yet who is there that hath that Zeal for God, or that Charity for his Brother, as to interpoſe, and by a ſerious and fitting Reproof, vindicate the one 2. *Of the difficulty of Reproof.*

 from

from Diſhonour, or reſcue the other from Perdition? There are enow that will make up a ſad Mouth, and whiſper thoſe things abroad, it may be out of very ill Ends and Deſigns: But where almoſt is the Perſon that will dare to maintain the Honour of God to the Face of thoſe who boldly affront him; that will dare to open their Mouths before thoſe that will dare to open them againſt Heaven? Certainly we can eaſily produce much more Reaſon for our Reproofs, than they can for their Wickedneſs; and it were very ſtrange, if we ſhould not be able to beat them off from their Confidence, when we have God and our own Conſciences, nay, and theirs alſo, to ſide with us. Yet ſo it is, that we are generally apt to ſneak and ſlink away from ſo troubleſome a Task, and to let Iniquity paſs uncontroul'd, yea, triumphant. We are well content to let others ſin quietly, ſo that we may live quietly, without troubling our ſelves with ſo hard and difficult a Service. And that which makes it ſeem ſo difficult, is,

1. *Firſt*, A ſinful Fear; and,

2. *Secondly*, A ſinful Shame, that ſeizeth on the Spirits of Men, and takes off the Edge of holy Courage and Confidence, that are ſo abſolutely neceſſary to the performing of this Duty.

1. *Fear of diſpleaſing ſhould not hinder reproving for Sin.*

Firſt, Many are afraid to reprove Sin, leaſt they ſhould incur Diſpleaſure, weaken their ſecular Intereſt, ruin their Dependencies, and bring ſome Miſchief upon themſelves, by exaſperating the Offenders againſt them. But theſe are poor, low, carnal Conſiderations. Where Matter of Duty is in queſtion, it is very neceſſary for every Chriſtian to be of an undaunted Courage and Reſolution, not to fear the Faces of Men, nor to be frighted with a grim Look, or a proud Huff. If he will ſeriouſly perform this Duty, he muſt remember, that he is pleading for God, that he is ſaving a Soul from Hell, and therefore ought not to value their Anger, nor his own Damage; but to ſteel himſelf againſt all ſuch mean and ſordid Conſiderations. Indeed it ſhews a moſt pitiful Spirit in us, that we ſhould be more afraid of offending them, than they are of offending God. Shall they be bold to ſin, and we not bold enough to tell them of it? And yet ſuch is the Cowardice of the Generality of Chriſtians, that they dare not appear for God, or for Piety and Holineſs, when they ſee them wronged by the Impudence of boiſterous Sinners; but thoſe pitiful, little, baſe, carnal Reſpects of what they may loſe, or what they may ſuffer by it, in-

Pſal. 38. 14. tervene, and make them ſit mopiſh, and over-aw'd, *like Men in whoſe Mouths are no Reproofs*; whilſt theſe wicked Wretches, who have all the Reaſon in the World to be timerous and fearful, glory in thus outbraving and baffling them.

2. *Shame ſhould not hinder Reproving for Sin.*

Secondly, Others again are aſhamed to reprove Sin. And whereas many vile and profligate Wretches glory in their Shame, theſe, on the contrary, are aſhamed of that which would be their Glory. Either they doubt they ſhall be thought but troubleſome and hypocritical Intermeddlers; or elſe poſſibly, being conſcious to themſelves of many Miſcarriages, they ſuſpect their *Reproofs* will be upbraidingly retorted upon themſelves; and ſo by reproving the Faults of others, they ſhall but give an Occaſion to have their own ript up and expoſed: And ſo they think it the ſafer way to ſay nothing, leſt by raking into other Mens Dunghills, they ſhould but furniſh them with Dirt enough to fling back in their own Faces. And thus between theſe Two carnal Principles of *ſinful Fear*, and *ſinful Shame*, which are ſo deeply rooted in our corrupt Natures, *Reproof* is commonly neglected; and it is one of the hardeſt things in the World, to perſwade Men to be true to God, to their own Souls, and to the Souls of their Brethern, in a faithful diſcharge of that Duty which is uſually attended with ſuch Diſadvantages and Difficulties.

But though it be thus difficult; yet,

3. *Reproof a very neceſſary Duty.*

Thirdly, It is a moſt neceſſary Duty. The greateſt Good you can do in the World is to pluck up theſe Briars and Thorns with which it is over-grown. Conſider but how inſolent Vice and Wickedneſs is apt to be where none do appear to check and controul it. If it can but once ſilence Virtue, it will quickly baniſh it. If it can but put it to the bluſh, it will quickly put it to flight. And when it hath once made us either afraid or aſhamed to lay a Rebuke in its way, what elſe can we expect but that it ſhould overſpread the Face of the whole Earth, and like a general Deluge drown all Mankind, firſt in Sin, and then in Perdition. There is no other way to prevent this great and ſad Ruin, but for

every

every Christian vigorously to oppose himself to the growing Sins of the Times and Places in which he lives, and with Courage and Resolution to decry that common Profaneness, that gains Credit only by our Silence. We know that Sin is a shameful opprobrious Thing in it self, a Thing that disheartens and dispirits the Guilty: They wear a *Conscience* about them that is still checking and upbraiding them; and if we could but look into their Souls, we should see them covered all over with Fear, Horrour, and Confusion. They are generally self-condemned Persons, and carry those Monitors within their own Breasts that are continually reproving and tormenting them: And therefore that they may not hear the Voice of their own Consciences, they live abroad, and rather converse with any one without doors, than with themselves and their own troublesome and clamorous Hearts. Now let it be our Care to stop up all Passages, by which they think to make their escape. Let them find, that in whatsoever Company they go, they shall meet with those that will no more spare them, than their own *Consciences*; that Company is no Sanctuary for Sins and Guilt, and that they shall be as sure to be *Reproved*, as they dare to *Offend*. And when they are thus every where beset, their *Consciences* exclaiming against them within, and all that they converse with without, they will see a Necessity for it, either to forsake their *Vices*, or the *World*, and be forced to be vertuous for their own ease and quiet. And certainly till Christians do conspire together in this Design, we may long enough complain of the abounding of Iniquity without any successful Reformation. Abound it will, and grow impudent and imperious, unless we joyn together to beat down its Credit, expose it to Scorn and Contempt, and make that which is so really shameful in it self, to be the greatest Mark of Infamy, Shame, and Reproach to any that shall dare to commit it.

But now this Duty of *Reproving*, requires not only a great deal of Christian *Fortitude* and *Courage*, but also a great measure of Christian *Prudence* and *Discretion*. We must not only be resolute and confident in doing it, but we must do it likewise in such a fitting way as may be most likely to work a good effect upon those whom we are to *reprove*. And therefore,

In the Fourth Place, I shall give you some brief Rules and Directions, when you ought to *reprove*, and how you ought to manage your *Reproofs*, so as they may be most beneficial to your Brother. And some of them shall be *Negatives*, and others shall be *Positives*. 4. *Rules for Reproof.*

First, For the *Negative* Rules, take these that follow. I.

First, I ought not to reprove my Brother if I have no certain knowledge of his Offence. And therefore those who upon a blind Rumour, or groundless Suspicion, hastily conclude him guilty, and so fill their Mouths with Reproofs, shew themselves to be very much in love with this Office, and are a company of impertinent Busie-bodies, who start their Arrow before ever they see the Mark. We must first be certainly informed, either upon our Personal Knowledge, or upon the undoubted Testimonies of credible Witnesses, that he is Guilty; otherwise in going about to shew him his *Fault*, we shall but shew our own *Folly*, and Credulity; our *Reproofs* will be but *Slanders*, and our Charity in offering the Cure, will not be half so great, as our uncharitableness in believing the Disease. 1. *We must not reprove without knowledge of the Offence.*

Secondly, It is not necessary for me to reprove, where I have reason to conclude that others of more Prudence and Interest in the Party, either have already, or else will more effectually perform it: For otherwise it will appear that we do not so much seek his *Emendation*, as to be *Ostentatious* of our own Zeal and Forwardness. And besides, too many Reprovers may, instead of reforming, rather irritate and provoke: Only here, beware thou dost not retract this ingrateful Office upon slight Pretences, nor think thy self excused, because others are bound to do it. But consider seriously in thine own Conscience, whether thou thinkest they will be faithful enough in performing it, or more dextrous than thou art in managing it; or that their *Reproof* will be more acceptable and more prevalent with thy Brother than thine. If not, thou art still oblig'd to it: And if thou refusest, know that though he may die in his Sins, yet his Blood God will require at thy Hands. 2.

Thirdly, We ought not to give sharp *Reproofs* for small *Offences*. We must not Particularly, and with Accent and Emphasis reprove our Brother for every involuntary Slip, every Infirmity and Weakness, that bewrayeth it self through some 3. *Sharp Reproof must not be for*

small Offences.

ſuddain Paſſion or Temptation, unleſs it be a Sin of Cuſtom, or that which carries with it ſome ſignal Aggravation, that renders it conſiderable, as well in the *Scandal* as in the *Guilt*. It will be ſufficient to paſs by the reſt, only with a brief Animadverſion upon them, enough to put him in mind that he forgot himſelf in ſuch and ſuch Paſſages: And ſo leave the farther *Reproof* to his own Conſcience, which will better do it for leſſer Sins, than poſſibly we can. To reprove ſmall Faults with great vehemence, is always as ridiculous, and may ſometimes prove as deſtructive a piece of Officiouſneſs, as his who took up a huge Beetle, and ſtruck with all his Might, only to kill a Fly he ſaw ſticking upon his Friend's Forehead. We muſt not thruſt the *Probe* deep where the Wound is but ſhallow: Nor be paſſionately concern'd at our Brother's lighter Failings; but ſo govern our ſelves as ſtill to reſerve the more ſharp and ſevere *Reproofs*, for the more foul and ſcandalous Offences. For they that will preſently upon every ſlender occaſion fly out into Exclamations, Deteſtations, and all paſſionate Exaggerations of Rhetorick, will but laviſhly ſpend the vigour of their Zeal, and leave themſelves no Art, no Methods to expreſs their greater abhorrence for blacker Crimes.

4. *Reproof not to be given where it will exaſperate.*

Fourthly, We are not to *Reprove* thoſe whom we have reaſon to believe are ſuch deſperate Wretches, that our *Reproofs* would but exaſperate them to ſin the more for a *Reproof*. To theſe, ſuch would be no Acts of Love and Charity, but rather a Deſign to deſtroy their Souls, and to heap more and heavy loads of Wrath and Vengeance upon their Heads. Certainly if we have any Senſe of God's Glory, any Tenderneſs and Compaſſion for our Brother's Soul, we ought to beware that we do not inrage him the more, to diſhonour the one, or to wound the other, by the miſtaken Charity of our *Reproofs*. And therefore St. *Auſtin* ſpeaks well, (*De Civitate Dei*, lib. 1. cap. 9.) *Si propterea corripiendis male agentibus parcit, quia opportunum tempus requirit, vel iiſdem ipſis metuit ne deteriores ex hoc efficiantur, videtur eſſe concilium Charitatis.* It is *Charity* not to reprove thoſe who we believe will be the worſe for our *Reproofs*. Alas, how many are there in the World, who when they are reproved (and that very juſtly) for their Sins, preſently fall a blaſpheming and curſing, railing at Piety, and all that profeſs it, violate the good Name of their *Reprovers*, and can hardly abſtain from offering Violence to their Perſons. Now ſuch as theſe are paſt *Reproof*, when once they turn *Reproof* it ſelf into an Occaſion of further ſinning. The greateſt exerciſe of *Charity* to theſe is to let them alone, and not to increaſe their Damnation, by ſtirring up the Virulency and Rancor of their Spirits.

Reproof is Spiritual *Phyſick* for the Soul. Now as it is an imprudent Courſe to adminiſter ſuch *Phyſick* to the Body, as will irritate, and not expel the peccant Humours: So likewiſe it is very imprudent and unſafe, to adminiſter ſuch *Reproofs* as we know cannot cure the Offender, but will only irritate his Corruption, and render it the more turbulent, and him much worſe than he was before. And therefore ſome are themſelves to be reproved, who with an imprudent Zeal reprove others, without ever conſidering what Effects their *Reproofs* are likely to produce: who, as ſoon as a Sin is committed, think themſelves obliged in Conſcience, inſtantly to rebuke them for it, although not only they themſelves may be reviled, but the Name of God moſt horribly blaſphemed upon this very Occaſion. It is indeed *good to be zealouſly affected always in a good Matter.* But yet withal know, that as Zeal and Charity ought to be the Motive, ſo Chriſtian Prudence ought to be the Meaſure of all our *Reproofs*. And if you take not the Advice of Diſcretion, your Zeal for God's Glory may but occaſion his Diſhonour; and your Charity to the Souls of others, occaſion their ſurer Ruin and Damnation. Certainly we are not obliged to reprove where we have reaſon to ſuſpect we ſhall rather do Hurt than Good. It would be but a cruel Charity, to poyſon our Brother in his *Phyſick*, and to kill him in his Cure. And therefore both *Solomon* and a greater than *Solomon*, our *Saviour Chriſt* himſelf, have forbidden us to miſplace *Reproofs* upon thoſe who are deſperate. *Solomon* tells us, *He that reproveth a Scorner, getteth to himſelf Shame; and he that rebuketh a wicked Man, getteth unto himſelf a Blot.* And again, *Reprove not a Scorner, leſt he hate thee.* And ſays our Saviour, *Give not that which is Holy unto Dogs, neither caſt ye your Pearls before Swine, leſt they trample them under their Feet, and turn again and rent you.* Where it is very plain from the precedent Verſes, that he dehorts

Gal. 4. 18.

Prov. 9. 7.

Mat. 7. 6.

dehorts us from laviſhing out our *Reproofs* imprudently upon *Dogs* and *Swine*; wicked and impure Perſons, on whom we have reaſon to think they will have no effect, but only to enrage them, and make them fly out both againſt God and us, with the more Violence and Madneſs. To *reprove* ſuch, *is* but to caſt up Water againſt an high Wind, that will be ſure to beat it back again into our own Faces.

And thus I have given you the *Negative Rules* in theſe four Particulars. Reprove not without a certain knowledge of the Offence. Nor where others who are likely to be more effectual, have done it already. Nor for every involuntary ſlip. Nor thoſe who are like to be the worſe for it.

Let us now proceed to lay down ſome *Poſitive Rules* and *Directions* for the right managing of our *Reproofs*. And here.

Firſt, If thou would'ſt reprove with ſucceſs, obſerve right Circumſtances of Time and Place: And let the one be as opportune, and the other as private as thou canſt. We ought to obſerve the *mollia tempora fandi*, the ſoft and eaſie Hours of ſpeaking. And therefore the wiſe Man tell us, *A Word ſpoken in ſeaſon, how good is it? It is like Apples of Gold in Pictures of Silver*; that is, very beautiful and pleaſing. There are ſome happy Seaſons wherein the moſt rugged Natures are acceſſible; and it is a great part of Prudence in all our Concerns, if we would have them proſperous, to watch ſuch Opportunities, and to improve them.

1. *Time and Place muſt be obſerved in giving Reproof.* Prov. 15. 23.

Now uſually it is no fit Seaſon for Reproof,

Reproof not ſeaſonable.

Firſt, Preſently as ſoon as the Sin is committed; for then the heat is not over, nor the uproar of the Paſſions and Affections appeaſed. In all likelihood a *Reproof* as yet would but irritate. As Water falling upon red hot Iron, doth but cauſe a great deal of Noiſe and Diſturbance: So a *Reproof* juſt upon the very Act of a Sin, doth but make the Sinner fume, eſtuate, and tumultuate the more. Nor yet,

1. *As ſoon as the Sin is committed.*

Secondly, Is a Time of Mirth and Joy fit for *Reproof*: For that will look like a piece of Envy, as if we were malicious at their Proſperity, and therefore ſtudied to caſt in ſomewhat that might diſturb them; and ſo they will be apt to interpret it. Nor,

2. *Reproof unſeaſonable in a time of Mirth.*

Thirdly, Is a Time of exceeding great Sadneſs and Sorrow, a proper Seaſon for *Reproof*: For this will look like Hoſtility and Hatred, as if we deſigned utterly to overwhelm and diſpatch them.

3. *Reproof unſeaſonable in a time of Sorrow.*

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Indeed in Caſes of great Importance and abſolute Neceſſity, we may run this Venture, and poſſibly ſucceed well in it. Thus *Joab* very ſharply reproved *David*, when he ſo immoderately mourned for *Abſalom*. And I think it is one of the roundeſt Checks that ever a dutiful *Subject* gave to his *Prince*; but if he had not taken that very time, the Caſe had been deſperate, and his People had

2 Sam. 19. 5, 6, 7.

ſmall Of-fences. ſuddain Paſſion or Temptation, unleſs it be a Sin of Cuſtom, or that which carries with it ſome ſignal Aggravation, that renders it conſiderable, as well in the *Scandal* as in the *Guilt*. It will be ſufficient to paſs by the reſt, only with a brief Animadverſion upon them, enough to put him in mind that he forgot himſelf in ſuch and ſuch Paſſages: And ſo leave the farther *Reproof* to his own Conſcience, which will better do it for leſſer Sins, than poſſibly we can. To reprove ſmall Faults with great vehemence, is always as ridiculous, and may ſometimes prove as deſtructive a piece of Officiouſneſs, as his who took up a huge Beetle, and ſtruck with all his Might, only to kill a Fly he ſaw ſticking upon his Friend's Forehead. We muſt not thruſt the *Probe* deep where the Wound is but ſhallow: Nor be paſſionately concern'd at our Brother's lighter Failings; but ſo govern our ſelves as ſtill to reſerve the more ſharp and ſevere *Reproofs*, for the more foul and ſcandalous Offences. For they that will preſently upon every ſlender occaſion fly out into Exclamations, Deteſtations, and all paſſionate Exaggerations of Rhetorick, will but laviſhly ſpend the vigour of their Zeal, and leave themſelves no Art, no Methods to expreſs their greater abhorrence for blacker Crimes.

4. *Reproof not to be given where it will exaſperate.* *Fourthly*, We are not to *Reprove* thoſe whom we have reaſon to believe are ſuch deſperate Wretches, that our *Reproofs* would but exaſperate them to ſin the more for a *Reproof*. To theſe, ſuch would be no Acts of Love and Charity, but rather a Deſign to deſtroy their Souls, and to heap more and heavy loads of Wrath and Vengeance upon their Heads. Certainly if we have any Senſe of God's Glory, any Tenderneſs and Compaſſion for our Brother's Soul, we ought to beware that we do not inrage him the more, to diſhonour the one, or to wound the other, by the miſtaken Charity of our *Reproofs*. And therefore St. *Auſtin* ſpeaks well, *(De Civitate Dei*, lib. 1. cap. 9.*) Si propterea corripiendis male agentibus parcit, quia opportunum tempus requirit, vel iiſdem ipſis metuit ne deteriores ex hoc efficiantur, videtur eſſe concilium Charitatis.* It is *Charity* not to reprove thoſe who we believe will be the worſe for our *Reproofs*. Alas, how many are there in the World, who when they are reproved (and that very juſtly) for their Sins, preſently fall a blaſpheming and curſing, railing at Piety, and all that profeſs it, violate the good Name of their *Reprovers*, and can hardly abſtain from offering Violence to their Perſons. Now ſuch as theſe are paſt *Reproof*, when once they turn *Reproof* it ſelf into an Occaſion of further ſinning. The greateſt exerciſe of *Charity* to theſe is to let them alone, and not to increaſe their Damnation, by ſtirring up the Virulency and Rancor of their Spirits.

Reproof is Spiritual *Phyſick* for the Soul. Now as it is an imprudent Courſe to adminiſter ſuch *Phyſick* to the Body, as will irritate, and not expel the peccant Humours: So likewiſe it is very imprudent and unſafe, to adminiſter ſuch *Reproofs* as we know cannot cure the Offender, but will only irritate his Corruption, and render it the more turbulent, and him much worſe than he was before. And therefore ſome are themſelves to be reproved, who with an imprudent Zeal reprove others, without ever conſidering what Effects their *Reproofs* are likely to produce: who, as ſoon as a Sin is committed, think themſelves obliged in Conſcience, inſtantly to rebuke them for it, although not only they themſelves may be reviled, but the Name of God moſt horribly blaſphemed upon this very Occaſion. It is indeed *good to be zealouſly affected always in a good Matter.* But yet withal know, that as Zeal and Charity ought to be the Motive, ſo Chriſtian Prudence ought to be the Meaſure of all our *Reproofs*. And if you take not the Advice of Diſcretion, your Zeal for God's Glory may but occaſion his Diſhonour; and your Charity to the Souls of others, occaſion their ſurer Ruin and Damnation. Certainly we are not obliged to reprove where we have reaſon to ſuſpect we ſhall rather do Hurt than Good. It would be but a cruel Charity, to poyſon our Brother in his *Phyſick*, and to kill him in his Cure. And therefore both *Solomon* and a greater than *Solomon*, our *Saviour Chriſt* himſelf, have forbidden us to miſplace *Reproofs* upon thoſe who are deſperate. *Solomon* tells us, *He that reproveth a Scorner, getteth to himſelf Shame; and he that rebuketh a wicked Man, getteth unto himſelf a Blot.* And again, *Reprove not a Scorner, leſt he hate thee.* And ſays our Saviour, *Give not that which is Holy unto Dogs, neither caſt ye your Pearls before Swine, leſt they trample them under their Feet, and turn again and rent you.* Where it is very plain from the precedent Verſes, that he

Gal. 4. 18.

Prov. 9. 7.

Mat. 7. 6.

dehorts

dehorts us from laviſhing out our *Reproofs* imprudently upon *Dogs* and *Swine*; wicked and impure Perſons, on whom we have reaſon to think they will have no effect, but only to enrage them, and make them fly out both againſt God and us, with the more Violence and Madneſs. To *reprove* ſuch, *is* but to caſt up Water againſt an high Wind, that will be ſure to beat it back again into our own Faces.

And thus I have given you the *Negative Rules* in theſe four Particulars. Reprove not without a certain knowledge of the Offence. Nor where others who are likely to be more effectual, have done it already. Nor for every involuntary ſlip. Nor thoſe who are like to be the worſe for it.

Let us now proceed to lay down ſome *Poſitive Rules* and *Directions* for the right managing of our *Reproofs*. And here.

Firſt, If thou would'ſt reprove with ſucceſs, obſerve right Circumſtances of Time and Place: And let the one be as opportune, and the other as private as thou canſt. We ought to obſerve the *mollia tempora fandi*, the ſoft and eaſie Hours of ſpeaking. And therefore the wiſe Man tell us, *A Word ſpoken in ſeaſon, how good is it? It is like Apples of Gold in Pictures of Silver*; that is, very beautiful and pleaſing. There are ſome happy Seaſons wherein the moſt rugged Natures are acceſſible; and it is a great part of Prudence in all our Concerns, if we would have them proſperous, to watch ſuch Opportunities, and to improve them.

1. *Time and Place muſt be obſerved in giving Reproof.* Prov. 15. 23.

Now uſually it is no fit Seaſon for Reproof,

Reproof not ſeaſonable.

Firſt, Preſently as ſoon as the Sin is committed; for then the heat is not over, nor the uproar of the Paſſions and Affections appeaſed. In all likelihood a *Reproof* as yet would but irritate. As Water falling upon red hot Iron, doth but cauſe a great deal of Noiſe and Diſturbance: So a *Reproof* juſt upon the very Act of a Sin, doth but make the Sinner fume, eſtuate, and tumultuate the more. Nor yet,

1. *As ſoon as the Sin is committed.*

Secondly, Is a Time of Mirth and Joy fit for *Reproof*: For that will look like a piece of Envy, as if we were malicious at their Proſperity, and therefore ſtudied to caſt in ſomewhat that might diſturb them; and ſo they will be apt to interpret it. Nor,

2. *Reproof unſeaſonable in a time of Mirth.*

Thirdly, Is a Time of exceeding great Sadneſs and Sorrow, a proper Seaſon for *Reproof*: For this will look like Hoſtility and Hatred, as if we deſigned utterly to overwhelm and diſpatch them.

3. *Reproof unſeaſonable in a time of Sorrow.*

But the fitteſt opportunity for this Duty, is when they are moſt clam and ſedate, their Paſſion huſht, and their Reaſon (with which you are to deal) again reſeated upon its Throne. When they are free from all inward Perturbations of Mind, and from all conſiderable Alterations in their outward Eſtate and Condition, then, if ever, they will liſten to *Reproof*, and take right Meaſures of the Sin for which you *reprove* them. But if we *reprove* them when their Paſſions are in a Tumult, and all within in an Uproar and Combuſtion, it is no wonder at all if either they reject or revile our *Reproofs*; for we then accuſe them before very corrupt Judges, *viz.* their own Paſſions and Corrupt Affections; and you may with as much Reaſon, and as good Succeſs, chide the Sea for being Tempeſtuous, when the Winds rage and are let looſe upon it. Chide a Man for being angry when he is angry, and what will you get by it, but only ſome of his foam caſt upon you? Let God himſelf expoſtulate with an impatient *Jonah*, whilſt he is in his fit of Impatience: *Doeſt thou well to be angry?* and he will tell him ſnappiſhly to his Face, *That he doth well to be angry, even to the very Death.* There is no dealing with Men while their Paſſions blind their Reaſon: This makes them as utterly incapable of taking good Counſel, as if they were brute Beaſts. Thou wert as good thruſt thy Hand into a *Waſp's Neſt*, as come with *Reproofs* and *Rebukes* when the Swarm is up; to be ſure thou ſhalt only go away with many a Sting and Wound, and thou mayeſt thank thy ſelf for no better timing thy *Reproofs*.

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Indeed in Caſes of great Importance and abſolute Neceſſity, we may run this Venture, and poſſibly ſucceed well in it. Thus *Joab* very ſharply reproved *David*, when he ſo immoderately mourned for *Abſalom*. And I think it is one of the roundeſt Checks that ever a dutiful *Subject* gave to his *Prince*; but if he had not taken that very time, the Caſe had been deſperate, and his People had

2 Sam. 19. 5, 6, 7.

all forſaken him, and therefore the neceſſity of Affairs would not permit him to expect a more reaſonable Addreſs. Otherwiſe generally, it is more adviſeable to wait a fitting and cool time. As God is ſaid to come down *in the cool of the Day*, to reprove *Adam*. So likewiſe ſhould we come in the cool ſeaſon of a Man's Paſſions, when all is quiet and temperate within, for then is there the greateſt probability of Succeſs.

2. *Reproof muſt be with Gentleneſs and Meekneſs.*

Secondly, If thou wouldſt have thy Reproofs ſucceſsful, reprove with all Gentleneſs and Meekneſs, without giving any railing or reviling Terms. He that mingles Reproach with *Reproof*, engages a Man's Reputation to ſide with his Vices: For while we ſhew any Bitterneſs in our *Reproofs*, and give them in vilifying and ignominious Language, the Vehicle will hinder the Operation of the Phyſick. For they will look like the upbraidings of an Enemy; and it is a thing moſt abhorrent unto Nature, to follow the Counſels and Advice of an Enemy. And therefore the *Apoſtle* chargeth us, *Brethren, if a Man be overtaken in a fault, you that are ſpiritual, reſtore ſuch an one in the ſpirit of Meekneſs, conſidering thy ſelf, leſt thou be alſo tempted.* Which laſt Clauſe intimates to us, that we ought to deal as tenderly with a fallen Brother, as we would deſire to be dealt with our ſelves, were we in the ſame condition. For having the ſame corrupt Nature, and being ſubject to the like Temptations, we may likewiſe, through God's dereliction of us, fall into the ſame Miſcarriages. Now wouldſt thou take it well, if any ſhould revile and reprove thee, condemn thee for a rotten Hypocrite, as *Job*'s Friends did him; or draw hideous black Conſequences from every failing and weakneſs of thine? Certainly thou wouldſt not interpret this to be friendly and candid dealing: No more do thou with others. It is a true Saying, That he who would know his own Faults, had need have either a faithful Friend, or a bitter Enemy; they will both be ſure to do it to the full. But then the difference is, that an Enemy *Reproofs* are uſually joyned with *Reproaches*, and when we are fallen, he will ſtand and inſult over us. But a true Chriſtian Friend will faithfully repreſent our condition to us, pity us in it, and endeavour to help and raiſe us out of it. And ſuch ſhould we be to all, not railing on them for Hypocrites, or loſt and deſperate Apoſtates; for this certainly is not the way to reduce them, but rather to confirm and harden them in their Sins; we ſhould not gripe nor preſs their Wounds, but rather gently anoint and chafe them. Our *Reproofs* ſhould be as Oil, ſmooth and lenitive, to ſoak into and ſupple the Part affected. And therefore the *Apoſtle* again exhorts us, *in meekneſs to inſtruct thoſe that oppoſe themſelves*. But whilſt we exclaim againſt them with bitter Invectives, and dip all our *Reproofs* in Gall and *Satyr*, we may quickly make them loath the Medicine rather than the Diſeaſe, and ſooner break their Heads with ſuch Rebukes, than their Hearts for their Offences.

Gal. 6. 1.

2. Tim. 2. 25.

3. *Reproof muſt be quick and vivacious.* James 1. 20.

Thirdly, Though our *Reproofs* muſt be meek and gentle, yet muſt they be quick and vivacious alſo. For as Charity requires the one, ſo doth Zeal the other: And the beſt and moſt equal Temper, is rightly to mix theſe two, that at once we may ſhew Meekneſs to his Perſon, (*for the Wrath of Man worketh not the Righteouſneſs of God*) and Sharpneſs againſt his Sin, (for a remiſs Reprover will but make a ſlow Penitent.) We ought ſo to reprove, that he may not think we only jeſt and dally with him, and for this it is neceſſary that we do it with all Seriouſneſs, Gravity and Authority; not playing about the Wound, but ſearching into the very depth and bottom of it. And therefore we muſt uſe ſuch words as are moſt ſignificant of our meaning, moſt expreſſive of our Grief and Sorrow for him, and which we think moſt apt to expoſe the *Vice* that we reprove, and make it moſt odious and hateful, keeping ſtill within the bounds of a ſober and friendly Redargution. Hence the *Apoſtle* gives *Titus* this Advice, *Rebuke them ſharply, that they may be ſound in the Faith.* If they want Salt and Vinegar, ſpare them not. This poſſibly may cleanſe thoſe Wounds that elſe would feſter and putrifie. But here is requird much ſpiritual Prudence to know how to ſuit *Reproofs* according to the different Conditions and Tempers of the Perſons you deal with. Some muſt be lancht and ſearcht to the very Quick before they can be healed. Others require a gentle Hand. If they be proud and ſtubborn, they need Coroſives. But for thoſe who are naturally meek and mild, a meek and mild Courſe will be eaſieſt and moſt effectual. The Tempers and Caſes of particular Chriſtians are ſo various, that there can be no Rules given that may be applicable to every Condition. This muſt of neceſſity be left to your Prudence and Diſcretion. Only this

Tit. 1. 13.

this Rule is infallible, Be ſure you flatter none in their Vices, extenuate not their Sins; when thou com'ſt to *reprove* them, do it not in ſport: Let them ſee thou art in very good Earneſt; and tell 'em their Sin, as it is in it ſelf, without mincing the matter, or the circumſtances of it. For Men are always apt to impute ſomewhat of the *Reproof* to the ſeverity of him that gives it, rather than to the demerits of their own Offences. And therefore, if thou thy ſelf ſhalt ſpeak but ſlightly of their Sins, they will be ready to conclude that they were none, or at leaſt ſo ſmall, that it was nothing but Officiouſneſs, and the love of Cenſuring, made thee take notice of them.

4. *Reproof ought to be given privately.*

Fourthly, Let all thy *Reproofs* be given as ſecretly and privately as poſſibly thou canſt; otherwiſe thou wilt ſeem not ſo much to aim at thy Brother's Reformation, as at his Shame and Confuſion. For if (as the wiſe Man tells us) a loud and clamorous Benediction given too officiouſly, is ſo far from being a Bleſſing, that it is but a Curſe and a Shame to a Man's Friend. Certainly then a publick and clamorous *Reproof* muſt only tend to the Shame and Reproach of them that receive it. Indeed there are ſome who offend openly before many: Theſe, (if there be no fear of irritating them to do worſe) we ought openly to rebuke, and to give them their *Reproof* in the Company where they have given the *Offence*: ſo ſaith the Apoſtle, *Thoſe that Sin rebuke before all*; that is, ſuppoſing that their Sins be open and publick. But for others whoſe Sins and Miſcarriages have been private, and only known to our ſelves and a few others, we ought to reprove them in ſecret, and to be tender not only of their Souls, but of their Reputation alſo. So is the Counſel of our Saviour, *If thy Brother ſhall treſpaſs againſt thee, go and tell him his Fault between thee and him alone.* And indeed this is a neceſſary piece of Prudence, not only to preſerve his Reputation and good Name as much as may be, but alſo,

Prov. 27. 14.

Tim. 5. 20.

Mat. 18. 15.

1. *To preſerve the Reputation of Religion.*

Firſt, To preſerve the Reputation of Religion it ſelf, which a more publick divulging of his Offences might much impair and diſcredit. And,

2. *To hinder the ſpreading of an evil Example.*

Secondly, To hinder the ſpreading of an evil Example, which alſo perhaps ſome or other would make uſe of, to encourage them in the like Tranſgreſſions. And,

3. *That they may be ſerviceable.*

Thirdly, To preſerve him ſerviceable for the future; for by reporting his Miſcarriages, thou leſſeneſt his Credit, and thereby rendreſt him leſs capable of doing good than he was before. For though he may recover himſelf out of the Snare of the *Devil*, and his Wound be healed, yet if his Faults have been made publick, the Scar will ſtill remain: And this will be ſuch a blemiſh to him, that having loſt much of his repute among Men, he will likewiſe loſe much of thoſe Advantages he formerly had of doing good in the World; and thou by thy *imprudent Reproofs* be the cauſe of it. Upon all theſe Accounts it is neceſſary that thy *Reproofs* be managed with the greateſt Secrecy and Privacy that may be: For as St. *Auſtin* ſpeaks well, "If whilſt thou alone knoweſt thy Brother to "have offended, and yet wilt rebuke him before all, *Non es corrector, ſed pro-*"*ditor*: thou art not a Reprover, but a Betrayer.

5. *Superiors muſt be reproved reſpectfully.*

Fifthly, Reprove not one who is greatly thy Superior, unleſs it be at a reſpectful diſtance. Towards ſuch we muſt not uſe downright and blunt *Rebukes*, but rather inſinuate things into them with Addreſs and Artifice. What ſays *Elihu*, *Is it fit to ſay to a King, Thou art wicked, and to Princes, Ye are ungodly?* And indeed in this Caſe uſually, it is moſt fit and decent that thy *Reproofs* ſhould not carry their own Shape and Form, but diſguiſe them rather into Parables or Intreaties, or into any ſuch humble and becoming Method: Yet withal, let ſo much appear, as that they may well enough know thy drift and intent. For it becomes the Wiſdom and Station of Inferiours, ſo to order their Speech, that if it can but be interpreted as a *Reproof*, their Superiours may and will certainly know they meant it for ſuch. Thus the *Apoſtle* bids us, *Rebuke not an Elder, but rather intreat him as a Father.* For becauſe their Place and Calling required Reſpect and Reverence, therefore the *Apoſtle* would not have them bluntly Rebuked, but that the *Reproof* ſhould be clad in another dreſs, that they might appear to be rather Intreaties than Rebukes.

Job. 34. 18.

1 Tim. 5. 1.

We may obſerve likewiſe, that when *Nathan* was ſent immediately by God to reprove King *David*, he doth not attack him directly, and fall rudely upon him for his Adultery and Murder, but cloaths his Speech in a Parable, and when he had ſo repreſented the heinouſneſs of his Sin, ſo as by that means to make him firſt reprove and condemn himſelf, then he tells him, *Thou art the Man.* *Sixthly*,

6. *We must not be guilty of the Sins we reprove others for.*

Sixthly, If thou wouldst have thy *Reproofs* effectual, especially beware that thou thy self art not guilty of those Sins which thou reprovest in another. It were indeed a Temper to be wish'd and pray'd for, that we could only respect how righteous the *Reproof* were, and not how righteous the Person is who gives it. For there is no more reason to reject sound Admonition, because it comes from an unsound Heart, than there is to stop our Ears against good Counsel, because it is delivered perhaps by an unsavoury Breath. Yet so it is, that when Men of defiled Consciences and Conversations reprove others, they are apt to justifie themselves by recriminating, or else to think they do but sport and jest with them: Or thirdly, to hate them for gross Hypocrites and Dissemblers; or lastly, to think they do but envy them their Sins, and that they would ingross all to themselves. It was a true Observation of *Pliny* in his *Epistles*, Lib. 8. Epist. 22. That there are some, *Qui sic aliorum vitiis irascuntur, quasi invideant*: who are so angry at other Mens Vices, as if they envied them. It cannot be hoped that the *Reproof* of such should ever take place. But when a Man of a clear and unspotted Name shall *reprove* the Sins and Vices of others, his *Rebukes* carry Authority with them; and if they cannot reform, yet at least must they needs daunt and silence the Offenders, that they shall have have nothing to reply, no Subterfuges nor Evasions, but they must needs be convinced that their Sins are as evil, as he represents them by his own Care and Caution to be avoided.

5. *Motives for reproving our Brother.*

Fifthly, The only Thing that remains is to propound to you some *Motives* that may quicken you to the conscientious discharge of this much neglected Duty. And I shall but name some few, and leave them to your consideration to be farther prest upon you. And here next to the express Command of Almighty God, whose Authority alone ought to prevail against all the Difficulties that we either find or fancy in the way of Obedience thereunto:

Benefit of reproving others.

Consider, *First*, the great benefit that may redound both to the *Reprover*, and *Reproved*.

First, Thou shalt hereby provide thy self a Friend that may take the same liberty to *reprove* thee, when it shall be needful, and for thy great good. And it may very well be thought that the *Apostle* upon this Account requires us to *Restore our*

Gal. 6. 1. *fallen Brother, with meek Reproofs, considering our selves, lest we also be tempted.* That is, that hereby we may purchase a true Friend, who will be as faithful to us, as we have been to him. However, certainly it is the best and most generous way of procuring to our selves true Love and Respect from those whom we

Prov. 9. 8. have thus reformed. So says *Solomon*, *Rebuke a wise Man, and he will love thee.*

Prov. 28. 23. And in another place, says he, *He that rebuketh a Man, afterwards shall find more favour than he that flattereth with his Tongue.*

Secondly, Thou wilt hereby intitle thy self to that great and precious Promise,

Dan. 12. 3. *That they that be wise, shall shine as the brightness of the Firmament; and they that turn many to Righteousness, as the Stars for ever and ever.* And to that other of

Prov. 24. 25. the wise Man, *To them that rebuke the wicked, shall be Delight, and a good Blessing shall come upon them.*

Thirdly, Thou shalt increase thy own Graces and Comforts more than possibly thou couldest do by separating thy self from them. Thy Graces will be more confirmed, because *reproving* of others will engage thee to a greater Watchfulness over thy self. Thy Comforts also will be encreased, because a conscientious discharge of this Duty, will be to thee a greater Evidence of the Integrity and Sincerity of thy Heart.

First, The practice of this Duty will be greatly profitable unto him that is reproved. How knowest thou but it may be a means to turn him from his Ini-

Jam. 5. 20. quity, and so thou *shalt prevent a Multitude of Sins, and save a Soul from Death?* And hereby likewise we shall frustrate one of the great Designs and Artifices of the Devil, which is, to allure Men to Sin by the Examples of those Wickednesses that pass uncheck'd and uncontroul'd in the World.

Tit. 3. 3. *Secondly*, Consider that we our selves also were disobedient and foolish, serving divers Lusts and Pleasures; but were wrought upon either by publick or private Reproof. And why then should not we use the same Charity towards others, which God hath been pleased to make effectual towards us.

Thirdly, Consider that the *Text* makes it an apparent sign of hating our Bro-

1 John 3. 15. ther, if we forbear justly to reprove him. *Thou shalt not hate thy Brother in thy Heart:*

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Heart: thou ſhalt in any wiſe reprove him. So that he who reproves not his Brother, hates him. Now *he that hates his Brother is a Murderer*, ſays St. *John*; *And no Murderer hath Eternal Life.* Yea, we are guilty of *Soul-Murder*, which is ſo much the more heinous by how much the Soul is more precious than the Body.

Fourthly, Conſider that the performance of this Duty, were it more univerſal, would be the apteſt and readieſt means to prevent *Schiſm* and *Diviſion*. The grand pretence for Separation, is the wickedneſs of many who are *Church-Members*. Now our *Saviour*'s Method is, That ſuch ſhould be firſt reproved and admoniſh'd, before they be caſt out; but it is a moſt prepoſterous and headlong Courſe that thouſands in our Days take, who caſt themſelves out of the Communion of the *Church*, for the Sins of thoſe who deſerve to be caſt out; and rather than they will perform this ingrateful Work of *Reproof*, chuſe to ſeparate; whereas if they would make uſe of our *Saviour Chriſt*'s Advice, to reprove privately, and in caſe of Obſtinacy, to convict publickly, there would be, as no need, ſo no Pretence left for Separation; but either their private Reproofs would prevail to reform, or their publick Complaints and Accuſations to remove Offenders. Mat. 18. 15, 16.

Fifthly, Conſider, that the neglect of this Duty, brings the Sin and Guilt of others upon your own Souls. See for this that Scripture, *Epheſians* 5. 11. *Have no Fellowſhip with the unfruitful Works of Darkneſs, but rather reprove them.* If we reprove them not, we are Partakers of their evil Deeds, and deſerve to be Partakers of their Torments. Eph. 5. 11.

THE DREADFULNESS OF GOD's Wrath, Explain'd.

SERMON V.

HEB. x. 30, 31.

For we know him that hath ſaid, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompence, ſaith the Lord; and again, The Lord ſhall judge his People.

It is a fearful thing to fall into the Hands of the Living God.

An Introduction.

THere are two principal *Attributes* of God, which the *Scripture* propounds to us as the moſt powerful and efficacious Motives to reſtrain us from Sin: And they are his *Mercy* and his *Juſtice*; *Mercy* tho' it be a ſoft, yet is it a ſtrong Argument to encourage us to Purity and Holineſs. And therefore ſays the Apoſtle, *The Goodneſs of God leadeth us to Repentance.* And certainly that *Mercy* that expreſſeth it ſelf ſo ready to pardon Sin, cannot but lay a mighty Obligation upon the Ingenuity of a Chriſtian Spirit to abſtain from the commiſſion of it. He that can encourage himſelf in Wickedneſs, upon the conſideration of the infinite Free-Grace of God, doth but ſpurn thoſe very Bowels that yern towards him, and ſtrike at God with his own Golden Scepter; yea, he tears abroad thoſe Wounds which were at firſt opened for him, and caſts the Blood of his Sa- Rom. 2. 4.

Saviour back again in his Face. But becauſe Ingenuity is periſht from off the Earth, and Men are generally more apt to be wrought upon by Arguments drawn from Fear than Love, therefore the *Scripture* propounds to us the conſideration of the dreadful Juſtice of God arrayed in all the terrible Circumſtances of it, that if Mercy cannot allure us, Juſtice at leaſt might affright us from our Sins. And as thoſe who are to travel through *Wilderneſſes* and *Deſerts*, carry Fire with them to terrifie wild and ravenous Beaſts, and to ſecure themſelves from their Aſſaults: So doth the great God, who hath to deal with brutiſh Men, Men more ſavage than wild Beaſts; he kindles a Fire about him, and appears to them all in Flames and Fury; that ſo he might fright them from their bold Attempts, who otherwiſe would be ready, *to run upon his Neck, and the thick Boſſes of his Buckler.* Job 15. 26.

And therefore in the Four precedent *Verſes*, we find the *Apoſtle* threatning moſt tremendous Judgments againſt all that ſhould wilfully tranſgreſs, after they had received the knowledge of the Truth. He tells us, *there remains no more ſacrifice for their Sins:* Nothing to expiate their Guilt, but that they themſelves muſt fall a Burnt-Sacrifice to the offended Juſtice of God, conſumed with that fiery Indignation that ſhall certainly ſeize and prey upon them for ever. And in *v.* 28, 29. he ſets forth the exceeding Dreadfulneſs of their Judgment, by a compariſon between thoſe that violated the *Law of Moſes*, and thoſe that *renounce and annul the Law of Chriſt. He that deſpiſed* Moſes's *Law*, who himſelf was but a Servant, and his Laws conſiſted of inferiour and leſs ſpiritual Ordinances, yet a Deſpiſer and Tranſgreſſor of theſe, was *to die without Mercy*; certainly much ſorer Judgments await thoſe, who reject the *Laws of Chriſt*, and trample him who is the *Son* and *Lord* of the Houſe, under foot; accounting his Blood unholy and prophane, renouncing his Merits, and blaſpheming the Holy Spirit by which our *Saviour* acted: Such as theſe, ſhall eternally periſh with leſs Mercy, than thoſe that *died without Mercy.* Where obſerve the ſtrange *Emphaſis* that the *Apoſtle* lays upon this dreadful Commination; he tells us they ſhall be ſorer puniſh'd, than thoſe that are puniſhed without Mercy; to let us know, that as there are tranſcendent Glories, ſuch as *Eye hath not ſeen, nor Ear heard, nor can it enter into the Heart of Man to* conceive, reſerved in the Heavens for thoſe that love God; ſo are there Woes and Torments, ſuch as *Eye hath not ſeen, Ear heard, nor can it enter into the Heart of Man to* conceive, how great and inſupportable they are, prepared in *Hell* for thoſe that hate him. They ſhall die with leſs Mercy, than thoſe that die without Mercy. Heb. 10. 28, 29.

Now that we might not wonder at ſuch a *Paradox* as this, the *Apoſtle* gives the Reaſon of it in my Text, *For we know him that hath ſaid, Vengeance belongeth unto me*; it is the Vengeance of God, *and a falling into the Hands of God*, and therefore it is no wonder if their Puniſhments be beyond all extremity. They fall under the Power and Wrath of an infinite God, which when we have heaped Superlatives upon Superlatives, yet ſtill we muſt expreſs defectively, and all that we can conceive of it falls vaſtly ſhort of reaching but a faint and languiſhing reſemblance thereof. It is a State ſo full of perfect Miſery, that Miſery it ſelf is too eaſie a Name to give it; yea, whatſoever we can ſpeak moſt appoſitely of it, is but diminiſhing it; for becauſe it is the *Wrath* and *Vengeance* of an infinite God, it can no more be known by us, than God himſelf. Plunge your Thoughts as deep into it as you can, yet ſtill there remains an infinite *Abyſs* which you can never fathom. And O that the conſideration of this *Wrath* might cauſe us to tremble before this great and terrible God; that we might ſo fear it, as never to feel it; and be perſwaded to fall down at his Feet, that we may never fall into his Hands. And that we may be thus affected, I have choſen this *Text* to ſet forth the Greatneſs and Dreadfulneſs of that Wrath and Vengeance which the righteous God will execute upon all ſtubborn and diſobedient Wretches.

A *Text* that ſpeaks to us, as God did to the *Iſraelites* from *Mount Sinai*, out of the midſt of the Fire and Blackneſs, Darkneſs and Tempeſt, in the Voice of a Trumpet. And truly we have all need to have ſuch rouſing Truths frequently inculcated upon us, for the beſt of us are *Lethargical*; and though ſometimes when our Conſciences are pincht hard by a ſevere and ſearching Truth, we ſtart and look abroad, yet as ſoon as the preſent Impreſſion is over, we cloſe our Eyes, and fall aſleep again in Sin and Security. There is a ſtrange Dulneſs and Stupor hath ſeiz'd us, that we can no longer keep waking than we are ſhook.

And

And therefore as we uſe to apply Fire and burning Coals to *Lethargick* Perſons to awaken them; ſo we have need to heap *Coals of Fire* upon Mens Heads, to ſpeak with *fiery Tongues*, and thunder Woe, and Wrath, and Judgments againſt them, that we may rouze the ſecure ſtupid World, and ſcorch them into Life and Senſe.

In the Words we have theſe two Parts obſervable.

Firſt, An Appropriation of Vengeance unto God, *Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompence, ſaith the Lord.*

Secondly, The Dreadfulneſs of that Vengeance inferred, from the conſideration of the Author and Inflicter of it, *It is a fearful thing to fall into the Hands of the living God.*

I begin with the *firſt* of theſe, God's appropriating and challenging Vengeance unto himſelf. *Vengeance blongeth unto me, I will recompence, ſaith the Lord.* Which Paſſage the *Apoſtle* cites out of *Deuteronomy*, *To me belongeth Vengeance and Recompence, and the Lord ſhall judge his People.* Deut. 32. 35. It is his great and royal Prerogative that he doth ſometimes make uſe of in inflicting Judgments upon the Wicked in this World, but moſt eſpecially in the World to come. And to this future Vengeance, the Words ought particularly to be applied. Now from this conſideration, that Vengeance in a peculiar manner belongs unto the great God, we may obſerve,

That God himſelf will be the immediate Inflicter of the Puniſhments of the Damned.

It is therefore here called a *falling in the Hands of the living God*, which denotes his immediate Efficiency in their Torments.

It is true, God doth uſe ſeveral Inſtruments of Torture in Hell. There is the *Worm that never dies*, and *the Fire that never goes out*, which I ſuppoſe to be not only a *Metaphorical*, but poſſibly a *Material Fire*, elevated to ſuch a degree of Subtility, as that it ſhall at once torture the Soul, and not conſume the Body. And this Fire the *Devils*, who are their Executioners, will be officiouſly raking about them, uſing all their malicious Art to increaſe their eternal Miſery. But theſe things are but ſmall Appendages, and the ſlighter Circumſtances of their Torments; the moſt exact and intolerable part of their Torture ſhall be inflicted on them from another *Fire*, an intelligent Everlaſting, and therefore an unquenchable Fire, even God himſelf, for ſo he is ſaid to be, *Our God is a conſuming Fire.* Heb. 12. 29.

And though we ordinarily ſpeak only of *Hell Fire*, yet not only *Hell* but *Heaven* is full of this *Fire*; conſult that place, *Who among us ſhall dwell with the devouring Fire? Who among us ſhall dwell with everlaſting Burnings?* Would not one think at the firſt ſound of the Words, that the *Prophet* ſpeaks only of ſuch as ſhould be damned in Hell, remaining there in everlaſting Burnings? And demands of them, who among them could endure this? No, but it appears plainly, that this *Fire* and *Burning* is in Heaven it ſelf, and the *Prophet* by putting this Queſtion, *Who ſhall dwell with the devouring Fire and everlaſting Burnings?* Asks who ſhall be ſaved, and not who ſhall be deſtroyed? And therefore in the 15th *Verſe*, he tells us, that he ſhall do it, *who walketh uprightly, and ſpeaketh uprightly, that deſpiſeth the gain of Oppreſſion, that ſhaketh his Hands from holding of Bribes, that ſtoppeth his Ears from hearing of Blood, and ſhutteth his Eyes from ſeeing of Evil.* Such a one ſhall dwell with the devouring Fire; that is, he ſhall for ever dwell with God in Heaven. So that we ſee God is a *Fire* both to the Wicked, and to the Godly; to the Wicked he is a *penetrating torturing Fire*, and they are combuſtible Matter for his Wrath and Vengeance to prey upon; but to the Godly he is a *purifying and cheriſhing Fire* only. And as *Lightning* doth not only cleanſe and refine the *Air*, but *rends Trees* and *Rocks* in pieces; diſſolves *Metals*, and breaks thorow whatſoever oppoſeth it: So this great and *Almighty Fire* only refreſheth and comforteth the Godly, whereas it breaks and tears the Wicked in pieces, and melts them like Wax before the ſcorching Heat of it. And though I deny not but there may be ſomewhat like that which we commonly apprehend, when we ſpeak of *Hell*, ſome unquenchable Flames prepared by the Wiſdom and Power of God for the eternal Torment of thoſe that ſhall be caſt there-into; yet withal I think that their moſt exquiſite Torments ſhall be from that *Fire* that is God himſelf.

Mat. 25. 41. For if we obſerve, it is ſaid to be *everlaſting Fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels.* Now the *Devils* are ſpiritual Subſtances, and flames of *Fire* themſelves. *He maketh his Angels Spirits, and his Miniſters,* that is, his Miniſtring Spirits, whether good or evil, whether Miniſters of his Wrath, or Miniſters of his Mercy, *He maketh them Flames of Fire.* They are ſuch piercing and ſubtil Flames, that *Lightning* it ſelf is but groſs and dull, compared to them: Yet here is a *Fire* that ſhall even torture *Fire* it ſelf; a *Fire* that ſhall burn thoſe Flames of *Fire*; and that is God, who being a Spirit, and the God of Spirits, can eaſily pierce into the very Centre of their Being. So that the Damned in *Hell* ſhall for ever find themſelves burnt with a *double Fire*, a *Material Fire*, ſuited and adapted to impreſs Pain and Torment upon the Body, yet without waſting and conſuming it; and an *Inviſible Intellectual Fire*, that ſhall prey upon the Soul, and fill it with unſpeakable Anguiſh and Horror, and this is no other than God himſelf.

Pſal. 104. 4.

And in this there is a true Parallel between *Heaven* and *Hell*; for as in *Heaven*, though there are many created Excellencies and Glories, which contribute to the *Beatitude* of the Saints; yet their moſt ſubſtantial Happineſs is from their immediate fruition of God: So likewiſe in *Hell*, though there be many created and invented *Tortures*, yet the moſt intolerable Miſery of the Damned, is from the immediate inflict and infuſion of the Divine Wrath into them, which no Creature can convey to them in ſuch a Manner and Meaſure as they there feel it; but God himſelf pours the full Vials of it into their Souls. And therefore as the Saints are called *Veſſels of Mercy*, ſo the Wicked are called *Veſſels of Wrath, fitted for Deſtruction.* Such Veſſels into which God will pour in of his Vengenance, and fill brim full with his Wrath and Fury for ever.

Rom. 9. 22.

2 Theſ. 1. 9. The Apoſtle ſpeaking of wicked Men, tells us, *They ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting Deſtruction from the Preſence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power.* Where we muſt not think that this Phraſe [*From the Preſence of the Lord*] denotes only that part of their Puniſhment which we call *pœna Damni*, or the Puniſhment of Loſs; but rather that it denotes the efficient Cauſe of their *pœna Senſus*, or the Puniſhment of Senſe; not that their Puniſhment ſhall only be, to be for ever baniſhed from his Preſence, but that this Preſence ſhall be active in inflicting Puniſhments upon them; and we may read it thus, *They ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting Deſtruction, by the Preſence of the Lord, and by the Glory of his Power:* For as God's glorious Power is effective of their Deſtruction, ſo alſo is his dread Preſence of that conſuming and tormenting Fire.

And thus much briefly for the *firſt* Thing obſervable in the *Text*, namely, God's appropriating Vengeance unto himſelf, *Vengeance belongeth unto me*; and it is a *falling into the Hands of the Living God.*

2. I come now to the *ſecond* Thing obſervable in the Words, the dreadfulneſs of this Vengeance inferred, from the conſideration of the Author and Inflicter of it; for becauſe it is Divine Vengenance, and a falling into the Hands of the Living God, therefore it muſt needs be very terrible. And here I ſhall *firſt* take notice of thoſe Expreſſions that my *Text* affords, to ſet forth the Terrour of this Wrath. And then conſider other Demonſtrations of it. And here,

1. *Firſt*, Conſider that all other Vengeance is as nothing in compariſon of that which God takes on a damned Soul. You may poſſibly have heard of ſtrange and horrid Revenges that ſome cruel Men have carved out unto themſelves, putting thoſe that have offended them to ſuch Tortures as were unfit for Men either to inflict or ſuffer. *Hiſtories* abound with ſuch *Babarities*; I am loth to offend your Ears ſo much as to recount them, let us only take an eſtimate by the dreadful Revenge that *David* took on the *Ammonites: He put them under Saws, and Harrows of Iron, and made them paſs through the Brick-Kilns.* And all this Severity, (if not to ſay Cruelty) was to revenge the inſolent Affront done to his *Embaſſadors.* It is doubtleſs no ſmall Torture to be burnt alive, for Fire is a ſearching Thing, and eats deep into the Senſes; but yet this kind of Death was a merciful diſpatch in compariſon of the others: Think what it is to be ſtretcht along, to have the ſharp Spikes of an Harrow tear up your Fleſh, and draw out your Bowels and Bones after them: Or what it is to be ſawn aſunder, and to have thoſe ſmall Teeth eat their way ſlowly thorow you, while they jarr againſt your Bones, and pull out your Nerves and Sinews thread by thread. How many *Deaths*, think you, were theſe miſerable Creatures compelled to ſuffer before they were permitted

2 Sam. 12. laſt.

mitted to die? Yet theſe, and all the witty Tortures that ever were invented by the greateſt Maſters of Cruelty, are nothing in Compariſon of the Vengeance that God will take upon Sinners in *Hell*: And therefore he ſays, *Vengeance is mine, I will recompence.* As if he ſhould ſay, Alas, all that you can do one to another ſignifies nothing, it is not to be accounted *Vengeance*, that is too great a Name for ſuch poor Effects. It is a Prerogative that God challengeth to himſelf to be the *Avenger*: And whatever Creatures meddle with, if they have not a Commiſſion from him, it is their Sin; and therefore private Perſons, whom he hath not inveſted with ſuch Authority, ought not to take upon them to avenge their own Cauſe. Or if they have a Commiſſion, yet all their execution of *Vengeance* is but feeble and weak. We find in *Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory* that the *Holy Martyrs* have often mock'd at all the *cruel Tortures* of their enraged *Perſecutors*, and God hath either taken from them all ſenſe of Pain, or elſe given them ſuch ſtrong Conſolations, that they have triumph'd in all the Extremity of them. O how have they hugg'd the *Stake* at which they were to be burnt, courted the *Beaſts* that were to devour them, and been ſtretch'd upon the *Rack* with as much content, as they have ſtretch'd themſelves upon their Beds; and not ſo much ſuffered, as enjoyed their Deaths! God has ſo mercifully taken off the Edge and Keenneſs of their *Torments*, to ſhew that *Vengeance* is his Right, and that they are but contemptible things that one Man can inflict upon another, ſcarce worthy to be called *Vengeance*. And beſides, let it be never ſo ſharp and cutting, yet it cannot be long durable; the more intolerable any *Torments* are, the ſooner they work our eſcape from them. And though Malice may wiſh the Perpetuity of our Pain, yet it is not poſſible for mortal Men to proſecute an immortal Revenge; the Death, either of them, or our ſelves, will put a period to our Sufferings. And what a ſmall matter is it to undergo pain for a few days only? This is not worthy to be called *Vengeance*, nor is it like that which the great God will inflict, which is both inſupportable and eternal. And therefore.

Secondly, The Apoſtle calls it *a falling into the hands of the Living God.* And this denotes to us the Perpetuity and Eternity of this *Vengeance*. God ever lives to inflict it, and Sinners ſhall ever live to ſuffer it; for they fall into his Hands. God hath leaſed out a Life to every wicked Man, he hath his Term of Years ſet him, wherein he lives to himſelf, enjoying his Luſts, and the Pleaſures and Profits of this preſent World; and all this while *Vengeance* intermeddles little with him: But when his Life is expir'd, and his Years run out, he then falls into the Hands of the great Lord of all, and becomes the Poſſeſſion of his *Vengeance* and *Juſtice* for ever. And then, *he is the living God*, and ſuch wicked Wretches muſt for ever live to endure the moſt dreadful execution of his Power and Wrath. Were there any Term or Period ſet to their *Torments*, ſhould they when they have endured them thouſands of thouſands of Years, afterwards be annihilated, the expectation of this Releaſe would give them ſome ſupport; yea, it would be ſome ſolace to them in their Sufferings to think that at laſt they ſhould be freed from them: But this is the *Accent* of their Miſery, and that which makes them altogether deſperate, that it is for ever; for ever they muſt lye and wallow in thoſe Flames that ſhall never be quenched, and ſhall always be bit and ſtung with that *Worm that ſhall never die*; they are fallen into the *Hands of the living God*, who will never let them go as long as he lives; that is, never to all Eternity. He is a conſuming *Fire*, but yet ſpends not any part of his Fewel; he conſumes without diminiſhing them, and deſtroys, but ſtill perpetuates their being. A wiſe and intelligent Fire, (as *Minutius* calls him) that devours the Damned, but ſtill repairs them, and by tormenting ſtill nouriſhes them for future Torments. *Sapiens ille ignis, urit & reficit, carpit & nutrit.* And when they have lain burning in this *Fire* all Ages that *Arithmetick* can ſumm up, Millions of thouſands, and Thouſands of Millions, yet ſtill it is but the beginning of their Sorrows. O think with your ſelves how long and tedious a little time ſeems, when you are in pain; you complain then that Time hath leaden Feet, and wiſh the Days and Hours would roll away faſter; and you never find them ſo ſlow-paced, as when they paſs over a *ſick Bed*. Oh then what will it be when you ſhall lye ſweltring under the *Wrath and Vengeance of the living God*, the intolerableneſs of your Pain and Torment will make every Day ſeem an Age, and every Year as long as Eternity, and yet you muſt lye there an Eternity of thoſe long Years. Methinks this conſideration of

Eternal Torments ſhould aſtoniſh the Heart, and ſink the Spirits of wicked Wretches; for though they were not to be ſo exceſſively ſharp as they are, yet the *Eternity* of them ſhould make them altogether intolerable. There is no pain ſo ſmall but it would make us deſperate, were we aſſured it would never wear off, that we ſhould never obtain any eaſe or freedom from it. Whatever Pain we ſuffer, our encouragement unto Patience is, that ſhortly it will be over: But now in *Hell* there is no period fixt to their *Torments*, they are all eternal, and therefore whatſoever they are for the Meaſure of them, yet are they utterly intolerable for their Duration and Continuance. Couldſt thou ſhove away Millions of Years with a Wiſh, yet all this would avail nothing; for there are as many Years in Eternity as there are Moments, and as many Millions of Years as there are Years; that is, it is an infinite boundleſs Duration; and when thou haſt ſtruck thy Thoughts as deep into it as thou canſt, yet thou art but at the top of the Heap, and it is ſtill a whole Eternity to the bottom.

Thirdly, Conſider alſo that the *Wrath* and *Vengeance* of God is moſt dreadful, not only from the Eternal Duration thereof, but alſo from the exceſſive Anguiſh and Smart of thoſe *Torments* that he inflicts; nothing that we have felt, or can feel in this preſent Life, can come into any compariſon with them; and therefore the *Text* calls it, *A falling into the Hands of God.* Here on Earth God's Hand doth ſometimes fall upon us, and it falls very heavy too, and lays upon us ſore and weighty Burthens; but theſe are nothing to our falling into the Hands of God. There is as much difference between his Wrath and Diſpleaſure falling upon us, and our falling upon it, as there is between our having a few drops of a Shower falling upon us, and our falling into a River, or into the Sea, and being over-whelmed with the great Waters thereof; and yet how dreadful is it when God's Hand only falls upon us! It was a ſad Complaint of the *Pſalmiſt*, *That God's Hand lay heavy upon him.* And, *That God's Hand preſt him ſore.* Grievous Burthens and ſore Preſſures may be laid upon us by this Hand of God, and that both as to outward Afflictions, and inward Troubles.

Pſal. 32. 4.
Pſal. 38. 2.

1. *Firſt*, As to outward Afflictions. How dreadfully doth God ſtretch out his Hand againſt ſome, making wide and terrible Breaches upon them; ſome in their Eſtates, ſome in their Relations, and ſome in their bodily Health and Strength. Have you never been about the ſick Beds of thoſe that have roared through extremity of Pain, every Limb being upon the Rack, and God filling them with a Complication of loathſom, tormenting and incurable Diſeaſes? And yet all this is but only a falling of God's Hand upon them.

2. *Secondly*, As to inward Troubles: We ſee how God cramps ſome Mens Conſciences, breaths Fire and Flames into their very Souls, and makes deep Wounds in their Spirits, forcing them thorow the extremity of Anguiſh to cry out, *they are damn'd, they are damn'd*; yea, ſome have even wiſht that they were in Hell, ſuppoſing thoſe everlaſting Torments would not be more unſufferable than what they here felt. And indeed theſe inward Troubles are far more grievous than any outward can be. We hear *Heman* crying out, that *becauſe of theſe Terrours of the Lord, he was ready to die from his Youth up. And whilſt he ſuffered this Wrath of God, he was even diſtracted with it.* And *Job*, whoſe Patience is celebrated for bearing all his outward Afflictions, loſs of Eſtate, of Children, of Health, with an heroick Conſtancy, (*You have heard*, ſays St. *James, of the Patience of* Job) yet when God comes to touch his Spirit with his Wrath, then we hear of his Impatience, he *curſeth the Day of his Birth, and wiſhes that God would deſtroy him, that he would let looſe his Hand and cut him off.* And wherefore are theſe paſſionate Requeſts? Why, he tells us, *The Arrows of the Almighty are within me, the Poyſon whereof drinketh up my Spirit: The Terrors of God do ſet themſelves in array againſt me.* And therefore though he could patiently bear all that the rage of the Devil could do againſt him, when he toucht his Wealth, his Children; yea, when he toucht his Body; yet his Patience could no longer hold out, when God came to touch his Soul and Conſcience.

Pſal. 88. 15.
Job 6. 9.

And yet the greateſt Terrors of Conſcience, whether in the Children of God to their Reformation, or in the Wicked to their Deſperation, are but light and ſmall touches of his Hand, in compariſon with what ſhall be expreſt hereafter on the Damned in *Hell.* For,

Firſt, To

First, To the Godly theſe Afflictions are mixed with Love and Mercy. They come not as *Plagues*, but as *Medicaments* to do them good. But in *Hell* all is Wrath, pure Wrath and Judgment without Mercy. And certainly if thoſe Sufferings which are inflicted in Love, and allay'd with Mercy, are yet ſo very dreadful to the People of God; how dreadful will the Wrath of God be in *Hell*, where it ſhall be pure and unmixed, and nothing put into that Cup which the Damned are there to drink of, but the rankeſt Venom that can be ſqueezed out of all the *Curſes* that ever God hath denounced? And then, 1.

Secondly, To the wicked all the Sufferings they here endure are nothing in compariſon with what they muſt eternally ſuffer in *Hell*. They are now only ſprinkled with a few drops of God's Wrath, but in *Hell* all his Waves ſhall go over them for ever. Here they do but ſip a little of that Cup, and taſte a little of the Froth of it, and ſhould they drink deeper, Earth could not hold them, but they would grow drunk, and reel and ſtagger into *Hell*; but there they muſt for ever drink the very Dregs of that Cup of Trembling and Aſtoniſhment. And thou who now roareſt like a wild Bull in a Net, when God's Hand is only upon thee, what wilt thou do when thou ſhalt eternally fall under his Mighty Hands? Thou now crieſt out of the Intolerableneſs of thy preſent Pain; but, alas, hadſt thou but felt one gripe of the Torments of the Damned in *Hell*; had God and the Devil had but one blow apiece at thee, thou wouldſt chuſe to live for ever here on Earth in the moſt exquiſite Torture that could be deviſed, the ſharpeſt *Paroxyſms* of the *Stone* or *Gout*, to be ſtretcht upon the Rack, to lye broke upon the Wheel, to have thy Fleſh pluckt by fiery Pincers; thou wouldſt chuſe to ſuffer all theſe to Eternity; yea, and chuſe them as Recreations and Divertiſements, rather than return to that place of Torment; where not only the Eternity, but the Anguiſh of them, is infinite and unconceivable. And as one Day in the *Joys of Heaven*, is better than a thouſand Years in all the impure and low Delights of Earth: So one Day in the *Torments of Hell*, is far worſe than a thouſand in the ſharpeſt Miſeries we can indure in this Life. 2.

Here our Pains uſually are but partial, God aims and ſhoots with his Arrow but at ſome one part of us: If he wounds our Spirits, yet this inviſible Shaft (like *Lightning*) paſſeth thorow without making a Breach in our Bodies or Eſtates; we have ſtill our Health and Plenty left us. Or if he ſtrike the Body, uſually it is but in one, or at moſt but in ſome few Places, and we enjoy eaſe in the reſt: But in *Hell*, God doth as it were wrap the whole Man up in Searcloth, and ſet it on fire round about them, ſo that they are tormented in every part, neither *Soul* nor *Body* eſcaping, nor any Power or Faculty of the one, nor any Part or Member of the other.

When we fall into the Hands of God, we are plunged into an Ocean of Wrath, and are covered all over with his Indignation; the Underſtanding, Will, Conſcience, Affections, are all as full of Torments as they can hold: For what can be greater Anguiſh to the Mind than to know our Miſery, and to know it to be remedileſs? And what can be greater Anguiſh to the Will and Affections, than moſt ardently and vehemently to deſire freedom from thoſe *Torments*, but yet to deſpair of ever obtaining it? And what can fill the Conſcience with greater Anguiſh, than to reflect with infinite Horrour and Regret, that it was the Sinners own Folly and Madneſs that brought them to this miſerable Condition? How will they be ready to rend and tear themſelves in pieces, their Conſciences curſe their Wills, and their Wills curſe their Affections, and their Affections the Objects that enticed them to the commiſſion of thoſe Sins, the Revenges of which they muſt now eternally ſuffer? And as for the *Bodies* of theſe Damned Souls, they ſhall after the *Reſurrection* and dreadful *Day of Judgment*, become all Fire, like a live Coal; Fire ſhall be imbibed into the very Subſtance of them, and they not have ſo much *as a drop of Water afforded them to cool the tip of their Tongues.* Every Limb ſhall drop whole flakes of *Fire and Brimſtone*, and they ſhall be ſo ſcourged with knotted and twiſted Serpents, as to be made all over one great fiery Wound and Ulcer. And this is a third Conſideration of the dreadfulneſs of everlaſting Vengeance; *it is a falling into God's Hands.* Luke. 16.

Fourthly, Conſider, it is *a falling into the Hands of the Living God himſelf*, and not of any Creature. Indeed we read, *David* choſe rather *to fall into the Hands of the Lord, than into the Hands of Men.* It is true, when there is Repentance, and 4. 2 Sam. 24. 14.

and hopes of obtaining Mercy, this is far more eligible: For the Chaſtiſements of the Lord are full of Mercy; but the tender Mercies of the wicked are cruel. But where all hopes of Mercy are excluded, as they are in Hell, certainly there it is infinitely more dreadful to fall into the Hands of a Sin-revenging-God, than into the Hands of all the Creatures in Heaven, Earth, or Hell it ſelf. One would have thought it had been terrible enough, if the Apoſtle had ſaid, It is a fearful thing to fall into the Hands of *Devils*; and ſo indeed it were, if we conſider either their Power, or their Malice: They can eaſily find out ſuch tormenting Ingredients, and apply them to ſuch tender Parts, that it would tranſcend the Patience of any Man, quietly to bear but what one *Devil* can inflict. Do we not often ſee in the Illuſions of black and ſooty *Melancholy*, what ſtrange Fears and Terrors they can imprint upon the Fancy, what Horror and Deſpair they can work in the Conſcience, ſo as to make Men weary of their Lives, and many times perſwade them to deſtroy themſelves, only to know the worſt of what they muſt ſuffer? And all this he can do out of his own Kingdom; what then can he do when he hath got Sinners into his own Dominions? What exact Tortures can he inflict upon them there? Such indeed as we cannot tell what they are, and may it pleaſe God we never may.

And yet the *Devil* is but a Fellow-creature; but wicked Men are to fall into the Hands, not of a Creature, but of the great Creator, into the Hands of God himſelf, whoſe Power is infinitely beyond the Devil's, ſo that he is the Tormentor even of them.

Think then with thy ſelf, O *Sinner*, that if God ſcourges and torments the very Devils, who yet do ſo inſufferably torment the damned; how infinitely intolerable then is that Wrath which God himſelf ſhall inflict upon them? Conſider with thy ſelf, if thou canſt not bear thoſe Pains and Torments which the *Devils* inflict, and if the *Devils* cannot bear thoſe Pains and Torments which God inflicts upon them; how wilt thou then, O Sinner, be able to bear the immediate Wrath and Vengeance of the great God himſelf?

Nay, let me go yet much lower; and ſuppoſe that God ſhould make uſe of common and ordinary Creatures for the puniſhment of wicked Men who is there that could bear this? If God ſhould only keep a Man living for ever in the midſt of a Furnace of groſs and earthly Fire, how dreadful would this be! If but a Spark of Fire fall upon any part of the Body, what an acute Pain will it cauſe? Much more if thy whole Man ſhould be all over on a light Flame, and thou for ever kept alive to feel the piercing Torment of it: And yet what is our dull unactive Fire in compariſon of that pure intelligent Fire, which ſhall melt down the Damned like Wax, and lick up the very Spirits of their Souls? Or ſuppoſe God who knows the ſeveral Stings that are in all his Creatures, ſhould take out of them the moſt ſharp Ingredients, and from them all make up a tormenting Compoſition; if he ſhould take Poyſon and Venom out of one, and Fire and Scorching out of another, and Smart and Stinging out of a third, and the Quinteſſence of Bitterneſs out of a fourth; and by his infinite Skill, heighten all theſe to a preternatural Acrimony; and ſhould apply this Compoſition thus fatally mixed and blended together, unto any of us, what an intolerable Anguiſh would it cauſe? And if Creatures can cauſe ſuch Tortures, what a dreadful thing then is it to fall into the Hands of God himſelf? For when God conveys his Wrath to us by Creatures, it muſt needs loſe infinitely in the Conveyance. When God takes up one Creature to ſtrike another, it is as if a *Giant* ſhould take up a *Straw* to ſtrike a Man; for though he be never ſo ſtrong, yet the Blow can be but weak, becauſe of the weakneſs of the Inſtrument; and yet alas how terrible are ſuch weak Blows to us? What will it then be when God ſhall immediately cruſh us by the unrebated ſtrokes of his own Almighty Arm, and expreſs the Power of his Wrath, and the Glory of his Juſtice and Severity in our eternal Deſtruction? And this is the *fourth Demonſtration* of the dreadfulneſs of Divine Vengeance.

5. *Fifthly*, Conſider that the Apoſtle calls this Wrath, which the living God will inflict upon Sinners, by the Name of *Vengeance*. *Vengeance is mine, I will recompence it.* Now *Vengeance* when it is whet and ſharpned by Wrath, will enter deep, and cut the Soul to the Quick. God acts a Twofold part in the puniſhment of Sinners.

1. *First*, Of a *Judge*. In relation to which their Eternal Torments are ſometimes called Condemnation; ſo we read of *the Condemnation of the Devil*; that

1 Tim. 3. 6.

is,

is, that State of Woe and and Wrath, to which the *Devil* is for ever ſentenced. And Damnation, *How can you eſcape the Damnation of Hell?* And ſometimes it is termed Judgment, *A certain fearful looking for of Judgment and Fiery Indignation.* And in *Jude* 15. *to execute Judgment upon all the Ungodly.* Which denotes that their Puniſhment ſhall be inflicted upon them from God, as he is a Juſt and Righteous Judge. Heb. 10. 27. Jude 15.

And *Secondly*, God is an *Avenger* as well as a *Judge*. He is a Party concerned, as having been wronged and injured by their Sins. And in relation to this, the Puniſhments that God will inflict upon them, are called Wrath and Fury, ſmoaking Anger and Jealouſie: *The Anger of the Lord and his Jealouſie ſhall ſmoak againſt that Man.* Alſo, Fiery Indignation, all which we find amaſs'd and heaped together, *My Determination* (ſaith God) *is to gather the Nations, to pour upon them mine Indignation, even all my fierce Anger; for all the Earth ſhall be devoured with the Fire of my Jealouſie.* Now all theſe Expreſſions ſignifie the terribleneſs of that *Vengeance* which God will take. For when the Wrath of Man only ſtirs him up to revenge an Injury, he will be ſure to do it to the utmoſt extremity of all his Power. And if the *Revenge* of a poor weak Man be ſo dreadful a thing, how inſupportable will be the *Vengeance* of the great God, who aſſumes it to himſelf as part of his Royalty? *Vengeance is mine.* See that terrible place, *God is jealous, and the Lord revengeth: the Lord revengeth, and is furious; the Lord will take Vengeance on his Adverſaries, and he reſerveth Wrath for his Enemies.* God reſerveth Wrath for Sinners, and keeps it in ſtore, even that Wrath which themſelves have treaſured up againſt the Day of Wrath. 2. Deut. 29. 20. Heb. 10. 27. Zeph. 3. 8. Nah. 1. 2.

Now this *Revenging-Wrath* of God hath Two things in it that juſtly make it dreadful.

First, In that *Revenge* always aims at Satisfaction, and ſeeks to repair Injuries received, by inflicting Puniſhment on the Offender. This gives eaſe to the Party grieved; and if this *Revenge* be commenſurate to the greatneſs of the Offence, he reſts ſatisfied in it. And therefore, God ſpeaking of himſelf according to the Paſſions and Affections of Men, ſolaces himſelf in the thoughts of that *Vengeance* he would take upon Sinners, *Ah! I will eaſe me of mine Adverſaries, I will avenge me of mine Enemies.* And O how dreadful that *Revenge* muſt be, that ſhall eaſe the Heart of God, and give him ſatisfaction for the heinous Provocations that Sinners have committed againſt him! For conſider, 1. Iſa. 1. 24.

First, How great and manifold our Offences have been; and every Act of Sin, yea, the leaſt that ever we committed, is an infinite Debt, and carries in it an infinite Guilt, becauſe committed againſt an infinite Majeſty. For all Offences take their Meaſures, not only from the Matter of the Act, but from the Perſon againſt whom they are committed: As a reviling injurious Word againſt our *Equals*, will but bear an Action at Law; but againſt the *Prince*, it is High-Treaſon, and puniſhable with Death. So here, the leaſt Offence againſt the infinite Majeſty of God, becomes it ſelf infinite: The Guilt of it is far beyond whatſoever we can poſſibly conceive; and yet what infinite Numbers of theſe infinite Sins have we committed? The *Pſalmiſt* tell us, *They are more than the Hairs of our Head.* Yea, we may well take in all the Sands of the Sea-ſhore to caſt them up by. Our Thoughts are inceſſantly in Motion; they keep pace with the Moments, and are continually twinkling, and yet, *Every Imagination of the Thoughts of our Hearts is evil.* What Multitudes of them have been groſly wicked and impious; Atheiſtical, Blaſphemous, Unclean, Worldly, and Malicious! and the beſt of them have been very defective, and far ſhort of that Spirituality and Heavenlineſs that ought to give a Tincture unto them. And beſides the Sins of our Thoughts, how deep have our *Tongues* ſet us on the ſcore? We have talk'd our ſelves in debt to the Juſtice of God, and with our own Breath have been blowing up everlaſting and unquenchable Fire. And add to theſe the numberleſs crowd and ſum of our ſinful Actions, wherein we have buſily imployed our ſelves to provoke the Holy and Jealous God to Wrath, and we ſhall find our Sins to be doubly infinite in their own particular Guilt and Demerit. And now, O *Sinner*, when an angry and furious God ſhall come to exact from thee a full ſatisfaction for all theſe Injuries, a Satisfaction in which he may eternally reſt and acquieſce, ſuch as may repair and recompence his wronged Honour, think ſadly with thy ſelf, how infinitely dreadful this muſt needs be. Aſſure thy ſelf God will not loſe by thee, but will fetch his Glory out of thee, and 1. Pſal. 40. 12.

take

take ſuch a *Revenge* upon thee as ſhall as much pleaſe and content him, as his infinite Mercy doth in thoſe whom he ſaves. And how great then muſt this *Vengeance* be?

2. *Secondly*, Conſider how dreadful a Revenge God took on his own dear Son, our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, when he came to ſatisfie his Juſtice upon him for our Sins. His Wrath fell infinitely heavy upon him, and the preſſure of it was ſo intolerable, that it ſqueezed out drops of clotted Blood from him in the *Garden*, and that ſad Cry on the Croſs, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* And yet,

1. *Firſt*, Our Lord Chriſt was ſupported under all his Sufferings by the ineffable Union of the *Deity*. He had infinite Power for him, as well as againſt him; infinite Power to bear him up, as well as to cruſh him. In Chriſt's Sufferings, the Power of God ſeem'd as it were to encounter with, and run contrary to it ſelf in the ſame Channel. And as he had the ſupport of infinite Power in his Sufferings, ſo likewiſe had he in the greateſt of his Agonies the Miniſtry of *Angels* to comfort him, any to refreſh the Droopings and Faintings of his Humane Nature. And,

2. *Secondly*, The infinite Dignity of Chriſt's Perſon, being God as well as Man, might well compound for the Rigour of his Puniſhments, and ſtamp ſuch a Value upon his Humiliation, that leſs degrees of Suffering from him might be fully ſatisfactory. For indeed it cannot be but an infinite Puniſhment, for an infinite Perſon to be puniſhed. But thou that art but a vile contemptible Creature, made up of Mud and Slime, haſt nothing in thy Nature wherewith to ſatisfie the Juſtice of God, but only the eternal Deſtruction and Perdition of it. Thou haſt no Worth nor Dignity, the conſideration whereof might perſwade the Almighty to mitigate the leaſt of his Wrath towards thee: And when it falls in all its weight and force upon thee, thou haſt nothing to ſupport thee. It is true, the Almighty Power of God ſhall continue thee in thy Being, but thou wilt for ever curſe and blaſpheme that Support, that ſhall be given thee only to perpetuate thy Torments, and ten thouſand times wiſh that God would deſtroy thee once for all, and that thou mighteſt for ever ſhrink away into nothing: But that will not be granted thee; no, thou ſhalt not have ſo much as the comfort of dying, nor eſcape the Vengeance of God by Annihilation; but his Power will for ever ſo ſupport thee, as for ever to torment thee, which is only ſuch a Support as a Man on the *Rack*, or on the *Wheel*, ſupported ſo as they cannot come off, the Engine of their Torture upholds them. And as for any help or relief the Miniſtry of Angels will afford thee, think what ſolace it will bring thee, when God ſhall ſet on whole Legions of *infernal Ghoſts*, black and hideous Spirits, as the Executioners of his Wrath, who ſhall for ever triumph in thy Woes, and add to them, hurl Firebrands at thee, heap Fewel about thee, and fully ſatiate their Malice upon thee, as God ſatisfies his Juſtice. And this is one *Conſideration* of the dreadfulneſs of this Vengeance, in that it aims at and exacts ſatisfaction for Sin, which will be infinitely intolerable, becauſe our Sins are infinite both in Number and Heinouſneſs. And becauſe Jeſus Chriſt, who was to ſatisfie not for his own, but for the Sins of others, though he were upheld by the *Divine Nature*, and poſſibly underwent not ſuch Acrimony of Wrath as the Damned do; yet his Sufferings were unſpeakable and unknown Sorrows: And how much ſorer then ſhall wicked Men bear for their own Sins, when Juſtice ſhall come to reckon with them, and to exact from them to the very utmoſt Farthing, of all that they owe?

2. *Secondly*, Conſider that *Revenging Wrath* ſtirs up all that is in God againſt a Sinner. *Wrath* when it is whet and ſet on by *Revenge*, redoubles a Man's Force, and makes him perform Things that he could not do in his cold Blood; it fires all a Man's Spirits, and calls them forth to expreſs their utmoſt Efforts. So this *Revenging Wrath* of God draws forth all the Force and Activity of his Attributes, and ſets them againſt a Sinner; and how dreadful then muſt that Execution needs be? We ſee what great Works God can perform when he is not ſtirred up thereunto by his Wrath and Indignation. He ſpeaks a whole World into Being, and ſpeaks it with a cold and calm Breath. Certainly it was no ſmall piece of work, to ſpread out the Heavens, and lay the Foundations of the Earth, and to work all thoſe Wonders of *Creation* and *Providence* which we daily behold; but yet all theſe Things God did, (if I may ſo ſpeak) without any Emotion. But when he comes to take *Vengeance* upon Sinners, he is then inflamed, all that is in God

God, is as it were on fire. *Jealouſie*, ſays *Solomon*, *is the Rage of a Man.* Now when God's Jealouſie ſhall be ſtirred in him, think how impetuouſly it will break forth in the fearful effects of it. *The Lord ſhall ſtir up Jealouſie like a Man of War; he ſhall cry, yea, roar, he ſhall prevail againſt his Enemies.* If the calm and ſedate Works of God are ſo great and wonderful, how great then will his *Vengeance* be, when Anger, Fury, and Indignation ſhall excite and whet his Power to ſhew the very utmoſt of what it can do? And therefore we find that though God had inflicted dreadful Plagues upon the *Iſraelites* in the Wilderneſs, and had ſhewn mighty effects of his Power and Vengeance, yet we find the *Church* bleſſeth him, *That he turned away his Anger, and did not ſtir up all his Wrath.* But in *Hell* God ſtirs up all his Wrath, every thing is ſet and bent againſt the Damned: And as to the *Saints* in Heaven, every Attribute of God concurrs to make him merciful and gracious to them; So to the Wicked in *Hell*, all the Perfections of God conſpire either to ſtir up and kindle his Wrath, or elſe to aſſiſt him in the execution of it upon them. The infinite *Wiſdom* of God contrives their Puniſhments, and which way to lay them on, ſo that they ſhall be moſt ſharp and poinant. The *Power* of God that rouzes it ſelf againſt them, and proffers all its Succours and Aſſiſtance unto *Vengeance*. The *Eternity* and *Unchangeableneſs* of God come in as a dreadful Addition, and makes that Wrath which of it ſelf is inſupportable, to be alſo everlaſting. Yea, that ſweet and mild Attribute of God, his *Mercy*, the only Refuge and the only Comfort of miſerable Mankind, yet even this turns againſt them too, and becauſe they deſpiſed it when it ſhone forth in Patience and Forbearance, will not now regard them when they ſtand in need of its Reſcue and Deliverance: So that all that is in God, arms it ſelf to take *Vengeance* on Sinners: And O think how ſore and fearful that Vengeance will be, when God ſhall put forth all that is in himſelf for the executing of his Wrath upon impenitent Sinners! And thus I have done with the *Demonſtrations* of the Dreadfulneſs of God's Wrath taken from the Words in the Text, *Vengeance is mine, I will recompence it. 'Tis a fearful thing to fall into the Hands of the Living God.*

Prov. 6: 34. Iſa. 42. 13. Pſal. 78: 38.

Let us now conſider ſome other *Demonſtrations* of the Greatneſs of this Wrath. And,

1.

Firſt, It appears to be exceeding dreadful in that it is ſet forth to us in *Scripture* by all thoſe things which are moſt terrible to Humane Nature. God maketh uſe of many *Metaphorical* Expreſſions of things moſt grievous to our Senſes, that from them we may take an hint to conceive how intolerable his Wrath is in it ſelf. It is called a Priſon, the *Spirits in Priſon*, that is, the Souls of thoſe Men to whom the Spirit of Chriſt in *Noah* went, and preach'd in the Days of their Mortal Life, but for their Diſobedience are ſhut up under the Wrath of God in Hell. And certainly *Hell* is a Priſon large enough to hold all the World. *The Wicked ſhall be turned into Hell, and all the Nations that forget God.* A Priſon it is where the *Devil* and wicked Spirits are ſhackled with Chains of maſſy and ſubſtantial Darkneſs. *They are*, ſays the Apoſtle, *reſerved in Chains of Darkneſs unto the Judgment of the great Day.* And they are there kept in everlaſting Chains under Darkneſs, not one Cranny in this great Priſon to let in the leaſt ray or glimpſe of Light. It is called a *Place of Torment*. It is a Region of Wo and Miſery, wherein Horrour, Deſpair and Torture for ever dwell, and are in their moſt proper Seat and Habitation. It is called, *a drowning of Men in Deſtruction and Perdition.* One would think that to be drowned, might ſignifie Death enough of it ſelf; but to be drowned in Perdition and Deſtruction, ſignifies moreover the fatalneſs and the depth of that Death into which they are plunged. It is called, *a being caſt bound Hand and Foot into utter Darkneſs; A being thrown into a Furance of Fire*, to be burnt alive. It is called, *a Lake of Fire*, into which wicked Men ſhall be plunged all over, where they ſhall lye wallowing and rowling among Millions of damned Spirits, in thoſe infernal Flames. And this Lake is continually fed with a ſulphurous ſtream of Brimſtone: And this Fire and Brimſtone is that which never ſhall be quenched. *He will burn up the Chaff with unquenchable Fire.* And *laſtly*, to name no more, it is called everlaſting *Fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels.* And now we are arrived at the higheſt pitch of what Senſe can feel, or Imagination conceive. Or if it be poſſible that in your deepeſt Thoughts you can conceive any thing more dreadful than this, you may call it a *Sea of molten Brimſtone*, ſet all on fire, and continually ſpewing out ſooty dark Flames, wherein endleſs Multitudes of ſinful

1 Pet. 3. 19. Pſal. 9. 17. 2 Pet. 2. 4. Luke 16. 28. 1 Tim. 6 9. Mat. 22. 13. Mat. 13. 42, 50. Rev. 20. 15. Rev. 19. 20. Mat. 3. 12. Mat. 25. 41.

Wretches must lye tumbling to all Eternity, burnt up with the fierceness of a tormenting and devouring Fire, scourged with Scorpions, stung with fiery Serpents, howling and roaring incessantly, and none to pity, much less to relieve and help them, grinding and gnashing their Teeth through the extremity of their Anguish and Torture. If now you can fancy any thing more terrible and dreadful than this, *Hell* is that, yea, and much more: For these things are *Metaphorical*; and though I cannot deny but some of these may be properly and literally true, yet the literal Sense of these *Metaphors* do but faintly and weakly shew us what the least part of those everlasting Torments are.

2. *Secondly*, Another *Demonstration* of the dreadfulness of this Vengeance is this, That it is a Wrath that shall come up unto, and equal all our Fears. You know what an inventive and ingenious thing Fear is, what horrid Shapes it can fancy to it self out of every thing: Put but an active Fancy into an Affright, and presently the whole World will be filled with strange Monsters and hideous Apparitions. The very shaking of a Leaf will sometimes rout all the Forces and Resolutions of Men: And usually it is this wild Passion that doth enhance all other Dangers, and make them seem greater and more dreadful than indeed they are. But now here it is impossible for a wicked Man to fear more than he shall certainly suffer. Let his Imaginations be hung round with all the dismal Shapes that ever frighted Men out of their Wits: Let his Fancy dip its Pencil in the deepest Melancholy that ever any Soul was besmeared with, and then strive to pourtray and express the most terrible things that it can judge to be the *Objects* of Fear, or the Instruments of *Torment*; yet the Wrath of the great God vastly exceeds all that Fear it self can possibly represent. See that strange Expression, Psal. 90. 11. *Who knows the Power of thine Anger? According to thy Fear, so is thy Wrath.* That is, according to the fear Men have of thee, as dreadful and as terrible as they can possibly apprehend thy *Wrath* to be, so it is, and much more. Let the Heart of Man stretch it self to the utmost Bounds of Imagination, and call in to its Aid all the things that ever it hath heard or seen to be dreadful; let it (as that Painter, who to make a beautiful Piece, borrowed several of the best Features from several beautiful Persons) borrow all the dreadful, all the direful Representations that ever it met with, to make up one most terrible *Idea*; yet the Wrath of God shall still exceed it: He can execute more Wrath upon us than we can fear. Some wicked Men in this Life have had a Spark of this Wrath of God fall upon their Consciences, when they lye roaring out under Despair and fearful Expectations of the fiery Indignations of God to consume and devour them. But alas this is nothing to what they shall hereafter feel. God now doth but open to them a small chink and crevice into *Hell*, he now doth but suffer a few small drops of his Wrath to fall upon them. And if this be so sore and smart that their Fears could never think of any thing more dreadful than what they now suffer; O what will it be then when he shall overwhelm them with a whole Deluge of his Wrath, and cause all his Waves to go over them? Mat. 10. 28. *Fear him*, says our Saviour, *who is able to destroy both Soul and Body in Hell; yea I say unto you, fear him.* And yet when we have feared according to the utmost extent of our narrow Hearts, yet still his infinite Power and Wrath is infinitely more fearful than we can fear it.

3. *Thirdly*, Consider the principal and immediate Subject of this Wrath of God and that is the *Soul*, and this adds much to the dreadfulness of it. The acutest Torments that the *Body* is capable of, are but dull and flat things in comparison of what the *Soul* can feel. Now when God shall immediately with his own Hand lash the Soul, that refined and spiritual Part of Man, the Principle of all Life and Sensation, and shall draw Blood from it every Stripe, how intolerable may we conceive those Pains and Tortures to be? To shoot poyson'd Darts into a Man's Marrow, to rip up his Bowels with a Sword red hot; all this is as nothing to it. Think what it is to have a drop of scalding Oil, or melted Lead, fall upon the Apple of your Eyes, that should make them boyl and burn till they fall out of your Heads; such Torment, nay, infinitely more than such, is it to have the burning Wrath of God to fall upon the Soul. We find that Spirits which are infinitely inferiour unto God, can make strange Impressions upon the Souls of Men: And shall not the great God much more, who is the Father of Spirits? Yes, he can torture them by his essential Wrath. And that God, who, as the Prophet Nah. 1. 6. *Nahum* speaks, *can melt Mountains, and make Hills and Rocks flow down at his Presence,*

Preſence, can melt the Souls of the Damned, like lumps of Wax; for in his Diſpleaſure he doth ſometimes do it to the beſt of Men, even in this Life; *My Heart is melted like Wax in the midſt of my Bowels*, ſays *David*. Pſal. 22. 14.

Fourthly, The Dreadfulneſs of this Wrath of God may be demonſtrated by this, That the Puniſhment of the Damned is reſerved by God as his laſt Work. It is a Work which he will ſet himſelf about when all the reſt of his Works are done; when he hath folded up the World, and laid it aſide as a Thing of no further uſe, then will God ſet himſelf to this great Work, and pour out all the Treaſures of his Wrath upon damned Wretches; as if God would ſo wholly mind this Buſineſs that he would lay all other Affairs aſide, that he might be intent only upon this, having no other thing to interrupt him. Think then how full of Dread and Terror this muſt needs be, when God will as it were employ all his *Eternity* about this, and have no other thing to take him off from doing it with all his Might. God hath reſerved two Works, and but two for the other World; one is the *Salvation of the Elect*, and the other is the *Damnation of Reprobates*.

Now it is remarkable that God's laſt VVorks do always exceed his former: And therefore we find in the *Creation* of the VVorld, God ſtill proceeded on from more imperfect kind of Creatures to thoſe that were more perfect, until he had fully built and finiſhed, yea, carved, and as it were painted this great Houſe of the Univerſe; and then he brings Man into it as his laſt VVork, as the Crown and Perfection of the reſt: So God likewiſe acted in the manner of *revealing his Will* unto Mankind; firſt he ſpoke to them by *Dreams* and *Viſions*, but in the laſt Days, (as the *Apoſtle* expreſſeth it) *he hath ſpoken unto us by his Son*. So alſo in the Diſpenſation of the Covenant of Grace, and Exhibition of the *Meſſiah*; firſt he was made known only by *Promiſe* to the Fathers, then in *Types* and obſcure Reſemblances to the *Jews*, but in the latter Days, himſelf came and took upon him the form of a Servant, and wrought out a compleat *Redemption* for us. So uſually the laſt Works of God are more compleat, perfect and excellent than the former. Now God's Puniſhing VVork is his laſt VVork, and therefore it ſhall exceed in Greatneſs all that ever went before it. In his firſt Work, the Creation of the VVorld, he demonſtrated his infinite Power, VViſdom, and Godhead; but in the Deſtruction of Sinners, which is his laſt Work, he will manifeſt more of Power and VViſdom, than he did in his creating them; and how fearful a Deſtruction then muſt this needs be? God hath variety of VVorks that he is carrying on in this VVorld, and if his Glory doth not perfectly appear in one, he may manifeſt it in another. But when he ſhall confine himſelf only to two, as he will in the VVorld to come, the ſaving of the Godly, and the damning of the VVicked, and this without any variety or change, certainly then theſe ſhall be performed to the very utmoſt of what God can do: For as he will ſave the Saints to the very utmoſt, ſo likewiſe will he damn and deſtroy Sinners to the very utmoſt. 5.

Fifthly, Another Demonſtration of the Dreadfulneſs of this VVrath ſhall be drawn from this Conſideration, That God will for ever inflict it for the glorifying of his Power on the Damned. *What if God willing to ſhew his Wrath, and make his Power known?* And *they ſhall be puniſh'd with everlaſting Deſtruction from the Preſence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power.* Now certainly, if God will inflict eternal Puniſhments upon them to ſhew forth his Power, their Puniſhments muſt needs be infinitely great. For, Rom. 9. 22. 2 Theſ. 1. 9.

Firſt, All thoſe VVorks wherein God ſhews forth his Power, are great and ſtupendous. Conſider what Power it was for God to lay the Beams of the VVorld, and to erect ſo ſtately a Fabrick as Heaven and Earth. The Apoſtle therefore tells us, That *by the Creation of the World, is underſtood the eternal Power of God.* When God ſhewed his Power in creating, O what a great and ſtupendous Work did he produce! And therefore certainly when God ſhall likewiſe ſhew his Power in deſtroying, the Puniſhments he will inflict will be wonderful and ſtupendous. 1.

Secondly, Conſider God can eaſily deſtroy a Creature without ſhewing any great Power, or putting forth his Almighty Arm and Strength to do it. If he only withdraw his Power by which he upholds all things in their Beings, we ſhould quickly fall all abroad into nothing: So eaſie is it for God to deſtroy the well-being of all his Creatures. But now if God will expreſs the greatneſs and infiniteneſs of his Power in deſtroying Sinners, whom yet he can deſtroy without putting forth his Power, yea, only by withdrawing and withholding it; O how 2.

how fearful muſt this Deſtruction needs be! Alas, we are cruſht before the Moth, and muſt need periſh, if God doth but ſuſpend the Influence of his Power from us. How dreadfully then will he deſtroy, when he ſhall lay forth his infinite Power to do it, who can eaſily do it without Power?

And thus I have laid down ſome *Demonſtrations* of the dreadfulneſs of the Wrath and Vengeance of God, five of them drawn from the Words of the *Text*, and five drawn from other Conſiderations. I ſhall now ſhut up with two or three Words of Application.

Uſe I. *Firſt*, Then be perſwaded to believe that there is ſuch a dreadful Wrath to come. I know well, you all profeſs that you do believe, that as there are unconceivable Rewards of Glory reſerved in *Heaven* for the Saints; ſo, that there are inexhauſtible Treaſures of Wrath reſerved and laid up in *Hell* for all ungodly and impenitent Sinners. But O how few are there that do really and cordially believe theſe things! Mens own Lives may be evident Convictions to themſelves of their Atheiſm and Infidelity: For the true reaſon of all that diſſoluteneſs which we ſee abroad in the VVorld proceeds much from hence, becauſe Men are not perſwaded that theſe dreadful Terrors of the Lord which have now been ſet before us, are any thing but an honeſt Artifice. They look upon them as things only invented to ſcare the VVorld into good order, and to awe Men into ſome compaſs of Civility and Honeſty: They think all thoſe tremendous Threatnings that God hath denounced in his Law to be things intended rather to fright Men, than to do execution upon them. And whereas one of the moſt effectual Motives to Piey and an holy Life, is to be perſwaded of the Terrors of the Lord, theſe are not yet perſwaded that there are any ſuch Terrors: But aſſure your ſelf theſe are not the extravagant Dreams of *Melancholy Fancies*, nor the Politick Impoſtures of Men that deſign to amuſe the VVorld with frightful Stories; but they are ſad and ſerious Truths, ſuch as however you may now ſlight and contemn, yet ſhall you be wofully convinced of by your own experience, when after a few years, or poſſibly a few days, you ſhall be ſunk down into that Place of Torment, that Gulph and Abyſs of Miſery, where the great God ſhall for ever expreſs the Art, and the Power of his Vengeance in your everlaſting Deſtruction.

Uſe II. *Secondly*, This ſpeaks abundance of comfort to all thoſe whoſe Sins are pardon'd, and they delivered from the VVrath to come. Look what Spring-tydes of Joy would riſe in the Heart of a poor condemned *Malefactor*, who every moment expects the ſtroke of Juſtice to cut him off, to have a Pardon interpoſe and reſcue him from Death. Such, yea, far greater ſhould be thy Joy who art freed meerly by a gracious Pardon, from a Condemnation infinitely greater and worſe than Death it ſelf. VVhen we look into *Hell*, and conſider the VVrath that the Damned there lye under, O to behold them there reſtleſly rolling to and fro in Chains and Flames, to hear them exclaim againſt their own Folly and Madneſs, and to curſe Themſelves and their Aſſociates as the Cauſes of their heavy and doleful Torments; how ſhould we rejoice that though we have been guilty of many great and heinous Sins, and have Ten thouſand times deſerved *Hell* and everlaſting Burnings, yet our good and gracious God hath freely pardon'd us our Debts, and freed us from the ſame merited Puniſhments?

Uſe III. *Thirdly*, This alſo ſhould excite us to magnifie the Love of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt towards us, who though he knew what the dreadful VVrath of God was, how ſore and heavy it would lye upon his Soul, yet ſuch was his infinite Compaſſion towards us, that he willingly ſubmitted himſelf to be in our ſtead, took upon him our Nature, that he migh take upon him our Guilt; and firſt made himſelf wretched, that he might be made accurſed. He drank off the whole bitter Cup of his Father's VVrath at one bitter Draught, received the whole ſting of Death into his Body at once; falls and dies under the Revenges of Divine Juſtice, only that we might be delivered from the VVrath that we had deſerved, but could not bear. O Chriſtian, let thy Heart be enlarged with great Love and thankfulneſs to thy bleſſed Redeemer; and as he thought nothing too much to ſuffer for thee, return him this Expreſſion of thy Thankfulneſs, to think nothing too much, nor too hard to do, or to ſuffer for him.

Uſe. IV. *Fourthly*, You that go on in Sin, conſider what a God you have to deal withal; You have not to do with Creatures, but with God himſelf. And do you not fear that increated Fire that will wrap you up in Flames of his eſſential VVrath, and burn

burn you for ever? Conſider that dreadful Expoſtulation that God makes, *Can thy Heart indure, or can thy Hands be ſtrong in the Day that I ſhall deal with thee, ſaith the Lord?* The very weakneſs of God is ſtronger than Man: God can breathe, he can look a Man to Death; *By the Blaſt of God they periſh, and by the Breath of his Noſtrils are they conſumed: They periſh at the Rebuke of thy Countenance.* O then tremble to think what a load of Wrath his heavy Hand can lay upon thee; *That Hand which ſpans the Heavens, and in the Hollow of which he holds the Sea.* What Puniſhment will this great Hand of God in which his great Strength lyes inflict, when it ſhall fall upon thee in the full Power of its Might? And tell me now, *O Sinner*, wouldſt thou willingly fall into the Hands of this God, who is thus able to cruſh thee to pieces, yea, to nothing? O how ſhall any of us then dare, who are but poor weak Potſherds of the Earth, daſh our ſelves againſt this Rock of Ages? Indeed we can neither reſiſt his Power, nor eſcape his Hand: And therefore ſince we muſt neceſſarily ſooner or later fall into the Hands of God, let us by true Repentance and an humble Acknowledgment of our Sins and Vileneſs, throw our ſelves into his merciful Hands; and then to our unſpeakable Comfort we ſhall find that he will extend his Arm of Mercy to ſupport us, and not his Hand of Juſtice to cruſh and break us.

Ezek. 22. 14. Job 4. 9. Pſal. 80. 16. Iſa. 10. 27.

ON

Man's Mortality.

SERMON VI.

HEB. ix. 27.

It is appointed unto Men once to die; and after this the Judgment.

An Introduction.

A Sermon of *Death* hath then a double Advantage to make deep Impreſſions upon us, when it is attended with a Spectacle of *Mortality*: Were there but the ſad Pomp of a *Funeral* now preſented before you, a dead Corps brought to be interred, a Grave digged through into the Earth, dry and rotten Bones lying ſcattered about the Mouth of it in fearful confuſion, a ſolemn Train of Mourners tolled along the Streets by the doleful Moan of a Bell? Did you ſee the Dead laid down in the Duſt, the Place of Darkneſs and Silence, their Friends groaning out their laſt Farewel, Clods of Earth falling in upon them, and ſtriking a horrid murmur upon their Coffins? Had your Affections but ſuch a Preparatory as this is, poſſibly this might more eaſily work and move upon them; for it muſt needs make Men ſerious and penſive to think, this is but the Patern of what muſt befal themſelves, and that all this muſt ſhortly be acted upon them, that they now ſee done unto others: But ſince this Day preſents us with no ſuch *Solemnity*, ſome perhaps may wonder that I have choſen this *Text* and *Subject* of *Mortality* to treat upon. Indeed Cuſtom hath made it almoſt improper to preach of *Death* without a *Funeral*, and to ſpeak to Men of their laſt End and Diſſolution, without ſetting before their Eyes an Example of it: Look well therefore one upon another; what are we all as it were, but ſo many Corps, ſo many Spectacles of *Mortality*, rather to be numbred among the Dead than among the Living? Every Day and Hour wears away part of our Lives; and ſo much of them as is already ſpent, ſo far are we already dead and buried. This preſent moment is the longeſt meaſure of our Lives; what is paſt is dead to us, and what is to come is not yet born; how ſoon God may put a final Period to our preſent ſtate,

how few times more our Pulſes may beat, and this buſie Breath in our Noſtrils return to us again, we know not; ſo frail and ſo uncertain are our Lives, that this may be truly a Funeral Sermon to ſome one of us before the cloſe of it. Since then we are all of us thus ſubject to the ſtroke of *Death*, it can never be unſeaſonable to warn you, that you be not ſurprized, and taken by it unprovided.

In the Words now read, you have the great Statute-Law of Heaven; that Law that God hath paſſed upon all the Children of Men; and that is, *That it is appointed to them once to die.*

Now, that I may make way to preſs upon you the ſerious conſideration of your own *Mortality*, let me briefly mark out ſome things that tend to the Explication of the Words. And,

Firſt, In that the Propoſition is laid down in the *Text* indefinitely, *It is appointed unto men*; it is that which is equivalent to an Univerſal, and reacheth to all men: *It is appointed to all men once to die.* We read of two only in the whole Book of God that were exempted by an extraordinary Grace, and peculiar Privilege from this great Law of Dying, and they were *Enoch* and *Elias*. Of *Enoch* it is ſaid, *That he walked with God, and he was not; for God took him.* And of *Elias* it is ſaid, *That he went up by a whirlwind into Heaven.* The great God, after a ſtrange and unuſual manner tackt their temporal and eternal Life together, making their Time run it ſelf into Eternity without any period or interruption. The *Apoſtle* alſo tells us, That *all ſhall not die*; to wit, at the laſt Day, at the laſt appearing of Jeſus Chriſt, there ſhall be a World full of Perſons that ſhall not taſte of *Death*. *All ſhall not die; but all ſhall be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an Eye.* Theſe are exempted, and being excepted, it is certain all the Generations of Men, from the firſt Creation, to the laſt Conſummation of all things, are *all appointed* by God unto *Death*.

Gen. 5. 24.
2 King. 2. 11.
1 Cor. 15. 51, 52.

All muſt die once; but Believers do not die the ſecond Death.

Secondly, All muſt die once. There is frequent mention made in *Scripture* of the *firſt* and *ſecond Death*. The *firſt Death* is the ſeparation of the Soul from the Body: The *ſecond Death* is the ſeparation of the Soul from God. As the Union of the Soul and Body is the Life of Man; ſo the Union of God with the Soul is the Life of the Soul. Now Believers do not die the *ſecond Death*, *for on ſuch*, as the *Apoſtle* ſpeaks, *the ſecond Death hath no power:* They are ſtill united unto God after an unconceivable and ineffable manner. As when Chriſt lay in the Grave, though his Soul was truly ſeparated from his Body, yet both Soul and Body were hypoſtatically united to the Godhead; ſo alſo, though the natural Union between a Believer's Soul and Body, be diſſolved by *Death*, yet both Soul and Body continue myſtically united unto Chriſt, even in their ſeparation one from another. It is not therefore the *ſecond*, but the *firſt Death* that all are appointed unto. The Hand of *Death* muſt untie thoſe ſecret and ſweet Bands; thoſe vital Knots that faſten Soul and Body together muſt fall aſunder one day in every Man.

Rev. 20. 8.

All Men muſt die, becauſe Death is the puniſhment of Sin.

Thirdly, It is appointed unto every Man to undergo this firſt Death. It is decreed and ordained by God, and that not upon the Account of any natural Neceſſity; but for the Puniſhment of Sin. The *Apoſtle* tells us plainly, That *by Sin Death entred into the World. Death* therefore is not ſo much a Debt due to Nature, as a Debt due to the avenging Juſtice of God; for though Man at firſt was created in pure Nature, yet was he alſo created in a deathleſs State; and *Death* ſeizeth upon us, not as we are Men, but as we are Sinners, liable to the Curſe of the Covenant of Works, containing in it that Threatning, *In the day that thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die.* It is true, *Adam*, even before he ſinned, had in him the contemperation of the ſame contrary Qualities that we now have; and ſo, at leaſt, had alſo the remote Principles of *Death*; but yet it is probable that he was created with ſuch a Privilege, that he might by his own Will ſway and over-rule the Jarrs and Diſcords of his elementary conſtitution, and continue himſelf in Life as long as he ſhould continue himſelf in Obedience; however, whether it was ſo, or otherwiſe, yet certain it is that *Death* came into the World as the puniſhment of Sin: So then it is not primarily Man's Nature, but Man's Sin, and the Curſe of the Law taking hold of him, that brought in this neceſſity of dying. Sin is not only the Sting, but the Cauſe of *Death*; and it gives it not only its Terrour, but its very Being alſo. And therefore it is ſomewhat remarkable, that among all the Creatures in the World, Man only is termed *Mortal*; moſt certain it is

that other Creatures decay and periſh as well as he; yet among all periſhing things, Man only hath that wretched denomination of being *Mortal*; and there is good reaſon for it, ſince he alone, of all periſhing things, being created *Immortal*, voluntarily ſubjected himſelf unto *Death*, and by his own Fault brought upon himſelf that Name of *Mortal*, as a Brand of perpetual Infamy.

And thus now I come to the Subject that I intend to inſiſt upon, and that is, The Unavoidableneſs and Certainty of *Death*.

To go about to prove this, were to loſe ſo much time; every one grants he muſt die. All other *Queſtions* about Man, are anſwered by *Peradventures:* If it be demanded, Whether ſuch an *Embrio* ſhall ſee the Light? What's the *Anſwer*, but, perhaps it ſhall, perhaps it ſhall not. If it be born, and it be asked, Whether it ſhall live, and grow up to Age? Why, perhaps ſo, perhaps otherwiſe: If it grow up to Age, and Enquiry be made, Shall it be rich, or ſhall it be poor? honourable, or deſpiſed? learned, or ignorant? What's the *Anſwer?* Only, perhaps it ſhall, perhaps not. But if it be asked, Whether it ſhall die? The *Anſwer* now is, Yes; it is certain, without any *Peradventure*; there is no doubt at all of this; *It is appointed by God for Men once to die.* And therefore though *Phyſicians* have written Books of preſerving of Health, yet never any wrote Books of avoiding of *Death*. We need no other proof of Man's *Mortality*, but only to ſearch into the Records of the Grave; there lye Rich and Poor, Strong and Weak, Wiſe and Fooliſh, Holy and Prophane; the Rubbiſh of ten thouſand Generations heaped one upon another, and this Truth that all muſt die, written indelibly in their Duſt.

That therefore that I ſhall do ſhall be in an Applicatory way, to make ſome Reflections upon the brutiſh Stupidity of Men, who, though they know themſelves *Mortal*, yet thruſt from themſelves the Thoughts of *Death*, and neglect due Preparations for it. Men live in the World as if they were arbitrary of their own Time, as if they ſhould never die and come to Judgment. Oh the beaſtly Sottiſhneſs of Men, who though they ſee Multitudes cut down daily by the hand of *Death*, round about them, yet they live careleſly and preſumptuouſly, as if they were privileged Perſons, and *Death* durſt not touch them. Should we make Enquiry into the Cauſes of this groſs Stupidity and Sottiſhneſs, perhaps we ſhould find it to proceed from ſome of theſe following.

Reaſons why Men put off the thoughts of Death, becauſe they are drown'd in the Affairs of the World.

First, *The generality of Men are ſo immers'd and drowned in the Affairs and Pleaſures of Life, that all ſerious thoughts of Death and preparations for it are ſwallowed up and devoured by them:* Their minds are taken up about other things, and their time ſpent upon other matters; like an heap of *Ants* that buſily toil to gather in their Proviſion, not regarding the foot that is ready to tread upon them; ſo is it with moſt men, they are taken up with impertinencies and vain things: One contrives how he may melt away his days in Luxury and Pleaſure, and with variety of invented Delights imp the wings of Time that in their apprehenſions makes but ſlow haſte, that ſo their days and hours may roul away the faſter; theſe are ſuch Prodigals of their time, and laviſh it away at that rate, as if their ſtock would laſt as long as Eternity it ſelf. Some are buſily climbing up the ſteep aſcent of Honour and Dignity, and are ſo taken up in ſeeking after Promotions and new Titles, that they forget their old ſtile of mortal Creatures. Others are plotting with the *Fool* in the *Goſpel*, how they may grow rich, and lay up goods for themſelves for many Years, as they fancy, when yet they know not but God may take away their Souls from them this very night; and what then remains to them of all that they have thus greedily ſcraped together? O vain and fooliſh men, are theſe the things you ſet your hearts upon? Muſt the World drink up all your thoughts, and *Death* that ſhortly will ſnatch you from all your enjoyments here below, be forgotten by you?

Men put off their preparations for Death, becauſe they look upon it as afar off.

Secondly, *Men put off the thoughts of Death and their preparations for it, becauſe they generally look upon it as afar off.* This is the greateſt ſottiſhneſs in the World, and yet moſt men are too guilty of it. Thoſe that are young, and in the prime of their Days; if it be askt them what they think of *Death*, they will readily *Anſwer*, that they think they ought of right and courſe to live till they are aged: And they that are aged will tell you their weakneſſes and decays are not ſo many or ſo great, but they may well weather away a few more Years. Thoſe that are healthful and ſtrong think ſurely they need not prepare for dying

till God by ſome ſickneſs ſends them a Summons, and thoſe whom God is pleaſed to vouchſafe a Summons by Sickneſs and Diſtempers, alas, they think that it is yet poſſible for them to eſcape from them again. And thus all are ready to thruſt Death from them, and to put the evil Day afar off: And though God hath told out to them but a few days or hours, yet they liberally and bountifully reckon upon Years and Ages, as if their time were not in God's hands, but their own. It is a true ſaying, that uſually the hopes of a long Life, is the Cauſe of an evil Life. Suppoſe now that every one of us knew for a certainty that our lives muſt run out with the Glaſs that is before us, that at the end of the hour God would ſtrike us all dead upon the place, ſhould we not all of us have more lively apprehenſions of Death and Eternity than ever yet we have had? Should we not pour out our Souls before God requires them from us, in holy Affections and fervent Prayers? Should we give ſcope to the gadding of our Thoughts, and the vanity of our Hearts? Should we think of ſuch a vain Pleaſure, or ſuch a worldly Employment, if God now from Heaven ſhould ſpeak audibly to us, and bid us give an account of our Stewardſhip, for we muſt be no longer Stewards? No certainly, it is impoſſible that men ſhould thus behave themſelves. And why, Sirs, is it not ſo with you always? For ought you know that Film and Bubble that holds your Lives, may be now a breaking, your Graves may be ready to be digging, and the laſt Sand in your Glaſs may be now a running; however, certain it is, it cannot be long before it will be ſo with all of us: Did we but ſeriouſly conſider by what ſmall pins this frame of Man is tacked together, it would appear to us to be no leſs than a Miracle that we live one day, yea, one hour to an end.

The Thoughts of Death being terrible, makes men put off their preparation for it.

Thirdly, *Men generally put off the thoughts of Death, and their preparation for it, becauſe of thoſe frightful terrours, and that inſupportable dread that ſuch apprehenſions bring with them.* Death is that which above all things Humane Nature moſt abhors: Oh! to think of the ſeparation of thoſe near and dear companions, the Soul and Body, of the debaſement, diſhonour and horrour of the Grave, that there we muſt lye in a Bed of ſtench and rottenneſs, under a coverlet of Worms crawling upon us, conſuming and mouldring away to duſt in oblivion and forgetfulneſs: Oh! theſe are too ſad and Melancholy Thoughts for the Jovial World to entertain and dwell upon: But though the conſideration of theſe things are very unwelcome, yea, very diſmal unto the minds of ſinners, yet is there far worſe behind than all this ſtill, and that which carries in it far greater terrour and amazement, and that is the Sin that deſerves *Death*, and the Hell that follows it: for as the *Apoſtle* ſays, *the ſting of Death is ſin.* And it's no wonder that Men who are conſcious to themſelves of condemning guilt, dare not think of ſtanding before the dreadful Tribunal of God; and Death now is God's Serjeant to Arreſt them, and to bring them thither; they cannot bear the thoughts of Eternal Vengeance and prepared Torments to be for ever inflicted on them by the Almighty Power of an incenſed God, and therefore it is no wonder that they put far from them the thoughts of *Death*, becauſe their Conſciences tell them that that Day whenſoever it comes will be to them an Evil Day.

1 Cor: 15. 56.

Many more *Reaſons* might be given of this brutiſhneſs of men in putting off the thoughts of Death, and preparations for it, but theſe ſhall ſuffice.

Conſiderations to arm men againſt the fears of Death.

The next thing that I ſhall do ſhall be to lay down ſome Conſiderations that may fore-arm Chriſtians againſt the Fears and Terrours of Death, and make them willing to ſubmit unto this law of Dying, unto which God hath ſubjected all men.

The Soul is immortal, and parting with this, it enters into a better Life.

And, Firſt, *If the Soul be immortal, as certainly it is, and that parting from this, it enters upon a better Life than this, we may well then be contented to Die upon that account.* No man, ſays a *Roman* Author, thinks *Death* is much to be avoided, ſince Immortality follows *Death.* I am very ſenſible how hard a task it is to perſwade men to be willing to Die; but yet let me ask you, if you are Believers, (for in this I ſpeak only unto ſuch) what is there in *Death* that is ſo terrible to you? I know it is monſtrous and full of horrour if we conſider nothing but the Corruption of the Fleſh, the ghaſtly paleneſs, the ſtiff, cold and grim viſage, the diſtorted Eyes and trembling Limbs of Dying Perſons; and afterwards think of the ſtench and filthineſs of the Grave, and laſtly the diſſipation of the viſible part of Man: All theſe Conſiderations make *Death* very terrible and full of horrour to us. But now he that ſhall conſider after all this, his ſpiritual and inviſible part, what can

can he ſee in *Death* that is not very deſirable to him? The Body reſts from its labours, and the Soul enjoys its reward in Heaven. If you are hereby taken away from converſing with Men, yet the Soul is elevated to an acquaintance with *Angels*, that is ſtill alive in its own Nature; the Soul lives for ever, being placed above the common Arreſts of *Death*.

We find to this purpoſe after that God had tryed the patience of *Job* by the loſs of all his ſubſtance, and afterwards of all his Children alſo, he reſtores to him double whatever he had taken from him; ſo we read in the Holy Story, *the Lord gave unto* Job *twice as much as he had before.* Now whereas at firſt *Job* had three thouſand Camels, God reſtores to him ſix thouſand; whereas before he had ſeven thouſand Sheep, God reſtores to him fourteen thouſand; and ſo of all the reſt double the number of what he loſt: But when God comes to recompence to him the loſs of his Children, which doubtleſs were of far greater value than all the reſt; whereas he had ſeven Sons and three Daughters, God reſtores to him the ſame number again, not double in theſe as he did in all the reſt: And wherefore did God double his Camels, his Sheep, and his Oxen, and not his Children? Why, the *Reaſon* was, becauſe his Children were not ſo dead as were his Camels, and the reſt of his brute Creatures, their Souls remain'd Immortal and Entire ſtill after *Death*: So that God in giving *Job* ſeven Sons and three Daughters did double them nothwithſtanding, though he gave him no more than he had at firſt. So here though we Die, yet *Death* doth us no injury; our better part ſurvives; and if we are Believers, it ſurvives in ſuch unconceivable Joy, as that all the pleaſures of the World are but Miſery and Wretchedneſs compared to them. Job 42. 10.

Secondly, *The whole Life of a Chriſtian is founded upon a Hope that cannot be accompliſhed but by dying.* And if ſo, that Man's Miſtake muſt needs be inexcuſable, who abhorrs that which alone can bring him to the poſſeſſion of his Hopes and Deſires. Chriſtians, what is it that you hope for? Is it not to arrive at Glory, with an *innumerable Hoſt of Angels, and the Spirits of juſt Men made perfect?* To ſee God, and to rejoice in him at a nearer hand than you now do here below? To be for ever bleſſed in the cloſe Embraces of the ſovereign Good? And what other way is there of obtaining this, but only by *dying*? *Death* is now made to us an In-let to Glory, the very Gate to Heaven. It is therefore unreaſonable to fear that which is the only way to obtain that we hope for. *A Chriſtian's Hope cannot be accompliſhed but by dying.*

Thirdly, *This Death, though ſo much dreaded, is no other than a quiet Sleep.* So the *Scripture* often repreſents it to us under the Notion of Sleep. *Them that ſleep in Jeſus ſhall God bring with him.* Sleep is the natural reſemblance of *Death*. Sleep and Death are very near a-kin: When we are aſleep, we ſee not, we hear not, all our Senſes are lock'd up from the enjoyment of any worldly Delights; we take no comfort in our Friends, in our Riches, or Eſtates; all theſe are cancell'd out of our Minds: And what more doth *Death* do than cancel theſe things out of Men's Memories? And yet the weary Labourer lays himſelf down with contentment, to take his Sleep until the Morning; and why may not we alſo lay down our ſelves with the ſame peace and contentment in our Graves, to take our Reſt and Sleep until the Morning of the Reſurrection? Indeed the Sleep of Death is different from natural Sleep, ſince that deprives us of natural Light; but this Sleep of Death brings us to the viſion of true inacceſſible Light. What then is there in *Death*, that we ſhould ſtand in dread of it? Why ſhould that be feared by thoſe for whom the ſting of it is already taken out? Such may ſafely take this *Serpent* into their boſoms; for though it hiſs at them, yet it cannot wound or hurt them; nay, inſtead of wounding them, it is reconciled to them, and become one of their party. The *Apoſtle* therefore reckoning up the Inventory of a Chriſtian, reckons this among them; *Whether Life or Death, all is yours.* And in another place he tells us, That *to him to live was Chriſt, and to die was Gain.* And well may a Chriſtian account Death among his Gains; for it is the Hand of *Death* that draws the Curtain, and lets him in to ſee God face to face in Heaven, that Palace of ineſtimable Pleaſure and Delight, where the ſtrongeſt Beams of Glory ſhall beat fully upon our Faces, and where we ſhall be made ſtrong enough to bear them. Neither doth *Death* bring any detriment to our Bodies, ſince they ſhall be new moulded at the Reſurrection; when *this Mortal ſhall put on Immortality, and this Corruptible put on Incorruption*; when theſe dull Lumps ſhall become impaſſible as the *Angels*, ſubtle as a Ray of *Light*, bright as the *Sun*, nimble as *Lightning*. Who is *Death is a quiet ſleep.* 1 Cor. 3. 22. Phil. 1. 21. 1 Cor. 15. 53.

there that hath hopes of Heaven, that would have this Law of *Death* reverſed? Who would be confined to live always a wretched Life here on Earth, that Sin and Sorrow ſhare between them? A *holy Soul* cannot but long and be impatient in breathing forth Deſires after the kind Office of *Death*, to deliver it into ſo great
Phil. 1. 21. and incomprehenſible a Glory; crying out earneſtly with the *Apoſtle*, *I deſire to be diſſolved, and to be with Chriſt, which is beſt of all.*

Of what concernment the thoughts of Death are.

Now of what great Concernment this Subject of Man's *Mortality* is, God by his Providence, ſince I laſt ſpake in this Place, hath ſadly evinced; and by a near Inſtance hath confirmed what I then preached unto you, of the Frailty and Uncertainty of this preſent Life. Happy were it for us if either *Sermons* or *Examples* might awaken us to a ſerious Conſideration that we our ſelves alſo muſt ſhortly *die*, and it may be, as ſuddenly. Are we not all ſubjected to the ſame Attack? Hath not God's Hands kneaded our Bodies out of the ſame clay, and may not his Fingers crumble them again into the ſame duſt? Certainly the Cords of our Tabernacles may be as eaſily unlooſed and cut aſunder as theirs. I have read of a great *Emperor*, that to engrave upon himſelf the deeper Apprehenſions of his own Frailty and Mortality, cauſed his own *Funerals* to be ſolemniz'd while he was yet living, laying himſelf down in his Tomb, weeping over himſelf, as his own Mourner: If there were any advantage in this to prepare him to die at laſt really, by dying thus firſt in an Emblem, we may almoſt daily have the ſame. There's not a *Funeral* of any of our Relations or Acquaintance that we are called to give our Attendance upon, but by ſerious and ſolemn Reflections upon our ſelves, we may make it our own: And if by beholding others nailed up in their *Coffins*, laid down in their cold *Graves*, covered over with Earth, that they may become a Feaſt for Worms; if now we reckon our ſelves among the number of them, we ſhall not be very much miſtaken; for this is only but a few days to anticipate what ſhall ſhortly be our ſtate and condition. This Advantage we our ſelves may make of the *Death* of others, to look upon it as a reſemblance at leaſt of our own. What is the Language of every *Grave* we ſee open its mouth to receive into it the dead Body of ſome Neighbour or Acquaintance, but only this, That we alſo are mortal and periſhing? There's not a broken Skull, or a rotten Bone that lyes ſcattered about the Grave, but hath *Death* and *Mortality* written upon them, and call loudly upon us to prepare our ſelves to take up our Abode in the ſame darkneſs and corruption with them; and if upon every ſuch ſad occaſion we do not make a particular Applicaton thereof unto our own ſelves, we not only loſe our Friend's *Lives*, but their very *Deaths* alſo. And yet in this Affair, that might be of great advantage to us, we are exceeding faulty; for the reflections we make on the *death* of others, are uſually very impertinent, and make no laſting impreſſions upon us. When *Death* comes and mows down our Acquaintance and Relations round about us, the Reflection that we uſually make, is more upon the Loſs that we have ſuſtained by their *Death*, than upon the Example they are thereby made to us of our own Frailty and Mortality; and thereby, as God by his Providence hath deprived us of the Comfort we had in their Lives, ſo we deprive our ſelves of the Inſtruction and Benefit we might have by their Death. Or if ſome extraordinary Circumſtance that appears in the *Death* of others, ſtrikes us into ſerious Thoughts of our own, yet uſually they are but ſhort-liv'd and fleeting; for a while, it may be, we think of humane frailty, and the mutability of our preſent State; but theſe Thoughts ſoon wear off, and we return to the ſame Vanity and wretched Security as before; for ſuch dying Mediations of Death, are uſually very unprofitable. It is with moſt Men as it is with a Flock of Sheep that graze fearleſly till the Shepherd ruſheth in among them, and lays hold of one of them for the Slaughter, and this preſently frights them, making them leave their Food, and run ſcattering about the Field; but no ſooner is the Tumult over, but they flock together again, and feed as ſecurely, without Thoughts of death or danger as before. So truly is it with moſt Men, when either the report is ſpread abroad that ſuch or ſuch a perſon is dead, and it may be ſuddenly, by ſome ſuddain and unexpected ſtroke; or when they are called to viſit ſome dying Perſon, where they behold departing Pangs, diſtorted Eyes, quivering Limbs, wan and ghaſtly Corps, the Image of Death in its lively terrours; if they have any Remainders of natural Tenderneſs, it muſt needs ſtrike them into Penſiveneſs, to think that one day this muſt be their own Caſe, and that therefore it behoves them to be in continual preparation

paration for this laſt and dreadful Change: But no ſooner is the Dead interr'd, and the Grave fill'd up again, but all theſe ſage and ſerious Thoughts vaniſh, and they return to the ſame exceſs of Sin and Pleaſure as before: This is the brutiſh Folly and Sottiſhneſs of moſt Men. But Oh, why ſhould not men always keep alive vigorous thoughts and meditations of *Death!* Are they not always alike mortal? Are they not as much ſubject to the Arreſt of *Death* at other times as when they ſee Examples of Mortality before their Eyes? The Law ſtands ſtill in force, unrepealed in Heaven, *That it is appointed unto all Men once to die.* Indeed it fares with ſuch as theſe, as ordinarily it doth with Malefactors, that fear not the Penalty of the Law till they ſee it executed upon others. Let us therefore act rationally as Men, and as long as we are in danger, be kept by that danger prepared to entertain that which we know is irreverſibly appointed unto us.

But now, beſides this general Appointment of God, That all ſhall die, there is a particular Appointment, that reacheth to every particular Circumſtance of Man's Death; the time when, the manner how we ſhall die: Theſe are unalterably determined in God's ſecret Council. To ſpeak a little briefly to this.

God appoints the time of Man's Life.

Firſt, *God hath punctually and exactly determined the time of our Death to a very moment.* The great God, *in whoſe hands our Lives, our Breath, and all our Ways are,* he turns up our Glaſs, and puts ſuch a meaſure of Sand into it, and no more; it is he that prefixes it to run to ſuch a length of Time, and then determines it ſhall run no longer: It is he who is Lord of all Time, that writes our Names upon ſo many Days and Hours as we ſhall live, as upon ſo many Leaves of his Book; and it is impoſſible for us to live one Day or Hour that hath not our Name written upon it by him from all Eternity. It is God that ſets every one the Bounds of their living, as well as *the Bounds of their Habitations*; beyond which they ſhall not be able to paſs. The *Embrio* that dies before ever it ſees the Light, fills up its appointed time by God, as well as he that lives to decrepit old Age. And therefore, though the *Scripture* and we uſe to ſay, Such or ſuch an one is taken away *in the midſt of his days*; yet ſimply in it ſelf conſidered, that is impoſſible; the whole Tale of days that God hath appointed to every one, muſt be fulfilled, and that to a very moment, according as the number of them is ſet down by God from all eternity. Such Expreſſions as theſe denote no more, than either that God cuts them off in the full ſtrength and vigour of their years, when yet they might, according to the courſe of Nature, and humane probability, have lived longer; or elſe comparing the ſhortneſs of their Lives with the length of others, God ſeems to break it off in the very midſt, before he had finiſhed his Work. I ſhall not enter into a Diſpute whether the Term of Life be fixed or moveable. Methinks *Job* hath fully ſtated and determined the *Queſtion. Is there not,* ſays he, *an appointed time to Man upon Earth? Are not his days alſo like the days of an Hireling?* Now an *Hireling* hath a time of Service prefixed, which when it is expired, he is diſcharged from his Labour. God hath ſent all Men into the World as ſo many *Hirelings,* and as ſoon as theſe days are expired, he takes them from their labour to their reward. Are not my days as the days of an Hireling? So *Job* ſpeaks alſo in another Chapter, concerning Man; *His days are determined, the number of his Months are with thee; thou haſt appointed his bounds that he cannot paſs.* What can be more punctual and particular? It is true however, that though God hath thus numbred out our days, and ſet us our bounds, yet we may well ſay, That whoever dies, might have lived longer, had they made uſe of the right Means: As *Martha* ſaid unto our Saviour, *Lord, if thou hadſt been here my Brother had not died.* So may we ſay, If ſuch and ſuch Means had been uſed, and ſuch Remedies applied, this or that Perſon had not died; but withal we muſt obſerve alſo, that that God who hath prefixed to every one his Term of Life, hath alſo ordained in his own Counſel and Purpoſe, that thoſe Means that are proper to prolong Life beyond that Term, ſhould through ſome unavoidable miſtake or miſhap, either not be known, or not uſed. This therefore may be of great ſupport unto us, as againſt all inordinate Fears of our own *Death,* ſo againſt all inordinate grief and ſorrow for the *Death* of others; to conſider that all our Times are in God's hands; he meaſures out every day to us; and as he hath appointed bounds to us, beyond which we ſhall not paſs, ſo alſo hath he appointed that we ſhall certainly reach unto thoſe bounds. His all-wiſe Providence diſpoſeth of the meaneſt and ſmalleſt Con-

Job 7. 1.

Job 14. 5.

Luke 11. 21.

cernments of our Lives, and therefore much more of our Lives themſelves; and if a *Hair of our Heads* cannot, much leſs ſhall not we our ſelves fall to the ground without our Heavenly Father.

Secondly, *As God hath appointed the exact critical Hour, ſo alſo the particular Manner of our Death.* It is he that appoints whether it ſhall be ſudden or foreſeen; by Diſeaſes, or by Caſualty; whether the Thread of our Life ſhall be ſnapt in pieces by ſome unexpected Accident, or worn and fretted away by ſome tedious and lingring Conſumption, or burnt aſunder by ſome fiery Fever. In whatever manner or ſhape *Death* may appear to us, is a Secret known only unto God; but this we know that it is always his Serjeant, and wears his Livery; and all the Circumſtances of our *Death* are of God's appointment, as well as our *Death* it ſelf. And in whatever ſhape it ſhall appear to us, if we diligently endeavour by a holy Life to prepare our ſelves for it, it ſhall not be frightful or terrible to us.

Now to make ſome Practical Improvement of this. And,

Uſe I. Firſt, *If God thus unalterably appoints to us our laſt period, if he hath thus appointed us to Die, if all men are concluded under that irrevocable Law; let this then ſerve to convince us of the groſs and notorious folly of ſetting our Affections eagerly upon this preſent World,* a World that we muſt ſhortly leave behind us. *Death* within a very little while will moſt certainly pluck us from it, and it will prove a violent rending to us if our Affections are inordinately ſet upon any thing here below. It was a ſtrange and perverſe uſe alſo that the *Ancient Heathens* made of the neceſſity of dying, when in their *Feaſts* their cuſtom was to bring in the reſemblance of an *Anatomy* to their Gueſts, thereby to excite them to Mirth, and Voluptuouſneſs, whilſt they ſhould reliſh ſuch delights as were then before them, becauſe ſhortly they muſt be as much duſt and bones as what
1 Cor. 15. 32. they ſaw. Like thoſe the *Apoſtle* makes mention of, who ſaid, *Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we ſhall die.* But how much better uſe doth the ſame *Apoſtle* teach us to make of this, when in the ſame *Epiſtle* he tells us, *But this I ſay, Brethren, the time is ſhort.* Why, what then? Why, ſays he, *It remains therefore that they that have Wives be as though they had none, and they that weep as though they wept not, and they that rejoyce as though they rejoyced not, and they that buy as though they poſſeſſed not, and they that uſe this World as not abuſing it, for the faſhion of this World paſſeth away.* Death one would think ſhould beat down the price of the World in every wiſe Man's eſteem. Why ſhould we lay out our affections upon thoſe things from which we may be raviſht in a moment? Both they and we periſh in the uſing of them; they are dying comforts, and we muſt die alſo that enjoy them. Oh! what *Folly* then is it to toil and wear away our Lives in purſuing ſuch vain things, from which we may be ſnatcht before we can caſt another look at them! Sour *Death* will ſoon convince us that all is but vanity and vexation of ſpirit that we here ſet our eyes and hearts upon. And therefore.

Uſe II. Secondly, *Seeing by the appointment of God we muſt all ſhortly die, let us be perſwaded to be always in a readineſs and preparation for it.* Our Souls are Immortal, and muſt live for ever, and when our Bodies die and fall into the Duſt, they immediately enter into an Eſtate that is for ever unalterable. Now here I ſhall only lay down a few directions, and ſo conclude.

Directions to prepare for Death.

Get hearts weaned from the World.

Firſt, *Wean your Hearts from an inordinate love of the World.* Death muſt and will pluck you from it; and, Oh! it will be a violent rending if your affections be glewed to it. Conſider that all things in this preſent World are fading and periſhing, but your precious Souls are ever living and immortal; be not therefore unequally yoaked, joyn not your ever living Souls to dying comforts. This is a tyranny worſe than that which was Exerciſed by thoſe of old, who tied living Bodies to dead Carkaſſes. Oh! what a ſad parting hour will it be to thee, when thou ſhalt go into another World, and leave behind thee all that thou counteſt good in this; how wilt thou protract and linger, and wiſhly look back again, upon all thoſe precious vanities and dear nothings and follies that here thou placedſt thy happineſs and contentment in? But now when the heart ſits looſe from all theſe things, with what ſatisfaction ſhall we be able to Die, accounting what we loſe by *Death* to be no great matter, becauſe what we gain thereby will be infinitely more to our advantage.

Secondly,

Secondly, *Would you be prepared for Death; beware then that you do not defer your Repentance one day or hour longer upon any preſumption of the continuance of your Life.* Death depends not upon the warning of a ſickneſs; God doth not always afford it, but ſometimes he doth execution before he Shoots off his warning Piece, and why may it not be ſo with you? However it is poſſible your ſickneſs may be ſuch as may render you uncapable of doing your laſt good Office for your Soul: But if it ſhould be otherwiſe, yet this I am ſure of, it is the unfitteſt time in all your Life; to be then caſting up your Accounts when you ſhould be giving of them up; to have your Evidences for Heaven then to clear up to your Souls when you ſhould produce and ſhew them for your ſupport and comfort. *Repentance muſt not be deferred upon hopes of long Life.*

Thirdly, *Live every day ſo as if every day were your laſt and dying day, and the very next day allotted to you unto Eternity*; if it be not ſo it is more than any of us knows; and ſince we have no aſſurance of one day or hour longer, it is but Reaſon and Wiſdom to look upon every day as that which may prove our very laſt. *Live every day as if it were your laſt.*

Fourthly, *Be conſtant in the Exerciſe of a Holy Life, and always doing of that, that you would be content Chriſt ſhould find you doing when he comes to Summon you before his Bar.* Think with thy ſelf if thou wer't now upon thy ſick Bed, and hadſt received the *Sentence* of *Death*, and ſaweſt thy Friends ſtand mourning round about thee, but cannot help thee; what would be thy thoughts and thy diſcourſe then? Why, let the ſame thoughts and the ſame diſcourſe fill up every day and hour of thy Life; for thou knoweſt not, whether now this moment thou art not as near *Death*, as if thy Friends and Relations, yea, and thy Phyſicians alſo deſpaired of thy Life, and had given thee over for Dead. *Be conſtant in the exerciſe of a holy Life.*

Fifthly and Laſtly, *Labour to get an aſſurance of a better Life, and this will prepare you for a temporal Death.* When you and all things in the World muſt take leave of one another, and part for ever, then to have the ſenſe of the Love of God, of an intereſt in Jeſus Chriſt, and the ſight and view of your own Graces; theſe will bear up your Heart in a dying hour; theſe things are Immortal, as your Souls are, and will enter into Heaven with you, and abide there with you to Eternity. O whom will it not comfort to think that *Death* will change his Bottle into a Spring! Tthough here our Water ſometimes fails us, yet in Heaven, whither we are going we ſhall bathe our ſelves in an infinite Ocean of Delights, lying at the breaſts of an infinite Fountain of Life and Sweetneſs. Whoever hath ſuch an aſſurance as this is, cannot but welcome *Death*, embracing it not only with Contentment but with Delight: And while the Soul is ſtrugling and ſtriving to unclaſp it ſelf, and to get looſe from the Body, it cannot but ſay with Holy Longings and Pantings, *Come, Lord Jeſus, come quickly.* *Get an aſſurance of a better Life.*

THE GREAT EVIL and DANGER OF LITTLE SINS.

SERMON VII.

St. MAT. v. 19.

Whoſoever therefore ſhall break any one of theſe leaſt Commandments, and ſhall teach Men ſo, he ſhall be called the leaſt in the Kingdom of Heaven.

AMongſt thoſe many Points that our Saviour handles in this his *Sermon* on the *Mount*, one is the Stability and Permanency of the *Moral Law*; the Obligation of which, he affirms to be as perpetual as Heaven and Earth, *Verſe* 18. *Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, till Heaven and Earth paſs, one jot or one tittle ſhall in no wiſe paſs from the Law, till all be fulfilled.* This Aſſertion *An Introduction.*

 Chriſt

Chriſt lays down in oppoſition to the common and corrupt Doctrine of the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, the *Jewiſh* Teachers; who by their *Traditions* ſought to make void the Law of God. Now, ſays Chriſt, unleſs they can remove the Earth, and rowl up the Heavens, and carry the World without the World, it is but a vain Attempt; for it is decreed in Heaven, That *till Heaven and Earth paſs, not a tittle of the Law ſhall fail; but all ſhall be fulfilled.*

As it is in this lower *World*, notwithſtanding it is maintain'd by a continual flux and viciſſitude by the perpetual change of one Being into another; one corrupting, and another riſing up in a new form and ſhape out of its Ruins; and yet not the leaſt duſt of Matter is, or can be conſumed; but the ſame Matter, and the ſame Quantity ſtill continues which were at firſt created. So is it with the Law of God; let *Scribes* and *Phariſees* corrupt it by their erroneous Gloſſes and falſe Interpretations, putting what Forms and Shapes they pleaſe upon it; yet as it is in the corruption of earthly Bodies, not the leaſt piece of Matter can periſh, or be annihilated; ſo neither in their corrupting of the Law ſhall one jot or tittle of it fail. Not but that the Law did fail of its obſervation; never yet was it exactly and punctually fulfilled by any, except by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; but yet the Obligation and binding Power of it is everlaſting, and ſhall continue while there is an Earth, and Men upon it; yea, while there is a Heaven, and glorified Saints in it; for the Moral Law is of an eternal validity; on Earth it is a perfect Rule ſet down in the Word; in Heaven, it is a perfect Nature implanted in the Bleſſed, from which all their Actions ſhall flow, and by which they ſhall all be guided to Eternity.

This Aſſertion being laid down, our *Saviour* proceeds to draw an Inference from it, and that he doth in the Words of the *Text*: If *every jott and tittle of the Law* be of ſuch a permanent and everlaſting Obligation, then, *whoſoever ſhall break one of theſe leaſt Commandments, and teach Men ſo, he ſhall be called*, that is, he ſhall be, or, he deſerves to be *the leaſt in the Kingdom of Heaven.*

Opening of the Words. And here, before we can arrive at the full and practical Senſe of the Words, we muſt enquire into Two Things.

Firſt, What is here meant by *the leaſt Cmomandment.*

Secondly, What is meant by being *leaſt in the Kingdom of Heaven.*

What is meant by the leaſt Commandment. For the *Firſt* of theſe: When Chriſt ſpeaks here of the *leaſt Commandment*, it muſt not be ſo underſtood, as if one Commandment were leſs neceſſary to be obſerved than another: God's Commands are all alike neceſſary, and that with a twofold Neceſſity; *Neceſſitate Præcepti, & Neceſſitate Medii.* The one ariſeth from the Authority of the Law-giver; the other from the Requiſiteneſs of Obedience to eternal Life; One Command therefore is not leſs than another.

No Command little in reſpect of God's Authority. *Firſt*, In reſpect of the Authority enjoyning them. The ſame holy and juſt God who hath commanded us to love and fear him with all our Souls and with all our Might, hath alſo commanded us to abſtain from every vain Thought, and from every idle and ſuperfluous Word. The *leaſt Command* hath power to bind the *Conſcience* to Obedience, as well as the *greateſt*; becauſe the *leaſt* is enacted by that Sovereign God to whom all Souls and Conſciences are ſubject, as well as the *greateſt*. It is not the greatneſs or ſmallneſs of the Coin, but the Image of the King ſtamp'd upon it, that authorizeth it, and makes it current: So truly the Holineſs and Purity of God's Nature once imprinted upon the *leaſt Command*, makes it fully as Authoritative and Obligatory, as if it were the *higheſt* and the *chiefeſt*.

No Command leſs neceſſary to be obeyed. Nor, *Secondly*, is one Command leſs than another, as if it were leſs neceſſary to be performed in order to Eternal Life. The Breach of the *leaſt Commandment* doth as certainly ſhut the Soul out of Heaven, and ſhut it up under Wrath and Condemnation, as the breach of the *greateſt*. In neither of theſe ſenſes therefore, muſt the Words be underſtood, as if our Obedience were required more remiſly, or left more arbitrary to the one than to the other; or as if the obſervation of 'em all were not equally conducible unto Happineſs, or the tranſgreſſion of them equally liable unto Puniſhment. When therefore Chriſt ſpeaks of the *leaſt Commandment*, the expreſſion may admit of a twofold ſignification.

Firſt, That herein he alludes to the common and corrupt Doctrine of the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* diſtinguiſhing God's Commands into great and ſmall. The great Commandments they held to be thoſe only which concerned the external Acts of Religious Worſhip; ſuch as *Faſtings*, and *Waſhings*, and *Sacrifices*, and *ſcrupulous Tithings*,

Tithings, with various *Gifts* and *Offerings*; these were their *great Commandments*; but for inward Concupiscence, for unmortified Lusts, for vain Thoughts and sinful Desires, these, they, as a Generation, corrupt in themselves, and Corrupters of others, taught as the *Papists* now do, either to be no Sins at all, or at most, but venial, so long as they did not break forth into act; and truly the greater part of this *Chapter* is spent in setting forth the evil of those Sins that the *Jews* accounted to be light and small; as to be *angry with our Brother*, to call him *Racha*, Mat. 5. 22. or *thou Fool*, *verse* 22. to harbour inward Motions of Concupiscence, *ver.* 28. 28, 29. to use *Divorce*, ver. 29. *Common Swearing*, ver. 34. *Private Revenge*, ver. 39. Now says our Saviour, I am so far from destroying the *Law* and the *Prophets*, either by my Doctrine, or by my Practice, as these Men falsly accuse and calumniate me; that contrariwise I teach that the violation of those Commands which your *Doctors*, the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* account small and little, will bring with them an heavy guilt, and sore condemnation; for whosoever breaks those Commandments that are commonly vilify'd and called least, *shall* be the *least in the Kingdom of Heaven.*

Secondly, Those Commandments which are great in respect of the Law-giver, may yet be the least in comparison with other Commands of the same *Law*, which are indeed thought greatest. Now this comparative inequality in the Commandments, is taken from the equality of the Objects about which they are conversant; some of them concern our Duty to God, others concern our Duty to Man: Now because Man is infinitely less than God, therefore those Commands that relate to our Duty towards Man, may be called less than those Commands that relate to our Duty towards God. Hence, when the *Lawyer* put a Case to our *Saviour*, Mat. 22. 36. *Master which is the great Commandment in the Law?* Mat. 22. 36. Our *Lord* answers him, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind; This*, says he, *is the first and great Commandment.* Sometimes this inequality riseth from the Latitude that every Command hath in it: Now this Latitude relateth to our Thoughts, to our Words, and to our Actions. Now because a Thought may be said to be less than a Word, and a Word may be said to be less than an Action, therefore that part of the Commandment that requires Holiness in our Thoughts, may be said to be less than that which requires Holiness in our Speech; and that part of the Commandment which requires Holiness in our Speech, than that which requires Holiness in our Lives and Actions. Now, says our Saviour, he that sins against Man, as well as he that sins against God; he that sins in a Thought, in a Word, as well as he that sins in his Actions and Conversation: He that breaks these *least Commandments shall be least in the Kingdom of Heaven.* And in this Sense I take the Words. And thus you see what is meant by the *least Commandment.*

What is meant by being least in the Kingdom of Heaven.

The *Second* thing we are to enquire into, is what we are to understand by being *least in the Kingdom of Heaven.* By the *Kingdom of Heaven* may be meant, either the Kingdom of Grace set up in the Church on Earth; and thus the Word is so frequently made use of in *Scripture*; I need not turn you to any Places. Or else by the *Kingdom of Heaven* may be meant the Kingdom of Glory established in the highest Heavens. If we take the *Kingdom of Heaven* here in the *Text* for the Kingdom of Grace, that is, for the Church and People of God here on Earth, then the Sense runs thus; *He that breaketh the least Commandment, and teacheth Men so*, shall be no true Member of the Church of Christ. But if we take *the Kingdom of Heaven* here spoken of, to be the Kingdom of Glory; then the meaning is, *He that breaks the least Commandment shall be least in the Kingdom of Heaven*; that is, he shall not enter into Heaven at all. *Minimus vocabitur in Regno Cœlorum, & fortasse ideo non erit in Regno Cœlorum, ubi nisi magni esse non possunt*, as St. *Augustine* speaks. He shall be the *least* in *Heaven*; that is, he shall not be there at all, because in Heaven there are none but great and glorious ones.

You see then what a heavy and most dreadful Doom Christ hath pass'd upon those things that the World call little and trivial Sins; they exclude out of Heaven, and will, without Repentance and a Pardon interpose, sink the Soul down to the lowest Hell irrecoverably.

Now because the generality of the World; yea, and of Professors also, do too commonly allow and indulge themselves in *little Sins*, I have therefore made choice of this Subject, on purpose to convince you, if it may be, of the great evil

that lurks under them, and that great wrath that will follow upon them: That as you would out of your great care for your precious and immortal Souls Eternal Welfare, abſtain from the Commiſſion of notorious and ſelf-condemning Sins; ſo you would labour to keep your ſelves free from theſe *little Sins*, which though leſs ſcandalous, yet are they not leſs pernicious and deſtructive: And this I ſhall endeavour to do in the Proſecution of this one Propoſition.

Doctrine. *That little Sins carry in them great guilt, and will bring after them a ſore and heavy Condemnation.*

He that breaketh the leaſt Commandment ſhall in no wiſe enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Now in treating upon this Subject, becauſe I intend not to inſiſt long upon it, I ſhall only lay down ſome Demonſtrations of the Truth of this Doctrine, and then make ſome Uſe and Application of it.

The leaſt Sin a great Affront of the great God.

Firſt, Therefore the great evil and danger that there is in *little Sins* appears in this, that the leaſt Sin is a moſt high Affront and Provocation of the Great God. An Infinite Holineſs is oppoſed, and an Infinite Juſtice is incenſed by them. Tho' I am not of the Opinion of the *Stoick Philoſophers*, that all Vices are equally heinous; yet this I account certain, that there is in the leaſt Sin as flat a repugnancy and contradiction to the Holy Will of God as in the greateſt. Hath not God forbidden vain Thoughts and idle Words, as ſtrictly as he hath forbidden Murder, Adultery, Blaſphemy, and Hatred of himſelf, with all thoſe abominable Sins that defile the mouths of thoſe that name them? And is it not as much his Will that he ſhould be obey'd in thoſe Commands, as in theſe? Have you any more Diſpenſation in the *Scripture* to ſpeak an idle Word, than you have to blaſpheme the Name of God? Have you any more liberty allow'd you to ſwear little Oaths, than you have to ſwear and ban by whatſoever is ſacred and holy in *Heaven*, or dreadful in *Hell*? Or to take the reverend Name of God in vain, more than to curſe him to his very Face? Are you more permitted to think evil againſt your Neighbour, than you are to murther him? No certainly; there are no ſuch Diſpenſations can ever be found in the Word of God; and I aſſure you, God will never diſpenſe with any Sin farther than he hath revealed; and why then will you dare to diſpenſe with your ſelves more in *little Sins* than in *great Sins*? Oh, our Conſciences will never bear with any patience thoſe great and crying Sins: Will they not? And do you think that God's Holineſs will bear with your *little Sins*? Believe it, theſe *little Sins* do arm God's terrible Power and Vengeance againſt you. And as a *Page* may carry the Sword of a great *Warriour* after him, ſo your *little Sins* do, as it were, bear the Sword of God's Juſtice, and put it into his hands againſt you. And wo unto us if the holy and jealous God deal in fury with us for our ſmall Provocations.

Little ſins a violation of the Law of God.

Secondly, Every *little Sin* is a heinous violation of a holy and ſtrict Law that God hath given us to be the Rule of our Lives. The leaſt Sin takes the *two Tables*, and in a worſe ſenſe than *Moſes* did, daſhes and breaks them in pieces. Nay,

Committing little ſins make men guilty of the greateſt.

Thirdly, That you may ſee what a complicate Evil every Sin is, take this too, which, though it be a Paradox, yet is it a moſt ſad Truth, That the commiſſion of the leaſt Sin makes you guilty of the greateſt Sin; yea, guilty of all Sin imaginable. Hear this therefore, and tremble all you that allow your ſelves in vain Thoughts or idle Words, and think with your ſelves, Piſh, this is but a Thought; this is but a Word; no, it is not only a vain Thought, or an idle Word; it is Blaſphemy, it is Hatred of God, it is Murther, it is Adultery, it is Idolatry; you will ſay, this is ſtrange *Doctrine*; if it be, it is the *Apoſtle's Doctrine*, James 2. 10. *Whoſoever ſhall keep the whole Law, and, yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.* As therefore thou wouldſt not be found guilty in the great Day of the Lord of all that ever Hell it ſelf was ever impeached for, ſee that you abhorr the commiſſion of the leaſt Sin; for the leaſt Sin will involve thy Soul in the greateſt guilt. And the Apoſtle gives an evident Reaſon of this, *ver.* 11. *For he that ſaid, Do not commit Adultery, ſaid alſo, Do not Kill; now if thou do not commit Adultery, yet if thou Kill, thou art become a tranſgreſſor of the Law.* The worſt thing that can be found in all the Sins that ever were committed, is the contempt of God's Authority. Now there is as much wretched contempt of the Authority of the great God, in the commiſſion of *little Sins*, as there is in the commiſſion of *great Sins*. It is the ſame God that ſaith, Do not take my Name in

James 2. 10.

in vain, who ſaith, Do not blaſpheme me; the ſame God that ſaith, Do not murther, hath ſaid alſo, Be not angry with thy Brother cauſleſly. Now what is it that makes Blaſphemy and Murther ſuch heinous Sins? Truly the Venom and Rancour of them lyes in this, That the Authority of that great God who hath forbidden them, is ſlighted and trampled under foot; and is it not ſo by *ſmall Sins?* Nay, let me add,

God's Authority more ſlighted by little than by great Sins.

Fourthly, The Authority of the great God ſeems to be more deſpiſed by the commiſſion of *ſmall Sins*, than by the commiſſion of *great Sins*. Doth it not argue great contempt of God, when you will not obey him in a matter that you your ſelves count ſmall and inconſiderable? You think, it may be, it is not of much moment or concernment what your Thoughts be, nor what your Words are; but when you hear and are convinced, that all your Thoughts ſhould be holy, and that all your Diſcourſe ſhould be ſavoury, and ſuch as ſhould miniſter profit and edification unto others; if after this, you ſtill think it of no great moment, whether they be vain and frothy, or whether they be holy and ſpiritual; believe it, this ſhews you to be deſpiſers of God's dominion and authority over you, when his Commands cannot prevail againſt the *leaſt Sin*. What a ſmall Matter was it, may ſome ſay, for *Adam* to eat of an *Apple* in *Paradiſe*? But was it not as ſmall a Matter for him to forbear and let it alone? And therefore this *ſmall Sin* ſhewed no ſmall contempt of God's Authority, who had ſtrictly forbidden it. When we ſin, we flatter our ſelves ſtraight with this; is it not a little one? Truly if it be but a little one to commit, it is but a little one to refrain from. It is an Aggravation of Sin, rather than an Excuſe, to ſay, our Sins are but *little ones*. It ſhews a Heart hardned againſt God, and bewrays a deſperate contempt of all that he can ſay to us, or do againſt us, when we ſhall chuſe rather to thwart and break his Commands, to venture, or rather to deſpiſe his Power, Wrath and Juſtice, than to forego our *little Sins*.

Little Sins greatly deface the Image of God.

Fifthly, *Little Sins* do greatly deface the Image of God in the Soul. *Adam* was at firſt created according to the Similitude and Likeneſs of God: He had the Divine Pourtraicture drawn upon his Soul by the creating Finger of the Almighty; and yet we ſee how *little a Sin* defaced it, and ſpoiled him of all his Glory. In curious Pictures a ſmall Scratch is a great Deformity: Certainly the Image of God is ſuch a curious piece of Workmanſhip, that the leaſt Scratch or Flaw in it by the leaſt Sin, deforms and turns that which before was the Image of God, into the Image of the Devil.

Little Sins have but little temptation in them.

Sixthly, *Little Sins* have in them ordinarily leſs of Temptation than other Sins have, and therefore they have more of wilfulneſs in them. If it be no excuſe of Sin, yet certainly it is a ground of pity and commiſeration, when thoſe fall into the Commiſſion of Sin, who are aſſaulted and haunted with moſt violent and eager Temptations; when the *Devil* will not let them alone for a moments time, but purſues them from place to place; and though they once and again eject and reſiſt him, yet ſtill he forceth his Temptations upon them: If ſuch as theſe are at length overcome by thoſe impudent Importunities of that *Evil One*, this their yielding requires our pity, and it may be ſhall more eaſily obtain God's pardoning Grace and Mercy. But thou that ordinarily committeſt thoſe that thou calleſt *Little Sins*, haſt no ſuch alleviation for them. What Temptation canſt thou plead? Doth the *Devil* continually dog thee with ſuch Solicitations and Perſwaſions, that though thou wouldſt yet thou canſt not reſiſt? no, certainly, when the *Powers of Hell* arm themſelves againſt a Soul, it is to more advantage, than the Commiſſion of a *little Sin*. *Little Sins* have ſcarce any other Temptation to inforce them beſides the commonneſs and cuſtomarineſs of committing them.

The Two great Arguments by which the *Devil* prevails in all his Temptations, are *Pleaſure* and *Profit*; now both of theſe do uſually attend the big and more bulky Sins; but *Little Sins*, have uſually this Aggravation left upon them, that if Men will commit them, they ſhall become Sinners for nothing. Tell me what profit hath the *Profane Spirit* to be continually ſtewing and ſoaking a luſt in his own thoughts? What profit or pleaſure hath the *Common Swearer* for to think himſelf to be but a *Little Sinner* in rapping out his Oaths againſt God and Heaven? Were I an *Epicure* (ſays one both piouſly and ingeniouſly) I would hate Swearing: Were Men ſuch as ſold themſelves unto all manner of ſenſual Delights, yet is there ſo little can be ſtrained from this common Sin that it can hardly bear the counte-

nance or presence of a Temptation. Now if it be not the violence of Temptation that makes you to Sin, it can be nothing else but your own wilfulness that makes you thus to Sin. Now wilfulness is the measure of all guilt; according as your Sins are more or less wilul, so are you the more or less sinful. Now it is not the Devil's Temptations, but your own Wilfulness, that runs you upon the Commission of *Little Sins*; and this is it that aggravates and heightens them; you Sin voluntarily without compulsion, and so by Mystery of Iniquity you make your selves *Great Sinners* by committing *Little Sins*.

Little Sins maintain a trade of Sin.

Seventhly, *Little Sins* do maintain the trade and course of sinning. The *Devil* cannot expect always to receive such returns of great and crying Impieties, but yet when he keeps the stock of Corruption going, and drives on the trade of sinning by *Lesser Sins*, believe it, Corruption will be on the thriving Hand, and you may grow rich in guilt, and treasure up to your selves Wrath against the Day of Wrath, by adding those that you call *Little Sins* unto the heap. It is not possible that any sinner in the World should be always raging against God by daring and staring Sins; for though the principle of Corruption aims still to exert its utmost strength, yet the *Faculties* in which it dwells, and by which it acts, cannot bear so constant an intentness; there must be therefore in the vilest Sinners some Intermission, but yet in this Intermission there is the continued practice and course of small Sins, that tack and unite them together; betwixt the Commission of one gross Sin and another, intervenes a constant neglect and forgetfulness of God, a constant hardness of Heart, a constant vanity and unfruitfulness of Life; and by these, though sinners look upon them as small Sins, yet they still plod on in the way to *Hell* and *Destruction* without any stop or interruption. In sharp Diseases the violence of the Fit doth not last so long as the Disease lasts, at times there is an Intermission, but still there is a constant Distemper in the Body: So when the pang of a violent Sin is well over, yet still there remains a constant Distemper in the Soul, which though it be not outragious, yet still continues the Soul's Disease, and will bring it to its Death at last. In the Fortification of a *City* or *Town*, all the Rampars are not *Castles* and *Strong-holds*, but between *Fort* and *Fort* there is a Line drawn that doth as it were join all together, and makes the place Impregnable. So is it in the Fortification of the Soul by Sin, all Sins are not *Strong-holds* of *Satan*, they are greater and grosser Sins; but between these is drawn a line of smaller Sins so close that you cannot find a Breach in it, and by these the Heart is fenced against God. Now is it nothing that your *Little Sins* fill up all the void spaces of your Lives? Is it nothing that you no where lye open to the force and impression of the *Holy Spirit*? He by his Convictions batters the greater and more heinous Sins of your Lives, but these *Strong-holds of Satan* are impregnable, and give him the repulse; he seeks to enter in by the Thoughts, but these are so fortified by Vanity and Earthly-mindedness, and a thousand other Follies, that though they are but *Little Sins*, yet swarms of them stop up the passage, and the Soul is so full already that there is no room for the Holy Spirit to enter. There's not a Sinner here that if he will make an Impartial search within him, but will find the experience of this in his own breast: When at any time you have flown out into the Commission of any boisterous and notorious Wickedness, have you not afterwards found that you live in a more constant liking and allowance of *little Sins*? When once a Man is stunn'd by some heavy blow, a small nip or pinch is not then felt by him: And when once Conscience is deadned by the stroke of some great and scandalous Sin, afterwards it grows less sensible of the guilt and evil that there is in *smaller Sins*; and thus you live in them without pain and regret, till you fall into some notorious Wickedness that more hardens the Heart, and more sears the Conscience; and what is this but to run round from Sin to Sin, from a small Sin to a great Sin, and from a great Sin to a small Sin again, till *Hell* put a period to this *Circle*? What is this now, but for the *Devil* to get ground upon you by *great Sins*, and to keep it by *little Sins*, whereby he drives on and keeps up the trade of Sin, and when God shall cast up your Accounts for you at the last Day, you will find that the Trade hath gain'd you no small loss, even the loss of your Immortal Souls? Now although the evil and danger of committing *little Sins* hath been made very apparent in the forementioned particulars, yet because Men are very prone to indulge and excuse themselves herein, I shall add some farther Demonstrations of their aggravated Guilt in these following particulars: Which will serve greatly for the confirmation of the truth of the Doctrine.

First,

First, *Conſider little Sins uſually are the damning and deſtroying Sins.* There are more beyond compariſon that periſh and go down to Hell by the Commiſſion of *little Sins*, than by thoſe that are more Notorious and Infamous; here periſheth the *Hypocrite*, and here the *formal Profeſſor*; here periſheth your honeſt civil neighbourly Man, that is ſo fair and upright in his dealing that you can ſee nothing that is groſs and ſcandalous by him: Oh! but yet the blood of their Precious and Immortal Souls runs out and is ſpilt for ever thorough thoſe inſenſible wounds that *little Sins* do make: Yea, hereby commonly periſheth the *Prophane Sinner* alſo, for it is uſually but the Commiſſion of *one ſmall Sin* more that fills up the meaſure of their Iniquities, and makes them fully ripe for Damnation; ſometimes indeed, God doth by ſome ſignal Stroke of his Vengeance ſtrike the Sinner through and through in the Commiſſion of ſome bold and daring Sin; but uſually the laſt Sin of the worſt of Men is but of the leſſer ſize; and though God had formerly born many great Impieties from ſuch Perſons, yet is he at laſt ſo provoked by ſome *little Sin*, that he will wait no longer, but ſnatcheth the Sinner away in his Wrath, and throws him down into *Hell*. This is an Argument how dreadfully provoking *ſmall Sins* are, that uſually upon the Commiſſion of one of them God puts an end to his patience and forbearance: It is not all the great and crying Sins of a Man's Life that brings ſo much miſery upon him, as a *little Sin* that ſinks him down into Eternal Torments doth. Uſually the laſt Sin that a Sinner enters into *Hell* by, is but a *little Sin*: Take it therefore as a warning from God, henceforth never more deſpiſe any Sin as ſlight becauſe it is ſmall. We have a known *Proverb* among us, that when a Beaſt hath his full load, one ſtraw more will break his Back. Believe it, Sirs, it is moſt certainly true in the preſent Caſe; many Chriſtians have been a long time ſinners againſt God and their own Souls, adding iniquity to iniquity, and ſome of you may already have your full load, O beware how you ever venture upon the Commiſſion of another Sin; tho' it be but a little and a ſlight Sin, yet this *ſlight* and *ſmall Sin* added to the reſt may break and ſink you for ever into *Hell*; this *little Sin* may fill up the *Ephah* of your iniquities, and after this *ſmall Sin* you may neither have time to Sin again, nor to Repent of your Sin.

Little Sins uſually are the damning Sins.

Secondly, Conſider this: *Small Sins* what they want in weight uſually they do more than make up in number, and therefore are as pernicious to the Soul as the greateſt Sins can be. Hence *David* prays, *Pſal.* 19. 12. *Who can underſtand his errors, cleanſe thou me from ſecret Sins.* Secret Sins muſt needs be the leaſt and *ſmalleſt Sins*, ſeeing they are ſo ſmall that he that commits them cannot diſcern them; but yet as they are ſmall, ſo are they numerous, *who knows how often he thus tranſgreſſeth, who can underſtand his errors?* Therefore *cleanſe thou me, O Lord, from theſe ſecret Sins.* A *Ship* may have a heavy burthen of Sands as well as of Milſtones, and may be as ſoon ſunk with them. And truly *ſmall Sins* though they ſhould be as ſmall as Sands, yet commonly they are as numerous as the Sands too; and what odds then is there between them and the greateſt Sins? Every thought thou thinkeſt, and every word thou ſpeakeſt in an unregenerate State and Condition, there is Sin in it; and though moſt of them poſſibly are but *little Sins*, yet a multitude of them alone are able to ſink you down into the loweſt *Hell*. Your Conſciences ſtart back and are affrighted, as indeed they ought, at a Temptation to *Murder*, *Inceſt*, *Blaſphemy*, or any of thoſe more horrid Sins, that are the prodigies of corrupt Nature; theſe Sins you dare not ſo much as commit once: And yet thouſands of thouſands of *leſſer Sins*, ſuch as *ſinful Thoughts*, *idle Words*, *petty Oaths*, *commodious Lies*; theſe proceed from you without either ſtriving againſt them, or mourning for them. Why now, Sirs, do you more fear intolerable and everlaſting Wrath, for the ſingle Commiſſion of a *great Sin*, than you do for the frequent and repeated Commiſſion of *leſs Sins*? Truly I cannot preciſely tell you, whether you had not as good Blaſpheme God once, as take his Name in vain often; whether it be not as good to Murder once, as to hate always: The frequency of *little Sins* makes their guilt ſo great, and their puniſhment ſo intolerable, that the vileſt Sins you can imagine, ſhall have nothing to exceed them in, unleſs it be the horror of the Name of that Sin. And yet it fares with us as it did with the *Iſraelites*, we tremble more at one *Goliah* than we do at the whole *Army* of

Little Sins what they want in weight they do more than make up in number. Pſal. 19. 12.

the *Philiſtines*. One groſs ſcandalous Sin makes Conſcience recoil and go back, when yet we venture upon the numberleſs guilt of *ſmaller Sins*, that have leſs terror in their Name, though united in their guilt they bring far ſorer Condemnation on the Soul, than the ſingle Commiſſion of *a great Sin?* What great difference is there whether your Eternal burning be kindled by many ſparks, or by one firebrand? Whether you die by many ſmaller Wounds, or by one great one? Many *little Items* may make a Debt deſperate, and the payment impoſſible. And truly when God ſhall reckon up againſt us at the great Day, many thouſand vain Thoughts, and as many ſuperfluous idle Words, with as many petty Oaths and Lies that we have been guilty of, the account will be as dreadful, and the Wrath that will follow as inſupportable as if Murder, Blaſphemy, or the greateſt Outrage that ever was committed in the World, were ſingly charged upon us.

It's difficult to convince men of the evil of little Sins.

Thirdly, Conſider it is very difficult to convince Men of the great Evil and Danger that there is in *little Sins*, and therefore it is very difficult to bring them to Repentance for them. Indeed this is the great and deſperate Evil that there is in *ſmall Sins*, that Men will not be perſwaded that they are Evil. Flagitious wickedneſſes are uſually ſelf-condemning; they carry that brand upon them that makes them evident to every Man's Conſcience that they come from *Hell*, and will certainly lead to *Hell*; and therefore the *Apoſtle* Rom. 1. 33. after he had reckoned up a black Catalogue of Sins, tells them in the laſt verſe, *that though they were Heathens, yet they knew the Judgments of God, that they that committed ſuch things were worthy of Death.* But now the guilt of *little Sins* is not ſo apparent; the eye of a meer natural Conſcience looks uſually outward to the Life and Converſation, and if that be plain and ſmooth, it ſees not or diſpenſeth with the *leſſer Sins* of the Heart: Hence is it that we ſo ſeldom confeſs or mourn for thoſe that we call *leſſer Sins?* When is it that we are deeply humbled for the Omiſſion of duties, or for the ſlight and perfunctory performance of them? Theſe we look not upon as deſerving Damnation, and therefore we think they need no Repentance. Nay, are we not ſo far from judging and condemning our ſelves for them, that we ſeek out pretences to excuſe and leſſen them, calling them *Slips, Failings, and unavoidable Infirmities:* And as *Lot* ſaid of *Zoar*, *is it not a little one, and our Souls ſhall live.* What, can I think there is ſo much danger in *a fooliſh Thought*, in *a vain and inconſiderate Word?* Can I think that the great God will torment his poor creatures for ever, for a *Thought*, for a *Word*, for a *Glance?* Yes, believe it, unleſs theſe Sins be done away in the Blood of Chriſt, there is not the leaſt of them but hath an infinite Evil in it, and an infinite Wrath following of it: If you will not now be convinced of it, you ſhall be then when with dread and aſtoniſhment you ſhall hear God calling your *little Sins* by other Names than you now do; you call them *Failings* and *Infirmities*, but God will call them *Preſumptions* and *Rebellions:* What you ſay is but a *vain Thought*, ſhall be arraign'd as *Treaſon* againſt God, as *Atheiſm* and *Soul-Murder:* Then every *formal heartleſs Duty* that here you performed, ſhall be accuſed of *mocking* and *ſcoffing* of God; they are ſo interpretatively and in God's eſteem; and unleſs the guilt of them be done away by the Blood of ſprinkling, you will find them no leſs at the great and terrible Day of the Lord. Indeed the generality of Men have gotten a dangerous Method of doing away the guilt of their Sins; *great Sins* they make to be *little*, and *little Sins* they make to be none at all, and thus they do away their Sins, and ſo they Live in them cuſtomarily, and Die in them impenitently, and Periſh under them irrecoverably.

Rom. 1. 33.

Gen. 19. 20.

The leaſt ſin allow'd is a ſign of an hypocritical Heart.

Fourthly, Conſider that the allowance and cordial approbation but of the leaſt Sin, is a certain ſign of a moſt rotten and hypocritical Heart. Be thy Converſation never ſo blameleſs, be thy profeſſion never ſo glorious, be thy Duties and Services never ſo pompous; yet if there be the ſecret reſervation and allowance but of the leaſt Sin, all this is no more than ſo much vain ſhow and pageantry: What ſays the *Apoſtle*, *Jam.* 1. 26. *If any Man among you ſeem to be Religious, and bridleth not his Tongue, that Man deceiveth himſelf, his Religion is vain.* Why, is it not ſtrange that after ſo many prayers daily put up to God, after an eminent profeſſion, and a conſiderable progreſs made in the ways of God, that yet both the ſincerity and ſucceſs of all this ſhould depend upon ſo ſmall a thing as the tip of a Man's Tongue? If that be allowed to run at random into impertinencies, nor

Jam. 1. 26.

not to ſay into Debaucheries and Prophaneneſs, all your Duties, all your Prayers, all your Profeſſion is blown away by the ſame Tongue that uttered them, and all your Religion will be in vain; and let me add, This ſeeming Religion will end only in ſhame and confuſion at the laſt, when the Soul and Conſcience of a ſinner ſhall be ript open at the great Day, before Men and Angels; and that *little Sin* that kept God, and Chriſt, and Eternal Salvation out, ſhall openly be ſhew'd to all the World, and laughed at by all the World, that ſuch a Sin ſhould keep a Man from Heaven and Eternal Happineſs. And therefore ſays *David*, *Pſal.* 119. 6. *Then ſhall I not be aſhamed, when I have reſpect unto all thy Commandments.* To have reſpect to ſome of God's Commandments, and not to all, is now hypocriſie, and will at laſt be ſhame and confuſion. It is a moſt certain Truth, that though the Commiſſion of the *greateſt Sin* be conſiſtent with the truth of Grace, yet ſo is not the approbation of the *leaſt Sin*. Oh! what a ſevere and critical thing is true Holineſs, that will no more allow the leaſt Tranſgreſſion than the greateſt; nor more tolerate the defilement of Duſt in our Hearts than a Dunghil. We have all of us need therefore to pray with *David*, *Pſal.* 139. 23. *Search me, O Lord, and try my Heart; try me, and know my Thoughts, and ſee if there be any evil way in me*; becauſe our Sins may be ſo little as to eſcape our own ſearch; and becauſe the leaſt Sin, if let alone in the Heart, will like a ſmall ſpeck in fruit, ſpread to a total rottenneſs: Therefore, O *Lord, do thou ſearch and try us, and if there be any way of wickedneſs in us*, caſt thou out our Corruptions, that ſo thou maiſt not caſt us out as corrupt and rotten at the laſt.

Pſal. 119. 6.

Pſal. 139. 23.

Fifthly, Conſider little Sins do uſually make way and open a paſſage into the Heart for the greateſt and vileſt Sins. Thus a little Thief that creeps in at the Window, may unlock the Door for others that ſtand without. And thus it fared with *David*, while ſenſual Delight crept in by the eye at the ſight of *Bathſheba*, it opened his Heart to the temptation, and in ruſht thoſe two outrageous Sins of *Adultery* and *Murder*. Believe it, there is no Sin ſo ſmall but tends to the utmoſt wickedneſs that can poſſibly be committed. An irreverent Thought of God, tends to no leſs than Blaſphemy and Atheiſm. A ſlight grudge at another, tends to no leſs than Murder. A laſcivious thought tends to no leſs than impudent and common Proſtitution: And though at firſt they ſeem to play only ſingly about the Heart, yet within a while they will mortally wound it.

Little Sins make way for greater Sins.

There are two things give *little Sins* their growth and increaſe.

Firſt, The Devil by his Temptations, is continually nurſing up youngling Sins till they arrive to a full ſtrength and ſtature of wickedneſs. He is continually ſuiting Occaſions and Temptations to the propenſions of our Luſts: Hath he wrought any ſinful deſire, or any evil purpoſe in you, he will take care you ſhall not long want an occaſion to fulfil it. Were it not for his vigilancy many a Sin muſt needs die in the Womb that conceived it; but as it was conceived by his Temptations, ſo is it brought forth by his induſtry and diligence.

Secondly, Natural Corruption it ſelf is of a thriving, growing Nature. If any Luſt hath ſeized ſtrongly on the thoughts, and boils there, it will vent it ſelf in Diſcourſe. A bad Heart, as well as a bad Liver, will break out at the Lips; and if the Diſcourſe be poyſonous, the Venom will ſpread it ſelf into the Life and Converſation; *for out of the abundance of the Heart the Mouth ſpeaketh*; and *evil Words corrupt good Manners*. Sinful Thoughts form themſelves into Words, and Words will conſolidate themſelves into Actions; and then Sin is perfected, and hath attained its full growth: And if you would know what the next degree or ſtep is that Sin takes, the *Apoſtle* St. *James* tells you, *Jam.* 1. 5. *When Luſt hath conceived, it bringeth forth Sin; and Sin, when it is perfected, bringeth forth Death.* You can no more ſet bounds to your Corruptions, than to the raging Sea; nor ſay to it, *Hitherto ſhall thy proud Waves go and no further.* It were Folly, when you have ſet fire to a Train of Powder, to expect it ſhould ſtop any where ſhort of the utmoſt of it. So truly, when the Thoughts are ſet on fire of *Hell*, this will inflame the Tongue, and that will inflame the Life; and unleſs God's infinite Mercy prevent, this burning will ſtop no where ſhort of everlaſting burning. Ask but your own Experiences this; Have you not often found it ſo? Hath not the *Devil* drill'd you on from *little Sins* to *great Sins*, and from theſe, to far greater Abominations? Believe it, there is a bottomleſs deceit

in every Sin, and this is the desperate issue of it, that if once you come to account any Sin small, you will soon reckon the greatest Sin to be no more. We commonly reckon the greatness of Sin by the abruptness of our advance to it. Possibly it would seem a horrid thing at the first rising of a Temptation in our hearts, if we should presently perpetrate the utmost of it into Act: therefore the Method of Sin is more smooth and deciteful; it counts a sinful Thought a little Transgression, and sinful Discourse to have but a little more guilt in it than a sinful Thought, and sinful Actions to have but a little more guilt in them than sinful Words. A great Sin but in a little degree exceeds a less; and so comparing Sin with Sin, and not with the *Law*, we at length come by invisible Advances to look upon the greatest Impieties in the World to be but *little Sins*, and so to commit them. If *Satan* prevails with us to go with him one step out of our way, we are in danger to stop no where till we come to the height of all Prophaneness; he will make us take a second, and a third, and so to travel on to Destruction; for each of these is but one step; the last step of Sin is but one step, as well as the first; and if the *Devil* prevails with us to take one step, why should he not prevail with us to take the last step as well as the first step, seeing it is but one? Your second Sin no more exceeds your first, than your first doth your Duty; and so of the rest. We should not therefore account any Sin small, but look upon them as the spawn of all the vilest Abominations: And as you would abhorr Death and Hell, so abhorr the least Sin; because it hath a Plot upon us in subserviency to greater Sins, that without infinite Mercy, will certainly bring to, and terminate in Death and Hell.

Little Sins so called, are indeed the greatest.

Sixthly, Consider that *those Sins that we commonly call the least, are indeed the greatest and vilest Provocations.* Some Sins are Sins of greater Infamy and Scandal; other Sins are Sins of greater Guilt and Sinfulness, rude and blustering Sins. Those Sins that are of greater Infamy, are such as make him that commits them, a scandalous person; and these are commonly reputed great and crying Sins by the World. If a Man be a *Swearer*, or a *Drunkard*, a *Whoremonger*, or an *Adulterer*, or a *Murtherer*; these Sins make a Man a Scorn and a Reproach to all that pretend to Civility. But now there are other Sins that are inward and spiritual Sins, that are indeed more sinful, though less scandalous; such as *Unbelief*, *Hypocrisie*, *Hardness of Heart*, *Slighting and Rejecting of Christ*, *Resisting the Holy Ghost*, and the like. Now herein lyes the great mistake of the World in estimating of Sins: At the naming of the former, we are ready to tremble, and so indeed we ought; and not only so, but we ought to shun and avoid those that are guilty of them, as Monsters of Men: But now we have no such abhorrency against the latter; if the Life be free from gross Enormities, we look upon *Unbelief* and *Impenitency* but as *small* and *trivial sins*. Now those Sins that we thus slight, are incomparably the greatest and the vilest Sins. *Murther*, *Adultery*, *Blasphemy*, and the rest of those crying Impieties, could not damn the Soul, were it not for *Unbelief* and *Impenitency*: It is not the *Swearer*, or the *Drunkard* that perish; but it is the *Unbeliever*: *He that believes not is condemned already*, John 3. 18. And so hating of God, and a secret scorning and despising of Holiness, and the Ways of God; these are Sins that do not defile and pollute the outward Man; and many doubtless are guilty of them, that are of a fair and civil Life and Conversation; and yet these are Sins that may out-vie with the most horrid Sins for the hottest and lowest place in Hell. We see then what small heed is to be given to the Judgment of the World concerning *small Sins*: Those that the World counts *little Sins*, may be great and heinous in the sight of God; for God judgeth not as Man judgeth; he is a Spirit, and therefore spiritual Sins and Provocations, such as Inordinacy in the Thoughts, Desires and Affections, these are Sins possibly that are more heinous in God's Sight, than more carnal and grosser Sins are.

Damnation for little Sins will be most intolerable damnation.

Seventhly, and lastly, Consider this; *Damnation for little Sins will be most aggravated, and most intolerable Damnation.* Oh, will it not be a most cutting Consideration to the Soul in Hell when it shall think, here I lye and fry for ever in unquenchable Flames, for the gratifying of my self in that which I call'd *little Sins!* Fool that ever I was, that I should account any Sin little that would bring me to this place of Torment! There's another of my fellow-wretched Sinners, between whom and me there was as much difference as there was between me

and

and a true Saint; He prophane and daringly wicked, I honeſt and civil; and yet for allowing my ſelf in thoſe Sins to which the World encouraged me, and called *Little Sins*, the ſame *Hell* that holds him, ſhall hold me for ever. Oh, the dreadful Severity of God! O wretched Folly and Madneſs of mine! Oh inſufferable Torments and Anguiſh! Believe it, thus will thoſe that are damned for ſmall and *little Sins*, reflect upon their former Lives; ſuch will be their diſmal Reflections, and ſuch will be yours alſo; expect no other, if being warned of the great Evil that there is in *little Sins*, you will yet perſiſt in them without Repentance.

And thus I have done with the *Doctrinal* Part of the *Text*; I now come to make ſome *Application* of it.

And the firſt Uſe ſhall be by way of Corollary: If ſo be that *little Sins* have in them ſo much Danger and Guilt as hath been demonſtrated to you, what ſhall we then think of great and notorious Impieties? If Sands will ſink a Man ſo deep into the Lake of Fire and Brimſtone, how deep then will their Hell be that are plunged into it with Talents of Lead bound upon their Souls? Whilſt I have been ſetting forth the Aggravations of the great Evil that there is in *little Sins*, poſſibly ſome prophane Spirit or other may thus argue; if *little Sins* be ſo dangerous and damning, then, ſince it is utterly impoſſible to keep our ſelves free from all Sins whatever, what need I ſcruple the greateſt Sin more than the leaſt? I am ſtated down under a neceſſity of ſinning, and I am told that the rate that every Sin will ſtand me in, is eternal Death; the leaſt is not leſs, and the greateſt is no more: It is but ridiculous Folly for a *Malefactor* nicely to ſhun the Dirt, and pick out the cleaner Path, when he is going to Execution: And ſo it is but a Folly for me to go the ſtraiter and ſeverer way to *Hell*; and therefore ſince there is no difference between Sins in the end, but all alike lead down to the ſame Deſtruction, I will put no difference between them in my practice. But let ſuch preſumptuous Sinners know, *Uſe* I.

Firſt, That, *as all Mens Sins are not equal here, ſo neither ſhall all Mens Torments be equal hereafter:* Some ſhall be beaten with fewer, others with more *Stripes*; ſome ſhall be chaſtiſed with *Whips*, others with *Scorpions*. The Eternal Furace ſhall be heated ſeven times hotter for ſome than for others: And for whom is the greater wrath prepared, but for the greateſt Sinners? In the blackeſt and hotteſt place in *Hell* there is chained the great *Devil*, that *Arch Rebel* againſt God; and after him is ranked whole Cluſters of damned Spirits, each according to their ſeveral degrees both of Sin and Torment. He that ſuffers the leaſt, ſuffers no leſs than a *Hell*; but yet he is in a condition to be envied at by thoſe whoſe daring and deſperate Wickedneſſes have brought upon them far heavier and ſorer vengeance; theſe ſhall have cauſe to envy the ſtate of *little Sinners*, even as they do envy the ſtate of *glorified Saints* in Heaven. Do not therefore conclude, that becauſe *the wages of the leaſt ſin is Death*, therefore the wages of the greateſt Sin is no more, nor no worſe: For, though in a natural Death, there is no being dead a little; yet in the ſpiritual and eternal Death there are degrees. As the Civil Man was a Saint here on Earth, in compariſon of the Lewd and Debauched Sinner, ſo ſhall he be happy hereafter, in compariſion of his Torment. Let ſuch therefore ſeriouſly conſider how ſad and infinitely wretched their Condition muſt needs be, ſince that no leſs than Damnation it ſelf ſhall be judged a Happineſs, compared with what they ſhall ſuffer, and what Wrath they ſhall lye under to Eternity. *All Mens ſins are not equal.*

Secondly, Conſider, *In the commiſſion of great Sins, you do not avoid the commiſſion of leſs Sins; but only add to the guilt of them, and to that Damnation that will follow upon them.* It is true, if a meer Civil Man, whoſe higheſt Attainments are but ſome commendable external Vertues; if he could change the Guilt of all the *little Sins* that he hath committed in his whole Life, for the ſingle guilt of ſome great and heinous Sin, (tho' I pretend not to know the ſize or quantity of wrath that every Sin deſerves) yet poſſibly his eternal puniſhment might be hereby ſomewhat diminiſh'd. But this is the Miſery of great and preſumptuous Sinners, that they ſtand guilty of as many *little ſins* as they do that periſh under the guilt of no other but *little Sins*. Where do you ſee a Perſon that is given up to vile Abominations, but he lives alſo in a conſtant courſe and practice of *leſſer Sins*? The *Drunkard*, the *unclean Perſon*, and the reſt of them, are they not always ſinful in their Thoughts, frothy and vain in their Diſcourſes? And is it noting to you, that you incur Damnation by *little Sins*, unleſs you can advance your own Deſtruction; unleſs you can promote your ſelves to be next of all in torments to the *Devil* himſelf, *In committing great ſins we avoid not leſs ſins.*

ſelf, by your greater Provocations and Impieties? As you ſee in *Rivers*, the natural courſe of them tends to the *Sea*; but the *Tide* joyning with them, makes the Current run the ſwifter and the more forcibly; ſo is it with Sin; *little ſins* are the natural ſtream of a Man's Life, that do of themſelves tend Hell-ward, and are of themſelves enough to carry the Soul down ſilently and calmly to deſtruction: But when *greater* and *groſſer ſins* join with them, they make a violent *Tide*, that hurries the Soul away with a more ſwift and rampant motion down to *Hell*, than *little ſins* would or could do of themſelves. Therefore when you hear how much evil there is in *little ſins*, preſume not to think there is nothing more in *great ſins*; yes certainly, God is more provoked by them, your own Conſciences are more wounded by them, Hell is more inflamed by them, and your own Souls are more widened and capacitated by theſe *great ſins* to receive fuller and larger Vials of God's wrath, than they would be by the commiſſion of *leſſer ſins* only. We may take an eſtimate in what proportion God's dealings with Sinners will be when he comes to puniſh them, by obſerving how he deals with them when he comes to convince and humble them; the ſober Sinner feels no ſuch Pangs and Throes uſually in the New Birth; but God deals with him in a more mitigated and gentle manner; but when at any time he humbles a notorious bluſtering Sinner, uſually his Method is, even to break his Bones, and ſcorch up his Marrow; and that he may ſave him from a *Hell* hereafter, he creates a very *Hell* in his Conſcience here. Now as it is uſually thus in Conviction, ſo is it always thus in Condemnation, of which Convictions are but, as it were, the Type and Reſemblance: When God comes to execute his Wrath and Vengeance upon Sinners for their Sins, his Hand ſhall be very heavy and ſore upon Civilized Sinners: Oh, but the bold, daring, preſumptuous Sinner, him he will preſs down, and break in pieces with all his might: He that ſuffers the leaſt, ſhall yet lye under intolerable Wrath; but where then, unleſs in the flaming depth of the Bottom of *Hell*, will the infamous and prophane Sinner appear?

Uſe II. *Secondly*, Another uſe we may make of this *Doctrine* is this; Is there ſo great an Evil and Danger in *little Sins*? Then here behold a woful Shipwrack of all the Hopes, and of all the Confidence of *Formaliſts* and *Juſtitiaries*, that hope to appear before God upon the account of their own Innocency and Harmleſneſs. Hence learn that a quiet, civil, honeſt Life, free from groſs and ſcandalous Impieties, is no good Plea or Title for Heaven; yet truly this is that alone that the generality, eſpecially of the Ignorant, rely upon; their Lives are harmleſs, their Dealings upright, none can juſtly challenge them that they have done them any wrong; were they preſently to appear before God's Judgment-ſeat, they know nothing by themſelves that deſerves Eternal Death; therefore if God ſave any Perſons in the World, ſure they are in the number of them. But is it ſo indeed? What, do you know nothing by your ſelves? Had you never ſo much as a Thought in you that ſtept awry? Did you never lodge a Thought in you that had in it the leaſt Vanity, Impertinency, or Frivolouſneſs? Have you never uttered a Word that did ſo much as liſp againſt the Holy Law of God? Will you dare to tell God you never yet did an Action that Innocency it ſelf would be aſhamed to own? Have your Lives in every part been as ſtrict and holy as the Law of God commands them to be? If not, it is in vain to plead for Heaven that your Converſations have been honeſt, civil and harmleſs, or that you have been Religious, and maintained a conſtant Courſe of holy Duties and good Works. I would not here be miſtaken by any as if I were preaching againſt Morality, or condemning Civility and common Honeſty. No, by no means, they are excellent things, and the practice of them very commendable; and I heartily wiſh there were more of them to be found in the Lives of thoſe that call themſelves Chriſtians: But if this be all you can ſay for your ſelves, believe it, the guilt but of one of your leaſt Sins will out-weigh all theſe; and you, and all this your Righteouſneſs, muſt ſink down together into *Hell*. If this be all Men have to plead for Happineſs, a civil, fair and honeſt Converſation: This may be; and yet Men may indulge themſelves in *little Sins*, which will moſt certainly ruin and deſtroy them.

Uſe III. *Thirdly*, If there be ſo great evil and danger in little Sins, hence learn what abſolute need we ſtand in of Chriſt, not only thoſe among us whoſe Lives are openly groſs and ſcandalous, but even thoſe who are moſt circumſpect and moſt careful in their Walkings. Though you do not wallow and roll your ſelves in the common

common Filth and Pollutions of the World; yet is it not poſſible but that our Garments ſhould be ſometimes ſpotted? An abſolute and perfect State is rather to be wiſhed for than enjoy'd in this Life: The utmoſt that we can attain to here, is not to commit great Sins, nor to allow our ſelves in *little Sins*, when through daily Infirmity we do commit them. Why, now theſe *little Sins* that the beſt of God's Servants daily and hourly ſlip into, cannot be pardon'd without the Blood of a great and mighty Saviour. It is the ſame precious Blood of Jeſus Chriſt that ſatisfied Divine Juſtice, for the *Inceſt* of *Lot*, for the *Drunkenneſs* of *Noah*, for the *Adultery* and *Murder* of *David*, and for the *Perjury* of *Peter*, that muſt ſatisfie it alſo for thy *vain Thoughts*, and for thy *fooliſh and idle Words*, if ever thou art ſaved: *For without Blood there is no remiſſion*, Heb. 9. 22. *And without remiſſion there is no ſalvation*, Acts 26. 18. The ſame Blood that is a Propitiation and Atonement for the *greateſt Sins* of the Saints now in Heaven, many whereof poſſibly have been as great as ever were committed on Earth; the ſame Blood of Atonement muſt take from thee the Guilt of thy *vain Thoughts*, and of thy *idle Words*, or thou muſt for ever periſh under them. Heb. 9. 22. Acts 26. 18.

Fourthly, *If there be ſo great evil and danger in little Sins*, hence ſee then what cauſe we have to bemoan and humble our ſelves before God, with Tears in our Eyes, and Sorrow in our Hearts, even for our *little Sins*. We ſhould never approach before the Throne of Grace in Prayer, but before the cloſe thereof we ſhould in Confeſſion mourn over and beg ſtrength againſt thoſe that the World calls, and we account *ſmall Sins*. Indeed it is impoſſible to confeſs them all particularly; who can reckon upon the *vain Thoughts* and *idle Words* of one Day, without a whole Day's time to recount them? For indeed we do little elſe in the Day: And who then can reckon up the *vain Thoughts* and *idle Words* that he is guilty of in his whole Life, without living over his whole Life to recount them? When we have therefore confeſſed the more obſervable Failings of every Day, we ought to wrap up the reſt in a general, but yet in a ſerious and ſorrowful Acknowledgment. Thus you find *David* did, *Pſalm* 51. where you have him confeſſing his two foul Sins of *Adultery* and *Murder*. It is true one would think he ſhould have been ſo intent upon the begging of Pardon for thoſe Sins, as that he could not ſpare a Petition to ask Pardon for any other Sins: But yet though theſe were his *great Sins*, yet he knew himſelf guilty of other Tranſgreſſions beſides, though of a leſs Nature; and therefore he ſums up all together, and heartily begs pardon for them in the heap, *ver.* 9. *Hide thy face from my ſins, and blot out all my Iniquities.* And ſo truly we ought in our daily Prayers to God, after particular Confeſſion of thoſe Sins that do more nearly touch and grate upon our Conſciences, to bind up the reſt in one general Petition, and ſo preſent them to God for Pardon in ſome ſuch like manner as this: *Lord my own Conſcience condemns me, and thou art greater than my Conſcience, and knoweſt all things*; I have obſerved much Sin and guilt by my ſelf this Day, *and thou who ſearcheſt the Heart and trieſt the Reins*, knoweſt far more by me than I do by my ſelf; but whatever I know by my ſelf, or whatever thou knoweſt by me, Lord do thou freely pardon and forgive it all unto me. Only here take heed that when you thus make your Confeſſions of your *ſmall Sins* in general, you do not alſo make them overly, ſlightly, and ſuperficially, which is the common Fault of thoſe that confeſs Sin by the heap. As many *little Sins* of an ordinary Infirmity, do equal the Guilt of *one great Sin*: So truly when we thus every Day confeſs many of them together, we ought to be deeply affected with true godly Sorrow, and as earneſtly pray for the pardon of them, and as importunately beg power and ſtrength againſt them, with the ſame Tears, Groans, and holy Shame, as if that Day we had committed ſome more groſs and heinous Sin. When therefore in your Prayers you come to this Requeſt, Lord, pardon me the Sins and Failings of this Day, think with your ſelf, now I ought to be as fervent, as affectionate and penitent, as if I were confeſſing *Drunkenneſs* or *Murder*; for poſſibly the *little Sins* and Failings that I have committed this Day, if they were all of them put together, the Guilt of them may amount to be as great as one of thoſe *groſs Sins*. Now upon ſuch a general Confeſſion and Humiliation as this is, God iſſues out a Pardon in courſe for our common and ordinary Infirmities, and by one Act of Oblivion, blots out many Acts of Provocation.

Uſe IV.

There are *two Conſiderations* that may be very uſeful to us in order to the humbling of our ſelves before God for *little Sins.*

By little Sins we continually offend God.

Firſt, Conſider theſe *little Sins* are thoſe Sins whereby we continually without intermiſſion offend againſt God, and provoke him againſt our own Souls. Still either the Matter of our Actions are contrary to the Holy Will and Law of God, or the manner in which we perform them: If the Subſtance of our Actions are not evil, yet the Circumſtances are; there's not a Word in Prayer, not a Thought in Meditation, but hath the Guilt of ſome Sin cleaving to it; and if it be ſo with us in our Holy Performances, how do you think then it is with us in our common and ordinary Converſation? And ſhould it not deeply humble us to conſider, that there is not one hour, no, nor one moment of our Lives free from Sin; that our *Pulſes* beat too ſlow to keep an Account of our Sins by; our Thoughts are continually in Motion without intermiſſion or ceſſation, and yet, *Every one of the Imaginations of the Thoughts of our Hearts are only evil, and that continually,* Gen. 6. 5. Certainly did we ſeriouſly conſider what it is we ſay, when we confeſs to God that our whole Lives are nothing but one continued courſe of Sin, thoſe moments, every one of which brings freſh Guilt upon us, would not ſlide away ſo pleaſantly with us as they do; but becauſe our Sins ſeem ſmall to us, we regard them not; and ſo our Time waſtes, and our Guilt encreaſeth, till Eternity puts a period and full end to thoſe Sins, to which we could never put any ſtop or intermiſſion.

Gen. 6. 5.

Little Sins proceed from a corrupt Nature.

Secondly, *Conſider what a corrupt and depraved Nature theſe little Sins do flow from.* When at any time we are ſenſible of a vain and ſinful Thought riſing up in our Hearts, we ſhould trace it along to the Fountain of it, even Original Corruption from whence it bubbles up: If we would but do ſo, we ſhould ſee great cauſe to be deeply humbled for that fruitful ſeed-plot of all manner of Sins that is in our Hearts. Many thouſands of Luſts lye crawling and knotting together there that never yet ſaw the light; the *Damned* in *Hell* have not worſe *Natures* in them than we have: There is no Sin, how horrid ſoever, that they committed on Earth, or can be ſuppoſed to commit now in *Hell,* but we alſo ſhould run into it, did not God's powerful reſtraints withhold us. Now do *little Sins* proceed from ſuch a *Corrupt* and *curſed Fountain,* and have we not then great cauſe to be humbled before the Lord for them, and ſay, Lord, here is Sin, a *little Sin* it is, but yet it proceeds from a Heart that hath in it the Spawn of all the greateſt and vileſt Sins that ever were or can be committed; and that it is but a *vain Thought,* and not *Blaſphemy, Murder,* or *Adultery,* or any of the greateſt and moſt crying Sins that ever were committed in the World, is to be acknowledged and attributed only to the powerful reſtraint of thy free Grace: For the ſame *corrupt Fountain* that ſends forth this *vain Thought* and that *idle Word,* would have ſent forth *Blaſphemy, Adultery, Atheiſm,* or any of the vileſt Abominations; but it is thy free Grace only that hath reſtrained us.

Uſe V. *We ſhould take heed of making light of any Sin.*

Fifthly, and Laſtly, If there be ſo great Evil and Danger in *little Sins,* this then ſhould teach us, *not to make light of any Sin.* Load every Sin with its due Weight, give every Sin its proper Aggravations, and then certainly you will ſee no Reaſon to account any of them to be ſmall or little. To help you in this, take briefly theſe Directions.

Firſt, Pray earneſtly for a wiſe and an underſtanding Heart, and for a ſoft and tender Conſcience. Some Sins ſo Counterfeit an harmleſs appearance, and look ſo innocently, that a Man had need of much ſpiritual Wiſdom, to know how to diſtinguiſh between Good and Evil, and to put a difference between thoſe things that differ as much as Heaven and Hell do: Now this ariſeth from that great blindneſs and ignorance that is in Mens minds, whereby they cannot diſcern that great evil and miſchief that lurks under *ſmall Sins,* but are apt to account every thing that is not ſcandalous and groſly wicked to be but an indifferent matter: And as their Minds are thus blinded, ſo their Hearts are hardned, that what they ſee and know to be ſinful, yet they will dare to venture upon it: Whence is it elſe that the generality of the World live in the Commiſſion of thoſe that they call *little Sins,* but becauſe their Hearts are hardned, and their Conſciences ſeared, that thoſe Sins that are great enough to damn them, yet are not great enough to trouble them? A tender Conſcience is like the *Apple of a man's Eye,* the leaſt duſt that gets into it afflicts it. No ſurer and better way

way to know whether our Conſciences begin to grow dead and ſtupid, than to obſerve what impreſſions *ſmall Sins* make upon them. If we are not very careful to avoid all appearance of Evil, and to ſhun whatſoever looks like Sin; if we are not as much troubled at the vanity of our Thoughts and Words, at the riſing up of ſinful motions and deſires in us, as we have been formerly; we may then conclude our Hearts are hardned, and our Conſciences are ſtupified; for a tender Conſcience will no more allow of *ſmall* than of *great Sins.*

Secondly, Labour always to keep alive upon your Hearts awful and reverent Thoughts of God, his Omnipreſence and Omniſcience; That there is no Sin ſo ſmall but he knows it, though but a Sin in our Thoughts, yet *every Thought of our Hearts is altogether known unto him.* Call to remembrance his infinite Purity and Holineſs whereby he hates every *little Sin*, even with an infinite hatred as well as the greateſt. Think of his Power whereby he can, and of his Truth, Juſtice and Severity whereby he will puniſh every *little Sin* with no leſs than Eternal Deſtruction: And whilſt you thus think of God, indulge your ſelves in *little Sins* if you can. The *Pſalmiſt* gives this very Direction, *Pſ.* 4. 4. *Stand in awe and Sin not*, that is, of the infinite glorious Majeſty of God. Have awful Thoughts and reverential Apprehenſions of God abiding upon your Hearts, and that will keep you from ſinning: *Stand in awe and ſin not.* To look upon Sin through the Attributes of God, is to look upon it through a Magnifying Glaſs, and thus you may beſt ſee its ugly deformed Nature; this is the beſt way to repreſent the infinite guilt that is in it, and that contrariety that it bears to the Holy Nature of God. And while you thus ſee Sin, comparing it with God, even the leaſt Sin muſt appear heinous: And when you are Tempted to any Sin, while you thus think, you may repel a Temptation as *Joſeph* did his *Miſtreſs, How ſhall I do this great wickedneſs and Sin againſt God?* The World indeed counts it but a *little Sin*, but looking upon it, and comparing it with the Holineſs and Purity of God, we muſt cry out, How ſhall we commit this Sin, though accounted little by others, and ſo provoke a great and holy God? Gen. 39. 9.

Thirdly, Get a more thorough acquaintance with the Spiritual ſenſe and meaning of the Law. This was the cauſe why the *Phariſee* did ſo ſlight the commiſſion of *ſmall Sins*; becauſe he kept himſelf to the Literal Senſe of the Law; and ſo, becauſe there he was commanded *not to Kill, not to commit Adultery*, and the like, thought, if he did abſtain from the outward Act of thoſe Sins, he obſerved the Law; yea, and obſerved it ſufficiently. But now the ſpiritual meaning of the Law, that forbids not only the outward Act, but it forbids whatever tends to the outward Act; inward Thoughts, Motions, Deſires, Complacencies in Sin, that are preſented to the Fancy, with whatever tends to, or belongs unto Sin, the ſpiritual Senſe of the Law forbids all theſe. Why, now grow more in acquaintance with the ſpiritual ſenſe and meaning of the Law, and then you will think ſmall Sins, ſuch as the Sins of the Thoughts, of the Deſires, and of the Fancy, and the like, to be no leſs forbbiden by the Law, than Murder or Adultery, and other heinous Sins; the Law having as ſtrictly forbid the one as the other.

Fourthly, and Laſtly, *Beware you compare not Sins among themſelves.* The *Apoſtle* ſpeaks of ſome, 2 *Cor.* 10. 12. *Who meaſuring themſelves by themſelves, and comparing themſelves among themſelves, were not wiſe.* Truly it is as great a Folly for us to meaſure Sin by Sin, or to compare one Sin with another. For as when we meaſure our ſelves with others, our *Pride* is apt to ſuggeſt to us, That ſuch and ſuch are inconſiderable Perſons in compariſon of us: So, when we meaſure one Sin by another, *Corruption* is apt to ſuggeſt to us, ſuch a Sin is a ſmall and inconſiderable Sin in compariſon of another Sin; and therefore I may venture upon it. Certainly, if we obſerve it, there are two ſad Events uſually follow upon our comparing Sins among themſelves. Either,

Firſt, We make little Sins leſs than they are; or if we are beaten off from ſuch falſe Opinions, by being ſhewn how great an Evil there is in them; then,

Secondly, We make it as good to commit the greateſt Sin as the leaſt. Theſe two ſad Events always happen, if we compare one Sin with another. Compare not therefore Sin with it ſelf; but compare Sin with thy Duty; compare the *leaſt Sin* with the Holineſs of that God againſt whom thou committeſt it; and this is the way whereby you may be brought to *account no Sin* to be ſmall or *little.*

OF

ABSTAINING

FROM THE

Appearance of Evil.

SERMON VIII.

1 THES. v. 22.

Abſtain from all Appearance of Evil.

MY laſt *Subject*, as you may remember, was to ſhew you the great Evil and Danger that there is in *Little Sins:* Now becauſe the Words at preſent read unto you, ſeem to have a near cognation to the Truth then delivered; it being a moſt certain gradation, that he that would avoid *great Sins*, muſt avoid *little Sins*; and he that would avoid both great and little, muſt conſequently ſhun alſo the very *Appearances* of Sin.

I have therefore pitched upon this brief Exhortation of the *Apoſtle*, that thereby we might, as far as is poſſible, be led up unto that exact Purity and Holineſs, the endeavour after which is abſolutely neceſſary by all thoſe whoſe Deſire and Care it is to obtain eternal Salvation.

Now in ſundry *Verſes* before the *Text*, the *Apoſtle* laid down ſeveral ſedatious Commands: *Let none render evil for evil; rejoyce evermore; pray without ceaſing; in every thing give thanks; quench not the Spirit; prove all things; abſtain from all appearance of evil;* being now towards the end and cloſe of his *Epiſtle*, and not willing to omit the mentioning of Duties ſo neceſſary for their Practice, he doth, as it were, Pour them out in weighty, though ſhort, *Exhortations*. The connexion betwixt moſt of them is very dark, or elſe none at all; only betwixt the *Text* and the two immediately forgoing *Verſes*, it may ſeem more plain and natural. In *v.* 20. he exhorts them not to deſpiſe Propheſying; *Deſpiſe not Propheſie*; that is, the Preaching even of the common and ordinary Preachers and Teachers, whoſe Office it was to expound the *Scriptures* to them, and to declare the Mind and Will of God out of the *Scriptures*. Did the *Apoſtle* mean only that extraordinary and miraculous *Propheſying* that he ſpoke of, 1 *Cor.* 14. when by an immediate impulſe and influence of the *Holy Ghoſt*, either they foretold things future, or elſe ſpake in divers Languages; he needed not then to have ſo ſollicitouſly forewarned them not to deſpiſe him; ſince ſo great a Miracle as this of *Propheſying*, would ſufficiently have vindicated it ſelf from all contempt: The Meaning therefore is this; Whatever Gifts or Graces you may have attained unto, though you may know your duties as well, and though you may practiſe your duties better than they; yet *deſpiſe* not their *Teaching*; but what they propound to you as the Will of God, that attend unto with all reverence and ſubmiſſion: But yet, ſays the Apoſtle, I would not have you therefore pull out your own eyes becauſe of the gifts of your Teachers and Leaders; no, do not mancipate and captivate your ſelves to whatever they ſhall dictate unto you; but *prove all things*; as it is in *ver.* 21. *Search the Scriptures*; examine whether the things delivered to you be true or not; if upon trial you

find

find them ſo; then *hold faſt the form of ſound words*, in *v.* 21. *Hold faſt that which is good*: But if, upon impartial ſearch, you underſtand and find that the *Doctrine* delivered to you, be unſound, then abſtain from it; though the Doctrine delivered to you be true, yet if their Expreſſions be deceitful, or ſuch as may lead into Errour; if their Notions be dangerous; if their Expreſſions be bold and adventurous, though you muſt not reject the *Doctrine*, yet *abſtain from that appearance of Evil* that is in them.

Hence, from the Connexion, we may obſerve, That in the delivering and receiving of *Doctrines*, we ſhould carefully abſtain, not only from what is unſound and dangerous, but alſo from what is unſafe and venturous. And truly had this Caution of our *Apoſtle* been duly regarded; had not Teachers luxuriant Tongues, and Hearers itching Ears, loathing old Truths, unleſs they appear ſet off in new Dreſſes, our Times had not been ſo fruitful in thoſe Monſters of Opinions that make it diſputable, whether our Knowledge or our Errours were more. It is a true Saying among the *Ancients*, That Hereſies ſpread from Words, if not falſly, yet unduly and improperly ſpoken. The fooliſh, raſh, and daring Expreſſions that have dropp'd from Men ſound in the Truth, being received by thoſe that have not been able to put a difference betwixt what is Proper and what is Figurative; what is Doctrinal, and what is Rhetorical, have been the occaſion of leading many aſide into moſt dangerous and deſtructive Tenets: Certainly *Chriſtian Religion* is a thing more ſevere and punctual than to be rhetoricated upon, and flouriſhed with *Oratory*, that may through Hearers Miſtakes as much pervert the Judgment, as it may pleaſe and tickle the Fancy. There is great weight in Words; for by them the Underſtanding is ſteered, either into the knowledge of *Truth*, or elſe into the embracing of *Error*; and therefore we ought to uſe ſuch Expreſſions as are leaſt liable to any Miſ-apprehenſions, or Miſ-interpretations. It is not enough to ſpeak that which may poſſibly be fetch'd off with Truth by a diſtinction; but if we did but conſult the Ignorance of ſome, and the Malice of others, we ſhould ſee reaſon enough to ſpeak, if poſſibly, ſo as that the ignorant might not be able to miſtake us, nor the malicious be able to miſ-conſtrue us. As for inſtance, to affirm that we are myſtically united unto Chriſt, and thereby become one with him, this is a moſt high and moſt undoubted Truth; but to ſay that we are *Goded* and *Chriſted*, as ſome have gon about to expreſs this ineffable Myſtery in ſweet and ſugar words, this hath been the occaſion of that *familiſtical Blaſphemy* and Nonſenſe that hath invaded ſo many parts of the Nation. We muſt obſerve and conſider alſo that the ſenſe and meaning of many Expreſſions vary and alter from the Time in which they were uſed. Thoſe very Words that were well uſed ſome Ages ſince in Matters of *Divinity* and *Religion*, cannot now be uſed without *appearance of evil* in them, becauſe now their Signification is quite different from what it was then: I will inſtance but in one, and that is concerning the meriting of good Works: It is true the *Ancient Fathers* of the Church did hold there was *Merit in good Works*; but yet it is clear alſo by their Writings that the Word *Merit* did not then ſignifie as now it doth; then it ſignified only Rewardableneſs; and when any maintained that Works merited, the common Senſe of them all was no more than this, That their Works ſhould be rewarded by God, and this is all that they did affirm. But now the Word *Merit* ſignifies Deſert in Works ariſing from the Equality that is in them, to the Rewards propounded and promiſed to them; and therefore now to aſſert that Works have *Merit* in them, is very unſafe and erroneous; which whilſt the *Papiſts* do, they do indeed ſtill retain the Expreſſions of the *Ancient Fathers*, but the Senſe is gon; that is, they ſtill hold faſt the *Feather* when the *Bird* is flown away. We ſhould therefore beware in our Diſcourſes of the doubtful Things of Religion, that we venture not upon thoſe Phraſes and Expreſſions that either border upon Error, or that may likely lead into Error. And truly the generality of Chriſtians have need of much ſpiritual Prudence and Sobriety, that while they deſire and are taken with luſcious and ſweet Words and Expreſſions, they do not withal ſuck in poiſonous and deſtructive *Errors*. This ſhall ſuffice to be obſerved from the connexion of the Words foregoing, *Prove all things*, that is, all Doctrines that are delivered to you; *Hold faſt that which is good*, but *abſtain* from that which hath but the *appearance of evil in it*; though the Doctrines themſelves that are delivered be in ſome Senſe ſound and ſavoury, yet if they be

delivered

delivered in a Senſe and Expreſſion that may be wreſted aſide to undue and erroneous Interpretations, abſtain as far as is poſſible from ſuch Expreſſions.

I ſhall now conſider the Words under a more general Latitude as they relate unto *Practice* as well as to *Doctrine*; and ſo here the Apoſtle lays it down as an unerring Rule, That we muſt not embrace any thing that hath but an *appearance* and no more, whether that *appearance* be of *good* or of *evil*: We muſt not *hold faſt* any thing that hath but the *appearance* of good only, and we muſt *abſtain* from every thing that hath but only the *appearance of evil*; and therefore when licentious Perſons are reproved for the Vanity, Looſneſs, Strangeneſs, and Immodeſty of their Garbs and Attire, (that poſſibly more diſguiſeth than adorneth them) and other Symptoms of a vain and frothy Mind, they think preſently to cover their Nakedneſs with ſuch *Fig-leaves* as theſe; What *Evil* is there in theſe things? Can you prove them ſinful? If you can, we will forbear the uſe of them; if you cannot, forbear you to reprove them. What if they could not be proved to be in themſelves ſinful; yet have they not the ſhew, the face, and the *appearance of Evil?* So judge all ſerious and ſober Chriſtians, and your ſelves alſo poſſibly may ſo judge ſometimes: Therefore diſpute not the Lawfulneſs or the Unlawfulneſs of theſe things in themſelves; if they have but the ſhew and the likeneſs of *Evil* in them, they are to be abſtained abſolutely from. And truly conſidering that great Careleſneſs and want of Circumſpection that is even among Profeſſors themſelves, who if they can but keep themſelves from that which is intrinſically in it ſelf ſinful, make no ſcruple of venturing upon the borders and edges of Sin. I thought it therefore very neceſſary to open this Phraſe and Exhortation of the *Apoſtle* unto you, which I ſhall endeavour to do in the proſecution of this plain Propoſition.

Doctrine. *That a truly Conſcientious Chriſtian ought carefully to avoid not only the Commiſſion, but alſo the very Appearance of Evil.* Abſtain from all Appearance of Evil.

This Point is indeed full of Niceneſs and Difficulty; and truly, when the moſt is ſaid of it that can be, we muſt ſtand very much to the Judgment of Chriſtian Prudence, and Chriſtian Charity, for our chief Reſolution in it; of Chriſtian Prudence, to know when an Action hath the *Appearance of Evil* in it, and when not; and of Chriſtian Charity, to ſhun whatever may ſcandalize others, though we do not defile our ſelves. It is a Point hardly limited to ſuch Bounds, but in ſome places there will be a failing; yet, that I may afford you ſome Light in the Knowledge of a Duty ſo neceſſary as this is, I ſhall,

Firſt, Lay down ſome Diſtinctions concerning the *Appearance of Evil*; and from them,

Secondly, Lay down ſome Poſitions, whereby it may be cleared how far forth we ſtand obliged to avoid even the very *Appearance of Evil.*

Thirdly, Some Demonſtrations, whereby it may appear how neceſſary and requiſite this Duty of avoiding of the *Appearance of Evil* is.

I will begin with ſome *Diſtinctions* of the *Appearance of Evil*: And,

Firſt, An *Appearance of Evil* may be either altogether groundleſs, or elſe it may be built on good Grounds, and upon probable Preſumptions.

Secondly, That which hath only a groundleſs *Appearance of Evil*, it may ſo appear either to our ſelves, or to the Conſciences of others.

Thirdly, we muſt alſo conſider, whether this Action that *appears to be evil*, be a neceſſary Action and Duty in it ſelf, or only free and indifferent, and left to our own free Choice.

Now from theſe Diſtinctions I ſhall lay down ſeveral *Poſitions* concerning the Limitation of our Obligation to *abſtain from all Appearance of Evil.*

Firſt, We ought in no Caſe whatſoever to do that which hath *an appearance of Evil in it*, if that appearance be grounded upon a probable Preſumption.

Now to explain this; An Action then carries in it a probable Preſumption of believing evil, either,

Firſt, When ordinarily it proves an occaſion of Evil; ſuch Actions there be, that are in themſelves poſſibly lawful; but yet they prove *occaſions* of Sin to moſt that venture upon them, becauſe hereby many times they are brought within the Verge and Compaſs of a Temptation; which Temptation overcomes them. It was not ſimply unlawful in it ſelf for *Achan* to look upon the *Babyloniſh Garment* and the *Wedge of Gold*; but yet hereby the *Devil* got an Advantage upon him, and made that an occaſion to ſtir up his Covetouſneſs; and therefore becauſe it was probably

probably to be feared and preſumed, that this might be an *occaſion* of Sin to him, therefore he ought to have refrained even his very Eyes from looking upon them.

Secondly, When an Action is ordinarily done to an evil End, then it hath in it the *appearance of Evil*, grounded upon a probable Preſumption. Thus to enter ſilently into another Man's Houſe in the dead of the night, carries in it a preſumption of *Theft*. And to enter into the *Temple* of *Idols* at the time of *Idolatrous Worſhip*, carries in it a preſumption of *Idolatry*: And ſo our Intimacy, Familiarity, and Friendſhip with thoſe that are wicked, is a grounded preſumption that we are like them, and that we do as they do. And the reaſon of this is, becauſe when we do thoſe Actions that commonly tend to a bad and ſinful end, it is an ill ſign that we intend the end it ſelf to which thoſe Actions lead. Now from every ſuch *Appearance of Evil* we ought in all Caſes to abſtain; and that for theſe Two following Reaſons.

Firſt, Becauſe all ſuch *Appearances of Evil* always prove Scandals unto others. A Scandal is twofold; either the Scandal of Sin, or the Scandal of Sorrow: Now this venturing upon the preſumed *Appearance of Evil* proves a Scandal in both reſpects; it proves a Scandal of Sin to the weak, and it proves a Scandal of Sorrow to the ſtrong.

Firſt, It proves a Scandal of Sin to the weak. Then are we ſaid to give a Scandal of Sin, when we do any thing that tends naturally to bring others into the commiſſion of Sin; but now the very *appearance* of Sin in us, may lead others to the Practice of Sin; when a weak Chriſtian ſees us run into thoſe things that are Occaſions of Sin, he alſo thinks he may lawfully venture as far as we do; and he venturing, becauſe poſſibly he is weaker than we are, he is enſnared and entrapped in thoſe Sins to the Occaſions of which we lead him by our Example.

Secondly, It proves alſo a *Scandal* of Sorrow to the ſtrong Chriſtians. They ſee ſuch probable ſigns and preſumptions of Sin by us, that they juſtly conclude, that certainly we are guilty of thoſe Sins, and thereby their Hearts alſo are ſadned and grieved. And that is the *firſt Reaſon* why we muſt forbear *all appearance of evil*, that is built upon ſtrong preſumptions that we have indeed committed the Evil.

Secondly, Another Reaſon is, becauſe all ſuch Occaſions of Sin, and ſuch Appearances of Sin, have guilt in them alſo, as being againſt the ſame Commandment that that Sin violates and tends unto; for the ſame Commandment that forbids the Sin it ſelf, forbids all *occaſions*, and all *appearances* of that Sin. That Commandment that forbids *Theft*, forbids alſo whatever may induce, though but remotely, thereunto. And that Commandment that forbids *Adultery*, forbids alſo all remote occaſions thereof. Hence it is that *Solomon* gives the young Man that ſcrupulous Caution againſt a ſtrange Woman, in *Prov.* 5. 8. *Come not near the door of her Houſe.* Why, to paſs by the door of her Houſe, is not in it ſelf unlawful; but yet when this may be juſtly feared to prove an occaſion of Sin, or when by going near a Houſe, it may be ſtrongly preſumed by others, that we are guilty of any Sin, then it muſt be carefully avoided and abſtained from. So again, *When the Wine looks red in the Cup*, *Solomon* bids us that we ſhould not then *look* upon it: Why, to look upon the Wine in the Cup, is not a thing that is unlawful; but becauſe this may be an occaſion of Intemperance, and Drunkenneſs, or the like; therefore we muſt abſtain from this very *appearance* and occaſion of *Evil*. So then, in the *appearance of Evil*, there is not only the evil of Scandal given to others, but there is alſo the evil of Guilt in it ſelf. And therefore let us all examine our ſelves what at at any time hath proved a ſnare to us, and what hath been an occaſion of ſinning. Have you not often ſaid it, and reſolved it, that you will venture but ſo far and no farther; and though you do approach near to Sin, yet you will keep your ſelves within your Duty; and have you not found it, that when you have ventured thus upon the *occaſions of Sin*, you have ſtopt no where ſhort of the commiſſion of thoſe Sins? This is to put your ſelves out of God's way, and to put your ſelves from under his protection; for God doth not uſually keep them from the *commiſſion* of Sin, who do not keep themſelves from the *Occaſions and Appearances* of Sin. And ſo much for the *Firſt Poſition*.

But if in caſe an Action *appears evil* to a Man's ſelf, though this apprehenſion of it be wholly groundleſs, then I ſhall lay down this *Second Poſition*: And that is,

Though

Though an Action be in it ſelf indifferent, yet if it *appear evil* and ſinful to us, we ought not in any caſe, while that miſ-perſwaſion continues, to venture upon the doing of it; no, though by doing of it, we might avoid the greateſt Evil: Yea, we are rather, if *Providence* bring us to that ſad choice, to loſe our very Lives, than to do any thing againſt the perſwaſions of our own Conſciences, though in it ſelf it be not evil or ſinful. The reaſon of this is clear; becauſe we are rather to chuſe the greateſt Affliction and Suffering than to commit the leaſt Sin; but now to go contrary to the Dictates and Perſwaſions of our own Conſciences, this is Sin, *Rom.* 14. 23. *Whatever is not of Faith, is Sin*; that is, whatever a Man doth, if he be not fully perſwaded and convinced of the lawfulneſs thereof in his own Conſcience, that is a Sin to him that ventures upon it while he is unſatisfied, though the Thing it ſelf may be lawful. And *he that doubteth*, ſays the *Apoſtle*, in the ſame Verſe, *is damned if he eateth*; that is, though there be no real difference betwixt one kind of Meat and another, but all are alike lawful; yet if a ſcrupulous Conſcience puts a difference betwixt them, where there is none, and if it account it unlawful to eat of ſome ſorts of Meat, if after this, a Man ventures to eat them, hereby he ſins, ſays the *Apoſtle*, and incurrs damnation, by doing that againſt his Conſcience, that yet, were his Conſcience otherwiſe informed, were lawful for him to do. And ſo in *Rom.* 14. 20. *For Meat deſtroy not the Work of God; all things are pure, but it is evil for him who eateth with offence.* Theſe and many other places clearly prove that what is done againſt a Man's own Conſcience, that is ſinful, to that Man. Conſcience hath the privilege of a Negative Vote in the Soul; nothing can lawfully be done by us but what hath the full conſent and approbation of our Conſciences; and though every thing we think is lawful, doth not thereupon preſently become lawful to us, yet what we think is unlawful, doth thereupon become unlawful for us to do, and we ought, whatever the caſe be, wholly to abſtain from the doing of it.

Thirdly, If the Action that we judge evil and unlawful to us, be our Duty, and ſo becomes neceſſary to us, then are we under a moſt ſad entanglement; we ſin if we do it, and we ſin alſo unleſs we do it. This is the unhappineſs of many, that through a miſ-informed Conſcience they verily believe they ought to abſtain from that which is indeed their Duty, and to do that wherein they ſin indeed if they do it: And ſo Chriſt ſpeaks of ſome that thought verily *they did God good Service when they perſecuted and murdered his Saints*, in *John* 16. 2. If they did not what they thought was good ſervice to God, they ſinned on that hand; and yet if they killed the *Saints*, which they judged to be good ſervice, they ſinned on that hand alſo; ſo that they were entangled on both hands. So is it in our days alſo; we have ſeen and known many that thought it their duty to abſtain from Ordinances; yea, who thought it their duty to perform no duty at all to God: Now if theſe Men abſtain from them, they ſin in doing that which is contrary to what God commands; if they uſe them, they ſin too, becauſe they do that which is contrary to what Conſcience commands. So that it is indeed the greateſt Plague and Puniſhment in the World for God to give Men up to the power of an erroneous and miſ-guided Conſcience. Now it appears that whatever a Man doth againſt his Conſcience, be the Action Indifferent, or be the Action his Duty, and ſo is neceſſary; yet he ſins: Which is evident in two Things.

Firſt, Becauſe there is no Man but thinks his Conſcience is rightly informed; no Man thinks his Conſcience erroneous; every one judgeth himſelf to be in the right, and to be rightly informed. Now if he thus judgeth, and acts contrarily, he ſins, becauſe he intends to ſin; and therefore by croſſing an erroneous Conſcience, though poſſibly he doth well in the Action, yet he ſins in Intention, ſince he doth that that he himſelf thinks doth croſs the Rule by which he ſhould walk.

Secondly, Another Reaſon is this; becauſe by acting contrary to Conſcience, though miſ-informed, and erroneous, we do contemn the Authority and Will of God; and therefore it is Sin. We are all to guide our Conſciences by the Word, that is, God's written Will; and we are all to guide our Lives by our Conſciences. No Man thinks his Conſcience to be erroneous; but thinks it to be according to the Will of God. Now if we do not act accordingly, we ſin as much as if indeed it were informed according to the Will of God. Conſcience is God's Deputy and Vicegerent in the Soul, and what Conſcience ſaith, we think it

it is God that commands, whether it be or not; and to act contrary to it, is vertually and implicitely to diſobey God; becauſe we think what Conſcience ſpeaks, God ſpeaks; and therefore it is very ſad to fall under the entanglements of an erroneous Conſcience; for then we are under a ſad neceſſity of ſinning on both hands: If we act according to it, we ſin; and if we act not according to it, we ſin. We ſhould therefore, above all things, heartily beg and deſire of God, who is the Lord of Conſcience, that he would rightly inform our Conſciences in thoſe things that are our Duties, that ſo by guiding our Lives by our Conſciences, we may guide them alſo according to his Will.

Theſe Three Poſitions now reſpect thoſe things that *appear evil* to our ſelves; but then there are other Things that have a good Appearance unto us, that yet may have an *evil Appearance* to others; they may ſcruple, and be offended at what we do, though for our own parts, we our ſelves are ſufficiently ſatisfied in the Lawfulneſs of it. And indeed our Times (what through different Cuſtoms and Intereſts) have brought Men's Conſciences alſo to ſuch different ſizes, that it is utterly impoſſible but ſome will condemn what others allow as lawful; yea, what others not only allow, but ſtiffly maintain to be neceſſary, and our Duty. How then ſhould we behave our ſelves in this Caſe? What Rules muſt we walk by, ſo as to keep Conſciences void of offence, not only to God, but as far as is poſſible towards Men alſo? In this, if any thing that belongs to Chriſtianity, there lyes a great deal of difficulty to ſtate the Caſe aright, or aright to practiſe it; and the Difficulty is increaſed from theſe two Conſiderations, which I ſhall lay down as general Premiſes to the following Diſcourſe.

Firſt, If we give no power to the ſcrupulous Judgments of weak and tender Conſciences to oblige us to Duty, to abſtain from what appears evil to them, then we ſhall ſin evidently againſt the Law of *Charity*, and againſt many *Apoſtolical* Injunctions and Commands, that we ſhould have reſpect to their Opinions and Cenſures; eſpecially in *Rom.* 14. and in 1 *Cor.* chap. 8. and 10. almoſt throughout. Indeed there is ſcarce any one thing belonging to Chriſtianity that hath more Rules and Preſcripts oftner preſcribed by the *Apoſtle* to us, than that of abſtaining from offending the weak Conſciences of others.

Secondly, If we make other Mens Conſciences the Rule of ours, and if we lay down this for a Maxim, That we ought to do nothing that appears evil to another;

This, *Firſt*, would be utterly impoſſible, ſince Men are of ſuch contrary Perſwaſions, that if the doing of an Action appear evil to one, the omiſſion thereof appears as evil to another; ſo that unleſs we can at once both do it and not do it, ſome will unavoidably take offence at it, and be ſcandalized at us.

Secondly, This would abridge, yea, utterly deſtroy all *Chriſtian Liberty* in things indifferent; becauſe, if nothing ſhould be lawful that another ſcruples, then almoſt every thing would become ſinful, ſince almoſt every thing is ſcrupled by ſome or other. In vain therefore is it to reckon it as our Privilege that we are freed from the *Old Ceremonial Law*, and that heavy Yoke of Ordinances that none were able to bear, if yet *Chriſtian Religion* brings our Conſciences under the moſt imperious Laws of Mens Humours, Cenſures, and Opinions; it were far eaſier to obſerve all the *Levitical Law* from one end of it to the other, than to be bound to thoſe *worldly Rudiments*, as the *Apoſtle* calls them in *Col.* 2. *Touch not, taſt not, handle not*; wear not, ſpeak not, if ſuch a Perſon be offended at it, and count it unlawful.

Now, from the conſideration of theſe *Two Particulars*, I ſhall lay dow this *Fourth Poſition*, concerning Abſtinence from the *Appearance of Evil*, in reſpect of others; and that is, if the *Appearance of Evil* is to others, and not to our ſelves, then in ſome *Caſes* we are bound in Duty and Conſcience to *abſtain* from it, and in others not: Whatever hath the Shew or *Appearance of Evil* in it, it muſt either be commanded, and ſo it is neceſſary; or elſe it is left indifferent and arbitrary; and accordingly we may take theſe following Rules.

Firſt, If ſo be thoſe thing that *appear evil* only to others, either are in themſelves, or at leaſt they appear to us to be commanded, and ſo neceſſary, we are bound not to regard; yea, we are bound to deſpiſe and ſcorn the *Scruples* of all the World; if they will be offended at us for doing of that which is our duty, let them be offended; we may in this caſe uſe the ſame Plea that

the *Apoſtles* did, *Acts* 4. 19. *Whether it be right before the Lord to obey Men, rather than God, judge ye.* To perform a Duty, can be but a Scandal to men at the moſt, and thoſe alſo uſually of the prophaner ſort; but to omit a Duty for fear of Scandalizing men, is a Scandal and an Offence even unto God himſelf. It is moſt *prepoſterous Charity* to run upon Sin in our ſelves, only to prevent Scandal in others. Though all the World cenſure Holineſs and Strictneſs of Life to be only a ſour and rigid humour, and an affectation of Singularity; yet muſt we not, upon any pretence of gratifying their humour, or winning upon them, remit the leaſt part of that ſeverity that the Law of God and our Conſciences require from us.

But, *what if ſuppoſe, as too often it happens, that this ſtrictneſs and holy ſeverity proves to be an occaſion of Sin unto others accidentally, what muſt we do in that caſe?* What is it that makes ſo many hate Religion, and ſcoff at the Profeſſors thereof, but only their Lives are too moroſe and reſerved; Duties are too frequent and tedious; ſo that ſome laugh and mock, others ſtorm and rage, and all are frighted from the embracing of that Profeſſion that requires ſo much Rigour and Severity. Why, be it ſo, yet we muſt not abate any thing of our Duty, nor ſin our ſelves, to keep others from ſinning. Is it your duty to pray, or are you call'd to any other Duty? Though you are aſſured that all that hear you, will ſcoff at you, yet you ought not therefore for fear of it, to forbear that Duty, or to leſſen your Fervency and Affection in it. Here indeed is required much Spiritual Prudence and Diſcretion, to diſcern the Seaſon of our Duty for ſeveral Circumſtances; and among thoſe Offences that wicked Men may take, it may make that ceaſe from being a Duty that at other times is our Duty: And therefore the *Wiſe Man* in *Prov.* 26. 4. bids us, *not to anſwer a Fool according to his Folly*; and yet in the next Verſe he bids us, *anſwer a Fool according to his Folly*; Two Commands quite contrary in two *Verſes* following one another: Now this is to note to us, That according to ſeveral Circumſtances and ſeveral Opportunities, it may be our duty to abſtain at one time from that, that at another time it is our duty to do; it is our duty ſometimes not to *reprove a Fool*, but to anſwer him *according to his Folly*; and according to divers Circumſtances, at another time it is our duty to *reprove him*; and not to anſwer him *according to his Folly*. But yet notwithſtanding that which is our duty in its particular ſeaſon, and which we are convinced to be ſo, we ought to perform it, though all the World be offended at it; yea, and if it were poſſible that it ſhould prove an occaſion of Sin unto all the World, for as we muſt not do evil, out of hope that it may prove an occaſion of good; ſo neither muſt we forbear the doing of good, that evil may occaſionally enſue thereupon. Our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt was, as it was propheſied of him, to be *a Stone of ſtumbling, and a Rock of offence*; almoſt all were ſcandalized at him; ſome at his *Doctrine*, as a deſpiſer of the *Law of Moſes*, others at his *Converſation*, as being a *Glutton, a Wine-bibber, and a Friend of Publicans and Sinners*; but yet for all theſe Out-cries, he alters nothing either in his Teaching, or his Living; but whilſt they are clamouring againſt him, and ſpeaking evil of him, he ſtill goes about doing good: And truly thoſe that will be the Diſciples and Followers of Chriſt, though the way in which they are to worſhip and ſerve God, be generally decried, and every-where ſpoken againſt, and carp'd at, as needleſs Peeviſhneſs; yet if it be a known Duty, they muſt not, they ought not to put themſelves out of the way of their obedince, to put others out of their groundleſs Offences. Only let me add a neceſſary Caution to this Particular alſo; for we cannot be too exact in ſtating this Caſe of *giving offence* to others, and that is this.

If that *appear* a Duty to us that hath an *Appearance of Evil* in it to the generality of the moſt ſober and ſerious Chriſtians, (let us ſuppoſe that) why now though this ſhould not preſently ſway our *Conſciences*, yet it ſhould engage us to make a ſtrict Search and Enquiry, whether it be our duty or not; if it is that which is contrary to the Opinion and Practice of holy and pious Chriſtians, it ought to have this Authority with us, to put us to a ſtand, and to make us to examine whether that which we account a Duty, be indeed a Duty, or not: As for inſtance, ſome among us at this day are perſwaded that they ought to worſhip God one way, and ſome another; and what appears a Duty to one, hath the appearance of Evil in it to another: Why now follow neither of theſe; becauſe it is their Judgment and Practice; but yet if thy perſwaſion be contrary

contrary to the perſwaſion of the moſt Pious and moſt ſober Chriſtians, this ought ſo far to prevail, as to make Men ſuſpect leſt they are miſtaken, and to put them upon a diligent Enquiry, and an impartial Search into their Grounds and Arguments; but after all, ſtill follow that which you are convinced in your own Conſcience is your Duty, how evil ſoever it may appear to others either one way or other. And that's the firſt Particular: If thoſe things appear evil to others that are our duty, or neceſſary, or that appear ſo to us, we ought not to regard the Cenſures and Opinions of others concerning it.

Secondly, If ſo be thoſe things that are in themſelves *indifferent*, and appear to us ſo to be, have yet an *evil appearance* unto others, if they be offended and ſcandalized at them, then the Rule of Chriſtian Charity obligeth us to abſtain from them. I call thoſe Things *indifferent*, that are neither in themſelves forbidden, nor yet commanded, but only permitted and left to the arbitrary government of every private Chriſtian's Prudence and Diſcretion. As for inſtance, under the *Levitical Law*, ſome kinds of Meat were unlawful; as in *Lev.* 11. And ſome kinds of *Garments* were unlawful to be worn; as in *Lev.* 19. 19. But now, under the *Goſpel*, ſince the aboliſhing of thoſe *Carnal Ordinances*, as the *Apoſtle* calls them, *Heb.* 9. 4. both all ſorts of *Meat* become lawful, whilſt we uſe them within the Bounds of Temperance and Moderation; and all ſorts of *Garments* may be lawfully worn, while we uſe them within the Bounds of Modeſty and Decency: Theſe Things are left free for us to uſe them, or not to uſe them, without Sin, according to our own conveniency and diſcretion. Theſe Things I call indifferent Things. And yet ſuch is the ſtrictneſs of *Chriſtian Religion*, that theſe indifferent, lawful Things, are not to be uſed at random neither. It is a certain Truth, though it may ſeem a Paradox, that we never ſin in any thing more than in doing that which is it ſelf lawful; in theſe things we uſually offend, either by uſing them immoderately, or with a neglect, yea, with a contempt of thoſe Conſciences that are weak. The Uſe of our *Chriſtian Liberty* is not uncontroulable; but God hath ſubjected it to the *Conſciences* of others; ſo that it is utterly unlawful for us to do that which is in it ſelf lawful, if it give offence unto others. How this ought to be limited I ſhall ſhew you by and by; in the mean time, ſee it clearly proved out of 1 C[illegible]. 10. from *v.* 25. to the end, where the *Apoſtle* decides this *Queſtion, Whether it were lawful to eat Meat that was offered to Idols.* For the underſtanding of this, you muſt know, it was a cuſtom among the *Heathens* to offer Cattel in Sacrifices to their *Idol Gods*; part whereof they did eat in their *Religious Feaſts* in the *Temple*, ſelling the Remainder in the common Market. Now the Queſtion was not, Whether it was unlawful to join with the *Heathens* in eating of their *Sacrifices* in the *Temple* before their *Idols*; for this were to join with them in their *Idolatrous Worſhip?* But there were ſome more *ſcrupulous Chriſtians* among them, that judged it unlawful to *eat* of thoſe *Sacrifices* when ſold in the *Shambles*, or common Market; the Apoſtle now there determines this Matter to be altogether indifferent, in *ver.* 25. *Whatſoever is ſold in the Shambles*, whether offered to *Idols*, or not, *that eat*; but yet, if any *weak Chriſtian* even ſo ſcruple to eat that which is offered to *Idols* after it is ſold in the *Shambles*, and if he be offended at others for eating of it, the *Apoſtle* then gives this Rule, That the ſtrong ought not to eat for the ſake of the weak, though the thing be indifferent, and might be done; yet the ſtrong ought not to eat for the ſake of the weak, in *v.* 28. *If any ſay, This was offered in Sacrifice to Idols*, though ſold in the Shambles, yet *eat not for his ſake that ſhewed you it.* Now what the *Apoſtle* here ſpeaks of *Meat* offered in Sacrifice to *Idols*, holds true proportionably in *Apparel*, in *Recreations*, and the like indifferent lawful Things, all which become Sin to you, if they become *Offences* and *Scandals* unto others. Now the Reaſon of this is evident; becauſe when Men raſhly do what they think is lawful, without regarding the *Scruples* of others, hereby they do as the *Apoſtle* ſpeaks, in *Rom.* 14. 13. *put a ſtumbling-block, and an occaſion of falling in their Brother's way*, that is, they bring him into the Commiſſion of a Sin, and this is againſt the Law of *Charity*. For ſays the *Apoſtle*, in *v.* 14. *If thy Brother be grieved at thy Meat, thou walkeſt not charitably.* Now in doing that which *appears evil* to others, though it be lawful in it ſelf, yet it may be an occaſion of Sin to them two Ways.

Firſt, *It may alienate their Hearts from the Ways of God.* When notwithſtanding all the Profeſſion thou makeſt of Holineſs, and of Strictneſs of Life and Converſation; yet they ſee that which they account looſe and ſinful, is generally practiſed and maintained, whether it be ſinful or not; yet ſeeing you generally practiſe that which is accounted evil, this alienates their hearts from the Ways of God, and from the Profeſſion of Religion.

Secondly, *It brings Sin alſo; becauſe it may encourage them to do the ſame things that you do alſo.* Now that may be Sin to them that is to you lawful; becauſe, as I told you, whatever is done contrary to the Dictates and Perſwaſions of a Man's own Conſcience, that is Sin to him: But now many weak Chriſtians may be induced to act contrary to Conſcience, only acting according to the examples of ſtronger Chriſtians, that are better informed, and that have more Light to direct them, and ſo by their unlimited doing what they think is lawful, they bring a great deal of guilt upon the Conſciences of others that are weak, and that ſcruple the things they ſee others do; and yet becauſe they ſee others do them, will themſelves venture to do them alſo, though they ſcruple it. It is not enough therefore that you your ſelves are ſatisfied in your own Conſciences that what you do is lawful; but you muſt weigh and conſider how it will ſuit with the Conſciences of other Men alſo, elſe what you think is lawful, may be a Sin both unto you and unto them; to them, becauſe they are brought to ſin by your example; and to you, becauſe you brought them to ſin by doing that which was to you lawful.

Object. But here ſome may ſay, *This is to bring us under a moſt intolerable yoke of Servitude, if we muſt be bound to obſerve every ignorant humorous Man's Conſcience, that will ſcruple every thing; it is in vain to tell us that ſome things are lawful and allowed to us, if yet we muſt do nothing to give offence in that which appears evil to others; for what one thing is there in the World that doth not appear evil to ſome or other? This is to bring us into an intolerable Bondage and Slavery.*

Anſw. To this I anſwer; There are ſeveral Caſes, wherein, though there be an *Appearance of Evil* unto others in ſome things, yet we may lawfully do them; as,

Firſt, We are not obliged to abſtain from things indifferent that may have in them an *Appearance of Evil* to others, unleſs we have ſome grounds to conjecture, that they take offence, and are ſcandalized at them. We are not bound to ask every one that we meet with, whether they ſcruple ſuch and ſuch a thing that we muſt do; this were endleſs and ridiculous. We are not obliged to abſtain, if there be only a remote poſſibility of Scandal, unleſs there be alſo ſome great probability of it; nor are we bound to divine whether or no it be not poſſible that ſuch an Action of ours may be offenſive to ſome or others; but if there be no preſent probabilty to conjecture that ſuch a thing may be offenſive, we may then lawfully do whatever is lawful unto us. And therefore,

Firſt, If by comparing the Circumſtances of an Action together, we cannot probably gueſs any ſhould be offended at it, it is their Weakneſs, and not our Sin, if they be offended at it. Indeed, whenever we converſe with others, it becomes our Chriſtian Prudence and Charity to weigh ſuch Circumſtances exactly; to conſider the Action that we do, though lawful, yet whether or no it be common or unuſual; to conſider the Perſons with whom we are, whether weak or ſtrong, whether ſcrupulous or reſolved Chriſtians; for that which may be lawful in ſome of theſe Circumſtances, may be unlawful in others of them: An Action may be lawful if it be common, tho' it be done before a *weak* and *ſcrupulous Chriſtian*, and it may be lawful tho' uncommon, if it be done before a *ſtrong* and a *reſolved Chriſtian*; but if it be unuſual, and if it be done before a *ſcrupulous* and a *weak Chriſtian*, it may ſeem to have in it a great probability of giving of *Offence*, and being a *Scandal* to them; and therefore we muſt forbear ſuch uncommon, unuſual actions before weak Chriſtians, in which there may be any probable gueſs that they will take offence, and be ſcandalized at them; but if upon examining theſe and the like Circumſtances, we can find no ſuch probability of giving of Offence, we may then make uſe of our *Chriſtian Liberty* in them.

Secondly, If after we have weighed theſe Circumſtances, and can find no probability of *Scandal* in them, if others with whom we are, or who are liable to take exception, if they do not diſcover their Exceptions, we are not bound to abſtain from any thing that is indifferently lawful. We have a hint of this from

from the *Apoſtle*, if he ſay to you. 1 Cor. 10. 28. *If any one ſay to you, this was offered to Idols, eat not*; But if they take *offence*, and will not make it known, the *offence*, as it reſts in their own boſom, ſo ſhall it lye on their own heads, and we ſhall be guiltleſs; and that's the firſt Limitation. We are not bound to *abſtain* from things lawful in themſelves, though they carry in them an *appearance of Evil* towards others, if there be no probable grounds to conjecture that they will be offended at them.

Secondly, We muſt conſider whether or not the Action that we do, which another takes *offence* at, be as *indifferent* to us, as it is *indifferent* in reſpect of God, that is, whether it be of great conveniency, or of great importance and concernment to us; if it be not of ſuch convenience and importance, then the *Rule* of *Charity* obligeth us to abſtain from it. There are thoſe things that are *indifferent* in reſpect of God, that yet may not be *indifferent* in reſpect of us; becauſe they may not be of great concernment unto us; if it be ſo, then we ought to obſerve this Method, as long as we may without any notable inconveniency: We muſt abſtain from theſe things, indeavouring in the mean time to ſatisfie their *Doubts*, and inform their *Conſciences* of the Lawfulneſs of that wherewith they are offended. This Rule the *Apoſtle* lays down for us, *Rom.* 15. 2. *Let every one ſeek to pleaſe his Neighbour for his good to edification.* We ought to *abſtain* from thoſe things that are *indifferent* in reſpect of God, and yet of importance unto us from the exceptions of others, ſo long as we have no notable inconveniency accruing to our ſelves thereby, endeavouring alſo to inform them of the lawfulneſs of them.

But what if they continue ſcrupulous, and contemn Information, reſolving not to be ſatisfied with any Reaſons that we can produce, what muſt we do in this Caſe? *Object.*

Truly it ceaſeth now from being any longer an *offence* to a weak Brother, and becomes a groundleſs offence taken up by a peeviſh, froward and malicious Perſon; and certainly in this caſe no Man is bound to *abſtain* from that which is *lawful*, though he may give *offence* to ſuch an one; eſpecially if it be of moment and concernment to him: As for inſtance; if any be unſatisfied of the lawfulneſs of another Man's Calling and Profeſſion, as at this day the *Socinians* are unſatisfied of the lawfulneſs of *Warlike* and *Military Employments*; if they will not be ſatisfied when ſufficient Reaſons are alledg'd to juſtifie it, we are not bound in this caſe to quit our Callings; for they are Matters of Concernment to us; but we are bound rather to neglect their Cenſures, as proceeding from Malice and Spite. *Anſw.*

But what if others ſtill continue unſatisfied, not out of Pride *and Malice, but out of Weakneſs, as being inſufficient to receive that information from us that we give them, and cannot conceive of the depth of our Reaſons and Arguments for the juſtifying of ſuch and ſuch Actions, what ſhall we do in that Caſe?* *Object.*

To this I anſwer in the *Third* place; We are not bound to abſtain from what they are offended at, unleſs they produce ſome probable Grounds and Reaſons for their Offences. It is not enough to oblige our Conſciences, that they tell us they imagine ſuch a thing to be evil, unleſs they ſhew ſome Grounds for their Imagination; nor is it here required, that the Grounds they produce ſhould be demonſtrative; but it is enough if they be probable Grounds, though they amount not to prove the things that *appear evil* to them, to be in themſelves evil; yet if they prove theſe things carry in them a probable preſumption of evil, this is ſufficient to oblige us to abſtain from them. Hereupon it was that the *Apoſtle* forbid the *Corinthians* to *eat Meat offered unto Idols*; if any took offence at that Meat, others were not to eat thereof in their preſence and company, and that becauſe their offence had ſome probable ſhew of Reaſon to judge that they thought they had too much communion with *Idols*, becauſe they did *eat* of thoſe things that were *ſacrificed* to them: And upon this ground the *Apoſtle* himſelf reſolves, in *Cor.* 8. *ult.* That *if Meat made his Brother to offend, he would eat no Fleſh while the World ſtood*; that is, (as I take it) *no Fleſh offered to Idols*; for that is the Subject of which he had been treating all along that *Chapter*. Though it was lawful in it ſelf conſidered, yet becauſe the weak had probable Grounds and Reaſons to ſhew why *Fleſh offered to Idols* might not be eaten, therefore he would abſtain from it whilſt the World ſtood. And ſo in like manner, if any except againſt what we do, and bring this Reaſon for it, That it is too like the Cuſtom of wicked Men, that none do thus and thus but the generality of the looſer and *Anſw.*

prophaner ſort; this is ſuch a Ground, that though the Thing in it ſelf be not ſinful, yet we ought hereupon to *abſtain* from it, being a probable ground of Evil, though the Thing in it ſelf be not evil. But now if there be no ſuch probable Reaſons produced as carry in them a Shew and Appearance, that probably that is evil which we do, then we are not bound to abſtain meerly becauſe ſuch a Man ſaith or thinks ſuch an Action is evil: As for inſtance; if any think, as of late many have taken exception againſt Preaching in a *Pulpit*, and by an *Hour-Glaſs*, as things unlawful; truly unleſs they produce ſome Grounds to prove theſe things to be unlawful, their Cavils are not to be hearkened to, nor regarded; and ſo in any other Things that are *Indifferent* to be uſed.

In the laſt Place, take this Limitation alſo; We are not bound to *abſtain* from thoſe things that *appear evil* to others, though they are in themſelves lawful, unleſs in thoſe places, and at thoſe times, where there is no danger of giving *offence*; at other times, and in other places, we may lawfully do what is lawful. When there are any preſent that are weak and ſcrupulous, and apt to be ſcandalized at us, then we muſt have reſpect unto their weak Conſciences; but at other times we are left to free and full uſe of our Chriſtian Liberty.

THE

Nature, Danger, Aggravations, and Cure

OF

Preſumptuous SINNING, &c.

SERMON IX.

PSAL. xix. 13.

Keep back thy Servant alſo from Preſumptuous Sins; let them not have Dominion over me.

HAving in my former Subject treated of Abſtinence from thoſe Things that have in them the *Appearance of Evil*, I ſhall now from the Words read to you, ſpeak ſomething alſo of thoſe things that are *apparently evil*; that as you have already in part ſeen what Chriſtian Prudence and Circumſpection is required that your Converſations be not *offenſive*; ſo here you may alſo ſee what Fervency of Prayer, what Meaſure of Grace is requiſite that they be not *groſly wicked*.

In the *Verſe* immediately before the *Text*, the *Pſalmiſt* prays that God would *cleanſe him from his ſecret Faults*; that is, from Sins of Ignorance, whereof he knew himſelf to be guilty in the general, though in particular he knew not what they were; now in this *Verſe* he prays, that God would keep him from Sins of *Preſumption*. The Connexion of theſe two Requeſts is ſomewhat remarkable, and may afford us this pertinent and profitable Obſervation.

Doctrine. *That Sin is of a growing and advancing Nature.*

From Weakneſs to Wilfulneſs; from Ignorance to Preſumption, is its ordinary courſe and progreſs. The *Cloud* that *Elijah*'s Man ſaw, was at firſt no bigger than a hand's breadth, and it threatned no ſuch thing as a general Tempeſt; but yet at laſt it overſpread the face of the whole Heavens; Why, ſo truly a Sin that

at firſt ariſeth in the Soul, but as a ſmall Miſt, and is ſcarce diſcernable; yet if it be not ſcattered by the breath of Prayer, it will at length overſpread the whole Life, and become moſt tempeſtuous and raging; and therefore *David*, as one experienced in the deceitfulneſs of Sin, doth thus digeſt and methodize his Prayer; Firſt, againſt ſecret and leſſer Sins; and then againſt the more groſs and notorious; as knowing the one proceeds and iſſues from the other: *Lord, cleanſe me from my ſecret faults*; and this will be a moſt effectual means to preſerve and keep thy Servant from *Preſumptuous Sin*: And this *Obſervation* may be gathered from the connexion of the two Requeſts: But I ſhall not inſiſt on that.

The Words are a moſt ſincere and affectionate Prayer; and in them are obſervable,

Firſt, The Perſon that makes it; and that is not a vile, notorious Sinner, one that uſed to be overcome by preſumptuous Sins; but *David*, a Man after God's own heart, eminent for Holineſs and Piety; *Keep back thy Servant*, ſays he, *from preſumptuous Sins.*

Secondly, The Requeſt and Petition it ſelf; and that is, that God would keep him, not from Sins of common Frailty, and daily Infirmity, ſuch as no Man's Holineſs can exempt him from; but from Sins of Preſumption, from daring and ranting Sins, ſuch as one would think, that no Man that hath the leaſt Holineſs in him, could ever commit, *Keep back thy Servant from preſumptuous Sins.* In this *Petition* two Things are evidently implied.

Firſt, *That ſtrong propenſion that there is in the beſt to the worſt Sins.* Were it not ſo, what need *David* pray for reſtraining Grace? *Keep back thy Servant.* Lord, my Corruptions hurry me with all violence into the greateſt Sins; they perſwade, they force, they drag, they draw, they thruſt forward, and now, now I am going and yielding; but, Lord, withhold me, put a curb and check upon theſe violent and head-ſtrong Corruptions of mine; keep back, *keep me back from preſumptuous Sins.*

Secondly, *It implies that utter impotency that the beſt lye under to preſerve themſelves from the fouleſt ſins, without the ſpecial aid and aſſiſtance of divine Grace.* My Heart it is not in my own hands; my Ways are not at my own diſpoſe; I cannot ſtand longer than thou upholdeſt me; I cannot walk longer than thou leadeſt me; if thou withdraweſt thine everlaſting Arms from under me, I ſhall ſtumble, and fall, and tumble headlong into fearful Precipices, into vile Impieties, into Hell and Perdition it ſelf; and therefore, *Lord*, do thou keep me; do thou by thy Omnipotency ſupply my Impotency; by thy Power keep me from what mine own Weakneſs will certainly betray me unto; *Keep back thy Servant from preſumptuous Sins.* Theſe two Things are implied and couched in the Petition it ſelf.

Thirdly, In the Text we have the Reaſon alſo why *David* prays ſo earneſtly againſt preſumptuous Sins: Which Reaſon carries in it the Form of a diſtinct Petition by it ſelf; *Keep back thy Servant from preſumptuous Sins; let them not have dominion over me*: But yet it may be well underſtood as a Reaſon of the foregoing Requeſt, therefore, *Lord, keep me from preſumptuous Sins*; leſt by falling into the commiſſion of them, I fall alſo under the power of them; leſt by prevailing upon me, they get dominion and ſovereignty over me. And in this Reaſon alſo we have a hint of the incroaching nature of Sin ſtill; from the allowance of little and ſecret Sins, it proceeds to the commiſſion of groſs and preſumptuous Sins; and from the commiſſion of theſe, it proceeds to dominion over him; and therefore if we would not be Slaves to our Luſts, and Vaſſals to the Devil, we had need all of us to pray with *David*, *Lord, keep us from ſecret Sins*, leſt they break out into open and preſumptuous Sins; and, Lord, *keep us from preſumptuous Sins*, leſt they get dominion over us.

Now, from the Words thus divided and opened, ſeveral uſeful *Obſervations* may be raiſed.

As, *Firſt*, From the *Petition* it ſelf, we may obſerve theſe Two Doctrinal Points.

Firſt, That *in the very beſt Chriſtians there is great proneneſs and inclination to the very worſt Sins: David* himſelf prays for reſtraining Grace to keep him from *preſumptuous Sins.*

Doctr. 2. *Secondly*, Obſerve, *It is not our own Power, but only Divine Grace that can preſerve us from the moſt horrid and vileſt Sins.* Thoſe Sins that we now abhorr the very thoughts of, yet were we but left to our ſelves, and were but Divine Grace abſtracted from us, even thoſe Sins we ſhould commit with all greedineſs.

And then from the *Perſon* who makes this Prayer and Requeſt unto God, obſerve,

Doctr. 3. *Thirdly*, That, *Becauſe the ſtrongeſt Chriſtians are too weak of themſelves to reſiſt the greateſt Sins, therefore they ought continually to implore the aid and aſſiſtance of Divine Grace.* *David*, though a ſtrong and mighty Saint, yet durſt not truſt himſelf alone to grapple with a Corruption or a Temptation; and therefor in the ſenſe of his own Weakneſs, he prays the Lord to keep him; *Keep thou thy Servant.*

And then, Laſtly, from the Reaſon, *Keep me from preſumptuous Sins, leſt they get dominion over me*; or, *let them not get dominion over me:* Obſerve,

Doctr. 4. That, *The frequent Commiſſion of preſumptuous and daring Sins, will ſubject the Soul to the reigning Power and Dominion of Sin.*

But I ſhall not handle each of theſe by themſelves; but give you the Sum and Subſtance of them all in one, and ſo proſecute that: Which is this;

Doctrine. That, *The beſt Security the beſt of God's Children have from the Commiſſion and from the Dominion of preſumptuous Sins, is only their own fervent Prayers, and God's Almighty Grace.*

In the Proſecution of this *Doctrine*, I ſhall endeavour to ſhew you, when it is that a Man is guilty of preſumptuous Sins, and wherein the Nature of ſuch Sins conſiſts.

Firſt, Then a Sin is preſumptous, when it is committed againſt the powerful Dictates of a Man's own Conſcience, and againſt the clear Convictions of the Holy Ghoſt. When Conſcience is awakened in Conviction, and rings aloud in Men's Ears, the ways thou liveſt in are groſly ſinful, the end of them is *Hell* and *Death*; thou wadeſt through the deareſt Blood of thine own Soul if thou goeſt on; ſeeſt thou not how Guilt diſmally ſtares thee in the Face? Seeſt thou not how the Mouth of *Hell* belches out Fire, and Flames, and Brimſtone againſt thee? Stop therefore, I here, as God's Officer, arreſt thee. If now, when *Conſcience* thus calls, and cries, and threatens, Men will yet venture on, this is moſt bold and daring Preſumption: To diſobey the Arreſt but of the *King's Officer*, is a moſt preſumptuous Crime; how much more therefore to diſobey the Arreſt of *Conſcience*, which is the chief and *ſupreme Officer* of God, and who commands in the name, yea, in the ſtead of God, as it were, in the Soul; and yet truly, who among us is not in ſome kind or other guilty of this Preſumption? Why, Sirs, if God ſhould now come down in *terrible Majeſty* in the midſt of us, and if he ſhould ask every Man's *Conſcience* here, one by one; Conſcience, wert thou ever reſiſted? Wert thou ever oppoſed in executing thine Office to this and to that Soul? Why, where ſits the Perſon whoſe *Conſcience* muſt not anſwer, *Yes, Lord, I accuſe him, I teſtifie to his very face, I have often warned and admoniſhed him, O do not venture upon this or that Action; there's Sin, there's Guilt lyes under it; there's Wrath and Vengeance that will follow it; Oh pity, Oh ſpare thine own Soul; this Sin will everlaſtingly ruine thee if thou committeſt it?* And what, didſt thou commit it notwithſtanding all this? *Yes, Lord, while I was laying before him all the arguments that the thoughts of Heaven and Hell, of thy Glory and his own Happineſs, could adminiſter, yet ſo preſumptuous was he, as to fall upon me thine Officer; and theſe Stabs, theſe Gaſhes and Wounds I received while I was admoniſhing him, and warning him in thy Name.* O Sirs, a thouſand times better were it for us that we never had Conſciences; better that our *Conſciences* were utterly ſeared, and become inſenſible; better that they were ſtruck for ever dumb, and ſhould never open their Mouths more to reprove or to rebuke us; better that we never had had the leaſt glimmering of Light to diſtinguiſh betwixt our Duty, and what is Sin, than thus deſperately to out-face and ſtifle our convictions, and to offer violence to our *Conſciences*, and preſumptuouſly to ruſh into the commiſſion of Sin in deſpight of all theſe; better Men had no Conſciences at all, or that they were given up to a ſeared and a reprobate Senſe, than to ſin thus in deſpight of their *Conſciences.* What ſays our Saviour? *Luke* 12. 47. *That Servant that knew his Lord's Will, and did it not, he ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes.*

There

There are two Things wherein it appears that all Sins against Conscience, and against Convictions, are presumptuous Sins. *Two Aggravations of sinning against Conscience.*

First, *Because, in all such Sins there is a most horrid Contempt of the Authority and Sovereignity of the great God:* And what higher Presumption can there be, than for vile Worms to set at nought the *Authority* of that God at whose Frown Heaven, and Hell, and Earth tremble. The *Voice of Conscience* rightly informed by the *Scripture*, it is the *Voice of God himself*; it is God speaking in a Man's Bowels, and whispering to a Man's very Heart. As *Moses* was the *Interpreter* betwixt God and the *Israelites*, so *Conscience* is the *Interpreter* betwixt God and us. Why now, would it not have been, think you, a most desperate Presumption, and a most daring Affront against the Majesty and Sovereignty of God, if while he was with his own voice pronouncing the *Ten Commandments* with Thundering, and Lightning, and Earthquake, from Mount *Sinai*, at the same time the *Israelites* to have been notoriously breaking and sinning against every one of those *Commandments*, as he spake them? Truly, though now God delivers his Will and Commands to us, not immediately by his own Mouth, as then he did, but by *Conscience* his *Interpreter*, yet while we know that *Conscience* speaks to us in the Name of God, it is as much fearful Presumption for us to slight the voice of Conscience, as if we should slight the voice of God himself speaking from Heaven immediately to us. And that's the *first* Thing. *1. It is a Contempt of the Authority of God.*

Secondly, *By sinning against our Consciences, and against our Convictions, we make it very evident that we stand in no awe or dread of any such thing as Hell and eternal Damnation is, and is not that Boldness? Is not that Presumption?* You scorn possibly to be such puling, whimpering Sinners, as to be affrighted with such Bugbears as everlasting Torments, and everlasting Wrath and Vengeance is; you know the *Wages of Sin is Death*, and that the Ways you take, lead down to the Chambers of Destruction; and yet though *God* and *Devil* stand in the way, you will through: Are not these, think you, bold and presumptuous Sinners, that will go on in Sin, though *Hell-Fire* flashes in their Faces, who, though God should cleave the Ground upon which they walk, and through that Chink should give them a view of *Hell*; though they should see the Damned tumbling up and down in those Torments, and hear their Yellings, and Shriekings, and Roarings; yea, though God should point them out a place in *Hell*, and tell them, Look Sinner, yonder is a place kept void, and heated from the beginning of the World for thee; yet are there some such bold and daring Wretches, that they would outbrave all this, and they would sin in despight either of *Heaven* or *Hell*; yea, and which is a most sad and dreadful consideration, some there are whose *Consciences* are already brim-full of extream horrour, and anguish, and yet they will venture upon those Sins that have caused that horrour, and are not such presumptuous Sinners? They give their *Consciences* wound upon wound; and though sometimes they roar bitterly, yet they will sin outrageously, even then when they roar and smart for Sin: So that this is a clear evidence of a *presumptuous Sin*, when a Sin is committed against a Man's own Conscience, against Knowledge, and against Conviction; this makes a Sin to be a presumptuous Sin, when Conscience cries out, Murder, Murder, Soul-Murder; when it beseeches with Tears of Blood that they draw from it, to desist from their Sins, and yet is not heard nor regarded; this is *presumptuous sinning*, sinning with a high hand, and with a brazen Forehead. *2. It is an evident Argument that we stand in no awe of Hell and Damnation.*

Secondly, *Then a Man sins presumptuously, when he sins upon long deliberation and forecast, plotting and contriving with himself how he may accomplish his Sin.* Some Sins are committed meerly through a sudden Surprize; a Temptation comes upon the Soul unawares, and finds it unprovided to make any resistance, and so it prevails? So it was with the Apostle St. *Peter*, his Apostacy and Perjury was indeed very dreadful; yet he was overcome by a sudden Surprize; he had no foregoing Thoughts and Purposes to deny his Master; yea, his Resolution was to own and confess him to the very Death; and therefore though his Sins were foul Sins, yet they cannot be called *presumptuous Sins*, but rather Sins of weakness and infirmity. And so there are divers Christians that are overtaken with Faults against their Resolutions and Prayers, yea, and contrary to their own Expectations; now the Sins of such Persons are not *presumptuous Sins*; but then a Sin becomes presumptuous, when it is committed after long deliberation, pre-meditation and forecast. There is a twofold Deliberation that makes a Sin presumptuous. *To sin upon long deliberation, is to sin presumptuously.*

First, *When a Man ſins after he hath deliberated with himſelf, whether he ſhall ſin or not.* When upon debating the Caſe, at length, after much pondering and conſideration, he conſents to Sin: And thus though St. *Peter* denied his Maſter upon a Surprizal, yet *Judas* betray'd upon deliberation. Now this is moſt deſperate high Preſumption to ſin when a Man ponders and conſiders with himſelf, and weighs the Reaſons on both ſides, whether he ſhall ſin or not; and yet truly of ſuch preſumptuous Sins as theſe are, we may all of us be found guilty. Why, ask but your ſelves, Did you never commit a Sin after you had weighed in your deliberate Thoughts all Circumſtances, putting in the beneficial Conſequences, the Pleaſure, Profit and Credit of Sin in the one Balance, and the dangerous and deſtructive Conſequences, that Wrath and Hell that is due to Sin, in the other Balance? Who of us all can acquit himſelf from being guilty of ſinning after ſuch Compariſons as theſe are have been made, after the due weighing both of Sin and our Duty; and yet have we not choſen the Sin before our Duty? Truly to ſin after ſuch deliberate Compariſons as theſe are, is a provoking and a preſumptuous Sin.

Secondly, *When Men do deliberate and contrive how they may ſin to the greateſt advantage, how they may make the moſt of their Iniquities; when they plot and contrive with themſelves how they may ſqueeze and draw out the very utmoſt of all that Pleaſure and Sweet that they imagine Sin carries with it; this makes that Sin a preſumptuous Sin.* Thus thoſe *Drunkards* contrived to prolong their Sin, *Iſaiah* 56. *v.* 12. *Come*, ſay they, *we will fetch Wine, and fill our ſelves with ſtrong Drink, and to morrow ſhall be as this day, and much more abundant.* Here they forecaſted to make as great advantage as they could of their Drunkenneſs, and to get as much pleaſure out of it as they could. This now is moſt *preſumptuous Sinning.* Thus the Prophet *Jeremy* alſo ſpeaks of thoſe that were *wiſe to do evil*; *Jer.* 4. 22. That could improve Sin to the very utmoſt, that could get more out of a Sin by their Husbanding of it, than another could that had not that Skill and Myſtery; theſe are wiſe to do evil; and ſuch are *preſumptuous Sins*; when Men ſtretch and ſtrain their Wits brim-full of ſinfull Devices, either ſo as they may reap moſt from them, or ſo as they may keep their Wickedneſs ſecret from the obſervation and notice of Men, then they ſin preſumptuouſly. Do not therefore flatter your ſelves, that though indeed you are Sinners, as who indeed is not? yet you ſin only through weakneſs and infirmity: Why, ask your own Conſciences, Did you never ſin, or, do you not uſe to ſin upon premediation and forecaſt? When you have conceived Sin in your own hearts, do you not nurſe it and nouriſh it there, till you find ſome fit opportunity to commit it, plotting to lay hold on ſome fit occaſion to act ſome wicked imagination that you have hatched in your own Heart? If ſo, this is clear, your ſinning is not out of weakneſs, but from ſtubbornneſs and wilfulneſs.

The more calm and quiet the Affections are, the more preſumptuous is that Sin.

Thirdly, *The more quiet and calm your Affections are when you ſin, the more free you are from the hurryings and perturbations of Paſſions when you ſin, the more preſumptuous are your Sins.* Indeed it is no ſufficient excuſe that you ſin in a Paſſion, no more than it is for a Murtherer to ſay he was drunk when he did it; but yet this takes off ſomething from the preſumption in ſinning. Then a Man is a bold and arrogant Sinner, when he can ſin calmly, and bid defiance to God and Heaven in cold Blood. Now St. *Peter*'s Denial of Chriſt, it was from the exceſſive Paſſion of Fear that then ſurprized him, and ſcattered his Graces; but when that Paſſion was over, he recruited again; but now *Judas* had no Paſſion; but the wickedneſs of his own heart wrought quietly and calmly in him to the betraying of his Maſter. When the winds rage violently, no wonder if ſometimes the *talleſt Cedars* are overthrown by them; but thoſe Trees that fall of their own accord, when the Air is ſtill and calm, it is a certain ſign they were rotten: So it is in this Caſe; when the Tempeſt of Paſſion rageth, be it Fear, or any other Paſſion and Perturbation of the Mind, no wonder if ſometimes the talleſt and the ſtrongeſt Chriſtians fall, are caſt down, and overwhelmed by it; but if Men fall into Sin when their Intellectuals are clear, and when their Reaſon is calm and undiſturbed, truly this is a certain ſign theſe Men are rotten, and theſe preſumptuous ſins have gotten dominion over them, for they fall like rotten Trees of their own accord, without any Tempeſt of Paſſion to ſtir them.

We may know whe-

Fourthly, *When at any time you commit a Sin, conſider what the Temptations are that aſſault you, and how you behave your ſelves under thoſe Temptations? for from*

thence

thence you may conjecture whether your Sins be presumptuous or not. Temptations as they are strong Inducements unto Sin, so sometimes they are great mitigations, of Sin; the more violently the Soul is baited and wearied with Temptations, the less presumption is it guilty of if at length it yields; this God doth judge to be weakness, not wilfulness; he knows our Frame that we are but Dust and Ashes, that we are no match for Principalities and Powers; and those mighty Enemies that we are to combate with, we can no more stand before them than so much loose Dust before a fierce and rapid Whirlwind; yea, were there no *Devil* to tempt, yet the Corruptions of our own Hearts are much too hard for us; but when both our own Lusts and the *Devil* shall conspire together, the one to betray us with all its Deceitfulness, and the other to force us with all its Power; who then can stand if God at such a time as this withdraw his Grace and Spirit, as sometimes he doth from the best of his Servants? Where is the Christian that ever coped with these *Temptations*, and was not vanquished and captivated by them? It is true, when God assists him, the weakest Christian proves victorious over the strongest Temptations: A *Dwarf* may beat a *Giant* when he is manacled that he cannot stir or resist; God sees that *Satan* is an over match for us, and therefore he ties his hands before he sets us out to the Conflict; and what wonder is it if we then conquer; When God hath trodden *Satan* under us, no wonder if as weak as we are we can then trample upon him too; but that all our Success may appear to be not from our own strength, but from God's Might, he leaves us sometimes to *Satan*, and lets loose *Satan* upon us in all his rage, he leads us into Temptation, and he leaves us under Temptation; and when we are buffeted we then yield and fall, and the *Devil* shamefully triumphs over us: In this Case, which is one of the saddest that a Christian can be in, though the Sin be very foul and heinous, yet the same Power of Temptations that makes us sin heinously, keeps us from sinning presumptuously. *Presumptuous* Sins are not to be measured by the bulk and ugliness of the Action, but by the forward and headlong Consent of the Will unto it; and therefore a gross Sin may sometimes be but a Sin of Infirmity, when yet a Sin of a less Nature is desperately daring and presumptuous. In the *Law*, if a Person that was *ravished* struggled and cried out aloud for help, the Crime was not imputed to her: So if the Soul be forcibly ravished by Temptations, though it struggle and strive against them, though it call upon its God, crying aloud, *Help, Lord;* though it call up its Graces, *Arise, help,* this Sin shall not be imputed to it as a presumptuous Sin. How then shall we judge by our Temptations whether the Sins we commit are presumptuous or not?

ther we sin presumptuously by our Temptations, and how.

I answer, you may judge of it by these following Particulars.

First, *If we commit Sin when we are not besieged and disturbed by violent and invincible Temptations, this is too too certain a Sign that then we sin presumptuously.* This plainly shews a Will strongly fixed and resolved to Sin: When Men will surrender and yield up their Souls to the *Devil*, even before he summons them, and when they will consent to sin upon every small and trivial temptation, as soon as they have but a hint and glimpse of some sinful *Object* passing before them, though it offer them no Violence, though it present nothing to them of so much Pleasure, and Profit, and Credit in it, but that a generous Christian might easily disdain, if yet they run out after it, and will sin meerly because they will, these are most desperate sinners that are impatient to wait the leisure of a lingring and lazy Temptation; they know the *Devil* hath much work to do in the World, many Thousands to tempt, deceive, and draw to Perdition, and therefore they will not trouble him, and for his ease they will sin without a Temptation, and ruin their own Souls without any help of any other *Devil* than what their own Hearts prove to them. As those are the best and most stayed Christians that are constant in the performance of Holy Duties, even then when they have no strong impulses and motions from the *Holy Ghost* unto Duty: So truly those are the worst and most stubborn Sinners that even then commit sin with greediness, when they have no violent impulses and temptations from the *Devil* to hurry them into sin. Now there are *Two things* whereby it plainly appears, that then a sin is *presumptuous* when it is committed without strong and violent Temptations to it.

If we sin when we are not besieged with violent Temptations, then we sin presumptuously.

First, *Hereby we do evidently declare a fearful Contempt of the great God*; we never more vilifie and diſparage God, than when we do that for nothing which we know his Soul hates. Should the *Devil*, when he Tempts you, take you as he took Chriſt, and ſhew you *the Kingdoms of the World, and the Glory of them all*, and promiſe to beſtow all theſe upon you; why, yet when God ſhews you, the infinite Glory of the *Kingdom of another World*, you can plead no Natural Reaſon why you ſhould conſent to Sin, God infinitely out-bidding the *Devil*, even then when the *Devil* bids higheſt; but when you will perferr a Sin that bids nothing, a barren, fruitleſs, and unprofitable Luſt, before the Holy Will of the great God, and the ſure Promiſes of Eternal Glory, what Reaſon of Pretence can you ſhew why you ſhould ſin, unleſs it be, becauſe you are reſolved rather to deſpight and affront God, than to advantage your own Souls. And this was the great aggravation of *Judas*'s Sin, and that which made it ſo exceeding *preſumptuous:* What a poor Temptation was *Thirty Pieces of Silver*, to induce him to the Vileſt Wickedneſs that ever was committed ſince the World ſtood? It was no more than the ordinary Value and Rate of a Slave, as you may ſee in *Exod.* 31. 22. amounting much to about Thirty Seven Shillings Six Pence; and yet ſo far did he undervalue Chriſt, as that for this ſmall Price he ſells the Lord of Life and Glory, and this God himſelf takes notice of as a great Indignity done unto him, *Zach.* 11. 13. *A goodly Price*, ſays God by the Prophet there, *was I prized at of them.* I know that at the very hearing of this, your Hearts riſe up in deteſtation of the Curſed Covetouſneſs of *Judas*, that ever he ſhould ſuffer himſelf to be Tempted by ſo baſe a Reward as a few Shillings were, to betray him to Death who was infinitely more worth than Heaven and Earth: Why, the Caſe is yours; nay, wonder not at it, he betrayed him for *Thirty Pieces of Silver*, and you *Daily Crucifie him*, and put him to open ſhame; you wound and pierce him to the very Heart for much leſs than that is. Look back upon your paſt Life, can you not recall to Mind, that you have been prevailed upon to commit many a ſin by ſuch poor and inconſiderable things as ſcarce bear the ſhew, or face, or appearance of a *Temptation*; have you not dealt very injurioully with God and Chriſt, and ſet them at nought for a little gain, for ſome vaniſhing delight, for compliance ſake, for the fickle favour of Men; yea, very Feathers, and empty Nothings, have weighed down the Scales with you againſt God. The *Devil*'s firſt and greateſt ſin was Pride, and Contempt of God, and how much is he pleaſed and humoured to ſee the ſame Contempt of God riveted in the Hearts of Men, and to ſee him ſo much ſlighted in the World, that he can ſcarce bid low enough when he *Tempts*, but whatever he offers is greedily ſnatch'd at, and preferred before God and Heaven, though it be but a very *Toy* and *Triſle*. This certainly muſt needs be a very heinous Contempt of the great Majeſty of Heaven, and muſt needs argue moſt deſperate boldneſs, and preſumptuous ſinning.

Zach. 11. 13.

Secondly, *When Men ſin upon ſmall or no temptations, they declare plainly a wretched neglect of their precious Souls, and therefore they ſin preſumptuouſly.* I have Read of a *Soldier* who being with Two others for ſome Crime Condemned, drew *Lots* for his Life, and having drawn one *Lot* that ſaved and pardon'd him, ſeeing one of his Companions come ſhivering and quaking to draw, told him, that for Two Shillings, or thereabouts, he would take his *Lot*, whatever it was. He drew again, and again it proved ſucceſsful to him; why, however it was a moſt daring preſumption, that after ſo narrow an eſcape, he ſhould again hazard his Life, and ſet it to Sale for ſo ſmall a Price as that was: Why truly the like *Preſumption* we our ſelves are guilty of, we purchaſe Toys and Trifles with the dreadful hazard of our Souls; thoſe Souls that are infinitely more worth than Ten Thouſand Worlds: We make common Barter and Exchange for every baſe Luſt; and, as *Prodigals*, pay very dear for very Toys, only to ſatisfie their Fancies; ſo do we lay down our precious Souls at Stake for thoſe Luſts that uſually have nothing in them beſides the ſatisfaction of the Humours and Fancies of our own Wills in Sin. Would you not Cenſure that Man to be moſt deſperately fool-hardy, that ſhould venture to dive into the bottom of the *Sea*, only to take up *Pebbles* and *Gravel*? Why, how great deal of Folly and Preſumption then are they guilty of, who dive even to the bottom of *Hell*, only to get Straws and Feathers, and ſuch impertinent Vanities and inconſiderable Nothings, that certainly Men would never hazard their immortal Souls for, unleſs they thought they did themſelves a Courteſie to be Damned? How many

are

are there that would not ſuffer no not ſo much as a *Hair* of their Head to be twitched off to gain that for which they will not ſtick to *Lye* and *Swear*, Sins that Murder their Souls? They are ſo Fooliſh, that the Lord complains in *Iſa.* 52. 3. *They ſell themſelves for Nought*; either they ſtay not till the *Devil* comes to cheapen them, but Sin beforehand, or elſe they readily take any Price that he offers for them, any vile Trifle is looked upon as a great Purchaſe, if they can procure it at ſo low a Price as *Hell* and *Damnation* is; why, what is it that makes the *Swearer* open his Throat as wide as *Hell* againſt Heaven and God himſelf, but only that he fanſies that a big, full-mouth'd *Oath*, makes his *Speech* more graceful and ſtately? And what is it that makes the *Company-keeper* run into all Exceſs with Riot, and to drown himſelf in all Senſuality, but only that he may comply with his Debauched Companions, and not diſguſt them by any ſingularity and reſervedneſs? And can theſe things be called *Temptations*? Are theſe things matter of ſuch weight, as deſerve to be put in the Balance againſt the Soul's Eternal Happineſs and Glory? Is it poſſible that Men that have Noble and Immortal Souls in them, ſhould ever ſo far debaſe them, as to bring them into competition with, nay, to make them to be the Price of ſuch Vile Nothings as theſe are? And yet tell theſe Men that they hereby rouze up God's Wrath againſt them that burns to the loweſt Hell; tell them that they deſtroy their precious Souls; tell them that they get nothing by ſuch ſins as theſe are, unleſs they reckon Damnation for Gain: Why, yet let God frown, and Hell triumph, and their Souls periſh, they will on, and will not raiſe the Rate of ſinning, nor put the *Devil* to more charges, and ſo they are Damned for nothing. Is not this moſt deſperate boldneſs and preſumption? And therefore do not lay the blame of your ſins upon the violence of *Temptation*, or upon the reſtleſs importunities of the *Devil*; when God ſhall at the laſt Day call, Sinner ſtand forth, what's the reaſon you committed ſuch and ſuch Sins that had nothing in them to commend them? That left nothing after them but Shame without, and Terrours within? Will you then plead as now uſually you do, that *Temptations* were too hard for you, and the *Devil* too ſtrong for you to reſiſt? No, no, it will then be made apparent, that the *Devil* was falſly charged with multitudes of Sins that he never knew of till they were committed: And therefore when Men ſin upon *ſlight Temptations*, it is not from the power of *Temptations*, it is not from the importunity of the *Devil* that they ſin, but only from a preſumptuous reſolution, that they will ſin whatever it coſt them, and that's the firſt Trial.

When Men run themſelves knowingly into Temptations, and Occaſions of Sins, if they are overcome by them, they then ſin preſumptuouſly.

Secondly, *When a Man wilfully and knowingly runs himſelf into Temptations, and upon occaſions of Sin, if he be overcome by theſe Temptations, he ſins preſumptuouſly notwithſtanding.* In this Caſe, though the *Temptation* be violent and irreſiſtible, yea, though when we are intangled by it, we ſtrive and ſtruggle to our very utmoſt, yet this doth not mitigate but rather aggravate our Sin, becauſe it was meerly thorough our own preſumption that we brought our ſelves under the power of ſuch a *prevalent Temptation*, from which Chriſtian Fear and Caution might eaſily have preſerved us. If a Man that is wholly Ignorant of the *Art of Swimming*, ſhall plunge himſelf into a deep River, tho' he ſtruggle hard for Life afterwards, yet if he ſinks and is drowned, he periſhes only through his own *preſumption*. That Man deſerves to be blown up that will make *Gunpowder* in a Smith's Shop when the Sparks fly thick about him: Truly, occaſions of ſinning are the *Devil*'s *Forge*, where he is continually heating and hammering out his *Fiery Darts*. Why, now for you that know your ſelves to be as catching as Powder, or Tinder, wilfully to run your ſelves into this *Forge*, where his *Fiery Darts* glow, and ſparkle, and fly about you, what is this but moſt deſperate boldneſs and preſumption? What ſays the *Wiſe Man*, Proverbs 26. 27. *Can a Man take Fire into his Boſom, and his Cloaths not be burnt?* Can a Man run himſelf upon ſuch occaſions of ſin, and not run alſo into the commiſſion of ſin? As the Motion of a Stone, when it falls downward, is ſtill the ſwifter the nearer it comes to its Center; ſo when you are running your ſelves into the occaſions of ſin, the more willingly you go to ſin, the nearer you come to it, there's no ſtop nor ſtay: When you put your ſelves upon theſe *Occaſions* and *Temptations*, you put your ſelves out of the protection of God's Grace, and you ſtand wholly at the *Devil*'s Courteſie; and if you are overcome, blame nothing but your own venturouſneſs and preſumption. Conſider this therefore, haſt thou not had frequent experience of many ſad Foils that the *Devil* hath given thee

by thy raſh venturing upon *Occaſions* and *Temptations* to ſin? Haſt thou not found ſuch and ſuch Company, ſuch and ſuch Employments, and other like Circumſtances, always prove Snares to thee? Never plead theſe *Temptations* were too ſtrong for thee to reſiſt: What, canſt thou not reſiſt them? Why, couldſt thou not have avoided them? And believe it, If the experience of thine own Weakneſs doth not make thee careful for the future to ſhun ſuch Snares and Intanglements as theſe are, thy ſins will be judged by God at the laſt Day to be wilful and preſumptuous Sins; for they are ſo, if not in themſelves conſidered, yet at leaſt in their Cauſe; for you *preſumptuouſly* run into thoſe *Occaſions* and *Temptations*, whereby, in all likelihood, you will be overcome; and this is to ſin preſumptuouſly.

If when we are tempted we yield, without vigorous reſiſtance, we then ſin preſumptuouſly.

Thirdly, Suppoſe that we are ſtrongly tempted without the betraying of our ſelves to the Temptation: Why then conſider, *If you commit the Sin to which you are tempted, without vigorous and reſolute reſiſtance; if you do, this is a certain ſign you ſin preſumptuouſly. Let the Temptation be never ſo ſtrong and irreſiſtible, yet if you yield to it without oppoſition and reſiſtance made againſt it to your utmoſt, you then ſin preſumptouſly.* A Child of God, when he acts like himſelf, falls fighting; the *Devil* gets not a foot of ground upon him, but by main force and ſtrength; though *Principalities* and *Powers*, though the *Rulers of the Darkneſs of this World, and ſpiritual Wickedneſſes in high Places, ſet themſelves all in array againſt him*; why, yet he encounters them all, and wreſtles with them all; and though ſometimes, through weakneſs he is overcome, yet he never baſely yields; he fights ſtanding, and he fights falling, and he fights riſing; and therefore when he ſins, it is through Weakneſs, and not through Preſumption; but now others, though they are very bold, and preſumptuous againſt God, yet they are very Cowards againſt their Luſts, and againſt the *Temptations* of the *Devil*; when a *Temptation* aſſaults them, they dare not preſume to oppoſe that; but they dare preſume to offend and provoke God himſelf; that they dare do. Believe it, Sirs, you muſt be bold and reſolute, either againſt the *Devil*, or againſt the *great God*; one of theſe you muſt grapple with; chuſe which you think you may beſt oppoſe, and ſooneſt conquer; the *Devil* ſtands before you armed with his *fiery darts*; God follows you, armed with *everlaſting vengeance*. If you will not engage againſt *Satan*, and reſolutely oppoſe him and all his force, what do you elſe but turn upon God, and challenge him to the Combat, and make him your Enemy, *that is able to deſtroy both Soul and Body in Hell-fire for ever?* Why, what a moſt daring preſumption is this, that ever we ſhould baſely ſurrender up our ſelves to the *Devil* without ſtriking one ſtroak in our own defence, and yet at the ſame time, we ſhould dare to provoke that God that can with one look and frown ſink us into the loweſt *Hell?* And thus in theſe Three Particulars we ſee when a Sin is preſumptuous in reſpect of Temptations, when it is committed without Temptations, when we run into Temptations and Occaſions of Sin, and when we make no vigorous oppoſition againſt them.

To ſin under eminent judgments and afflictions, is to ſin preſumptuouſly.

In the *Fifth* Place, another Trial is this; *When Men will dare to ſin under eminent and remarkable Judgments and Afflictions that God brings upon them, then they ſin preſumptuouſly.* What is this elſe, but when God ſtands viſibly in your way, yes you will deſperately run upon the *thick Boſſes of his Buckler? He hedges up your way with thorns*, and yet you will break through, though it be to the tearing of your Fleſh; he ſtrikes at you by his Judgments, and Oh! the Madneſs and Preſumption of vile Duſt and Aſhes, that they dare to ſtrike at God again by their Sins! What is this elſe but even to dare God to do his worſt? When God treads upon us, ſhould ſuch vile *Worms* as we are, turn the *Tail*, and threaten to take revenge upon the Almighty? This is Preſumption and Boldneſs, that God takes ſpecial notice of. In 2 *Chron.* 28, and 22. *Ahaz.* was brought very low, ſays the *Text*; and yet, *in the time of his diſtreſs he treſpaſſed yet more againſt the Lord; This is that* Ahaz: God ſets a Mark and Brand upon him, that he may be known to all poſterity for a moſt daring Sinner, that when God had brought him ſo low, when ſo many Enemies waged War againſt him, and diſtreſted him; yet even then he provoked a greater Enemy than them all, and challengeth God againſt him. *This is that King* Ahaz. Truly may it not be ſaid of many among us, This, and this is that perſon, who when God afflicted them, inſtead of humbling themſelves under the mighty hand of God, grew enraged at their Sufferings, and ſinned yet more and more againſt him? Oh, it is dreadful, when thoſe puniſhments

that

that should break and melt us, prove only to harden our hearts, and to exasperate and embitter our Spirits against God. What can reform us when we offend under the very smart of the Rod? Hereby therefore judge of your Sins, if so be God be gone out against you, if he hath laid his hand heavy upon you, and yet you regard it not, but still persevere in your old Sins, and still add new Iniquities to them; if, instead of humility and brokenness of heart, your hearts rise up against God, and you are ready to say with that wicked King, *This Evil is of the Lord, why should I wait upon the Lord any longer?* Conclude upon it, you are those *desperate presumptuous Sinners* that scorn to shrink for whatever God can lay upon them.

To encourage our selves with hopes of Mercy, while we live impenitently in Sin, is to sin presumptuously.

Sixthly, and lastly, *When we can encourage our selves with hopes of Mercy, though we live in Sin impenitently, this is to sin presumptuously.* You that know your selves to be Sinners, what is it that makes you to bear up with so much peace and confidence? Why, do you not every moment fear lest *Hell* should open its mouth, and swallow you up, lest God should suddenly strike you dead by some remarkable Judgment, lest the *Devil* should fetch you away alive to Torments? Why do you not fear this, since you know your selves to be Sinners? Why, truly you still hope for Mercy; and it is only from this very presumption that Men cry Peace, Peace to themselves, when yet God is at enmity with them; they flatter themselves that it shall be well with them in the latter end, though God swears he will not spare them; but his Wrath and Jealousie shall smoke against them. In *Deut.* 29. 19, 20. says God there, If any Man shall encourage himself when he goes on presumptuously in the way of his own heart *adding Drunkenness unto Thirst, I will not spare him,* says God; *but my Wrath and my Jealousie shall smoke against him, and all the Curses that are written in this Book shall fall upon him.* Were but Sinners truly apprehensive of their wretched Estate, how they stand liable every moment to the stroke of Divine Justice, how that there is nothing that interposeth betwixt them and *Hell,* but only God's temporary forbearance of them, truly it were impossible, utterly impossible, to keep them from running up and down the Streets like distracted Persons and Mad-Men, *crying out with horrour of Soul, O I am damned, I am damned*; but their Presumption stupifies them, and they are lull'd asleep by the *Devil*; and though they live in Sin, yet they still dream of Salvation; and thus their *Presumption* flatters them, till at length this *Presumption* ends then where their *Damnation* begins, and never before.

And thus I have in six Particulars shewed you what it is that makes a Sin to be *presumptuous*; which is that which *David* in the *Text* prays to God to keep him from; and I doubt not but these Particulars have represented to you so much Guilt and Uglineſs in *presumptuous Sins,* as that you also pray with him, *Lord, keep us also from presumptuous Sins.*

Aggravations of presumptuous sinning:

Now, though possibly it may seem altogether needless to die *scarlet* redder, yet that your Prayers against them may be more importunate, and your Endeavours unwearied, I shall in the next place by some aggravating considerations ingrain these *scarlet crimson sins,* and strive to make them appear as they are in themselves out of measure sinful.

Presumptuous Sins harden the heart with resolutions to persevere in them without Repentance.

Consider therefore in the first place, *that the commission of presumptuous Sins doth exceedingly harden and steel the Heart, with resolutions to persevere in them without repentance, and what can be more dreadful than this is?* Resolvedness to sin is a disposition likest to that of the *Devil,* and it is a punishment next to that of *Hell*; a Man that is confirmed in wickedness, is not many removes off from a *Devil* in his nature, and from a *damned Person* in his State; there is a fatal consequence betwixt Man's resolving to continue in sin to the end, and God's resolving to punish him with those torments that shall have no end. God hath *two Seals,* the one of the *Spirit of Adoption,* whereby he seals up Believers to the *day of Redemption,* and the other of *Obduration,* whereby he seals up the Impenitent to the *Day Destruction*; he seals them up under sin, and sets them aside for Wrath; hence the Apostle in *Romans* 2. 5. speaks of a *hard and impenitent heart, treasuring up wrath unto it self against the day of wrath:* Now presumptuous Sins have a twofold malign influence, thus to harden and make Men resolute in wickedness; for either they make them secure under sin, or else quite contrary desperate for sin, and both these strongly conduce to the hardening of the heart.

First,

Presumptuous Sins make Men resolute under the threatnings of God.

First, *The commission of presumptuous Sins oftentimes makes a Sinner resolute and secure under the blackest guilt the Soul can contract, and the fearfullest threatnings God can denounce:* Security under guilt arises from impunity; Sinners have read and heard terrible things against themselves, *that God will wound the hairy scalp of such as go on still in their iniquities, that he will destroy the incorrigible suddenly, and that without remedy;* but yet none of all this is executed, their Heads, instead of being wounded, are crowned with Blessings; and this speedy destruction still loyters; they neither feel terrors within, nor meet with troubles without; and therefore as *Solomon* observes, because they go unpunished they grow secure, in *Eccles.* 8. 15. *Because sentence against an Evil work is not speedily executed, therefore the hearts of the Sons of Men are fully set in them to do evil.* Carnal reason measures God's way of taking vengeance by its own; it is the custom of Men if they can to revenge while an injury is warm; delay and forbearance usually cools them into forgiveness; and hence *presumptuous Sinners* argue, That certainly were there any truth in God's threatnings, were there any thing to be feared besides the huge noise that they make, they should then have been exemplarily plagued, when they committed such and such a daring sin while the provocation was fresh; and from this it is, that the worst of Sinners, after the commission of some vile and crying sins, are for a while troubled with a trembling and tormenting Conscience, that the threatnings that are denounced should fall upon them by some visible appearance, and some signal hand of God against them; but when they see no such thing come of it, but their condition is Prosperous, and all their ways Sun-shine; how doth this work with them? Why truly, instead of admiring God's patience and long-suffering, they despise his wrath, and scoff at those threatnings that before they dreaded, and think none of them true, because none of them felt. We read of such bold Sinners as these are in 2 *Pet.* 3. 4. *Where is the promise of his coming? Do not all things continue as they were?* So these *presumptuous Sinners* say in their hearts, where is the threatning of his coming against us? Do not all things continue with us as they were? Though *Preachers* roar out whole *Pulpits full* of *Hell and Damnation*, and singe our Ears continually with Fire and Brimstone, making fearful clamours of Death, Hell, and Damnation, and everlasting Torments; yet all things are with us as they were: Is not the *Sun's light* as chearing, the *Air's breath* as refreshing, and the *Earth's womb* as fruitful as it was? Their greatest sins have not disturbed the least *Atome* in the *Creation*, nor moved so much as a hair of their head; for all that sudden and unavoidable destruction that is denounced against them, they still flourish and prosper; and because God doth not as Man revenge in the *first heat*, they think all threatnings are made rather to affright than to do execution; and hence it is, that they embolden and harden themselves in sin, and take up resolutions, that they will continue in them; and that is the first way how the commission of presumptuous Sins bring Men to resolutions of sinning, by making them regardless of *Divine threatnings.*

Presumptuous Sins make Men desperate in Sin, and to despair.

Secondly, *The frequent commission of presumptuous sins leaves Men desperate, whereby they are harden'd to continue in their sins.* Nothing more fortifies resolution than despair; make a coward desperate, and you make him invincible; now *presumptuous sins* they usually end in desperate resolutions; they make Men despair of ever gaining Power over them, and of ever obtaining Pardon for them.

Of subduing of them.

First, *Men that frequently commit presumptuous sins, they despair of ever subduing them:* Let your own hearts make answer, when you have sinned, presumptuously against your own Consciences and God's known Law, have you not been ready to conclude, that it were as good for you to abandon your selves over to the swing of such a lust, as still to strive thus in vain against it? When resolutions against sin prove unsuccessful, they commonly end in desperate resolutions to sin; and yet truly this is no other, than if a Man should therefore burn his House down about him, because it wants repairing. Is there none among us now, that when we have sinned against light, and against convictions, sit down under this despairing temptation, That it is in vain for us ever to make head against such a lust more; it will prevail, and why should we not therefore give up our selves to it? Truly, what you have been tempted unto, others have practised; and because the stream of their corruptions is violent, they therefore spread out their arms to it, and suffer themselves to be carried down by

by it into the Gulph of Perdition, resolving to run after the Stream and Current of their own Corruptions, because they find it so strong, despairing of ever subduing them, having been so often overcome by them.

To despair of obtaining Pardon for them.

Secondly, *The frequent Commission of presumptuous sins, makes Men despair of ever obtaining Pardon for them; and that hardens them in Resolutions to continue in them, and then they cry out with* Cain, *my iniquity is greater than can be forgiven.* Despair of Pardon oftentimes exasperates to more and greater Offences: As if a *Thief*, when he is Robbing of a Man, should argue with himself, If I am detected of this *Robbery*, it will cost me my Life; and if I *murther* him I can but lose my Life; just so do many argue: My Sins are so many and so great, that I cannot avoid Damnation for them; I see my Name prick'd down among *Reprobates*; it is but in vain for me to struggle against my own Fate and God's Decrees; it is too nice a Scruple, since God hath given me up to the Devil, for me to give up my self to sin; and so away they go to sin, and sin at random, desperately and resolvedly; *O horrid hardness!* That when the Thoughts of *Hell* use to quench and allay the Wickedness of other Men, when it is most furious; yet these Wretches never think of Hell, but that Etenal Fire inflames their Lusts, and the Thoughts of their own Destruction do even confirm them in the Practice of those very Sins that destroy them; and yet to this pass doth the Commission of *presumptuous Sins* bring many a wretched Soul in the World to. Why, now *Resolution to sin out of Despair*, is to sin as the *Devil sins*; indeed it is to give the Devil's Image in the Soul its last flourish. The *Devils and the damned Spirits*, as they lie always smothering and burning in Hell, so they always hear that dreadful Sound, *For ever thus, for ever thus*; and because their Chains are made strong and eternal by an Almighty Decree, this makes them implacable, they fret and look upward, and curse that God that hath plunged them into those Torments, from which Hell will never free them; this makes them desperate in their Resolutions to sin, because they despair of ever bettering their Condition; beware therefore, lest you also by frequent Commissions of *Presumptuous Sins*, be given up to Hellish Despair, such as this is; so to despair of Mercy, as at the same to provoke and defie Justice; and that's the *first* great Danger of sinning presumptuously, it will make Men resolute, either through Security, or through Despair, to continue in Sin.

Presumptuous Sins make Men impudent and shameless in Sin.

Secondly, *Presumptuous Sins as they steel the heart with most desperate Resolutions, so they also brazen the Face with most shameless Impudency:* All Shame ariseth from the Apprehension of some Evil suspected of us, or discover'd in us; and the Eyes that can discover it, are either the *Eyes of God* and *Angels*, or the *Eyes of Men* like our selves: Now all presumptuous Sinners are grown bold and impudent as to God and Angels, tho' God be present with them in the closest Secrecy, tho' his Eye sees them in the thickest Darkness; yet this doth not at all over-awe them, they dare sin even before his Face that must judge them; and if some of them be yet so modest, as to conceal their Wickedness from the Notice of Men, yet they are also so foolish and bold, as not to regard God's seeing them, in comparison of whom, to sin in the Sight of the whole World, is but to sin in secret; but yet the Frequency of presumptuous sinning will also quickly cause them to abandon this Shame too, and to out-face the Face of Men, which they more dread, than they do the Face of God or Angels: The Lord himself takes notice of the Impudency of such Men, and certainly every Sinner hath cause to blush, when God calls him impudent: In *Jeremy* 6. 15. says God there, *Were they ashamed, when they had committed all these Abominations? Nay, they were not at all asham'd, neither could they blush*; and in *Jer.* 3. 3. *They have a Whore's Forehead, and they refuse to be asham'd*; and in *Isaiah* 3. 9. *The shew of their countenance*, says God, *doth witness against them; they declare their Sin as* Sodom, *they hide it not.* There are *three Degrees of Shamefulness* in Sinning, to which many of our grosser Sinners do arise.

Three Degrees of Shamelessness in Sinning.

A committing foul Sins publickly.

First, *Those that will dare to commit foul Sins even publickly and knowingly:* Some Men lose half the Pleasure of their Sins, unless others may know how wicked they are, and how far they dare affront the Almighty; the *Swearer* swears not in secret, where none can hear him, but in Company, and calls Men to witness as well as God; the *Drunkard* reels in our Streets in mid-day, and is ready to discharge his Vomit in the Faces of all he meets with; truly *presumptuous sinning* will at last grow to publick sinning; not only at the last day, that which has been done in

ſecret, ſhall be divulged upon the Houſe-top, but many times, even in this Life, thoſe Sins that at firſt wicked Men durſt not commit, but in ſecret where no Eye ſees them, after a while they are grown bolder, and will act and own them before all Men.

A boaſting and glorying in ſins when committed.

Secondly, *Others are advanc'd farther, and not only ſin openly, but they boaſt and glory in their Sins alſo*; the Apoſtle in *Philippians* 3. 19. ſpeaks of them, *whoſe glory was in their ſhame*; they boaſt as if they had done ſome notable Exploit; when, alas! they have only murther'd a poor Soul of their own, that lay drawing on towards its death before.

A boaſting in ſins they dare not commit.

Thirdly, *There are others ſo ſhameleſs, that they boaſt of thoſe very wickedneſſes that they never durſt to commit.* As Cowards brag of their Exploits in ſuch and ſuch a Combat, which yet they never durſt engage in; ſo there are a Generation in the World, who dare not for the Terror of their Conſciences commit a Sin, that yet will boaſt that they have committed it, as if it were a *generous and honourable thing* to be call'd and accounted a *daring Sinner*; ſhall I call theſe Men, or Monſters rather, that boaſt of ſuch things as make them more like *Devils* than *Men*? and yet even to this height of profligate Impudence will preſumptuous Sins lead you; but let all ſuch know, God is reſolv'd to try the Foreheads of theſe Men at the laſt and great Day of Judgment, and in Deſpight of all their Swaggering and Boldneſs, Shame and everlaſting Confuſion ſhall cover their Faces, as impudent as they are now.

Thirdly, *Conſider this, what a fearful Thing it will be, if God ſhould cut off ſuch Men in the very Act of ſome preſumptuous Sin, without affording them any Time and Space of Repentance*; and have they any Security that God will not? What Promiſe have they, that God will forbear them one Moment longer? Nay, they have been often told, that God will make a ſpeedy End with them, *that he will take them away as with a Whirlwind living, and in his Wrath*, as it is in *Pſalm* 57. 9. and therefore he ſtrikes not without giving them Warning enough, tho' he ſtrikes ſuddenly. God hath *two Chief Attributes*, that he eſpecially aims to *glorifie* in all his Tranſactions with Men, his *Mercy*, and his *Juſtice*; theſe are the two great Hinges, upon which all the Frame of his Providence moves; the mighty Affairs of *Eternal Election* and *Reprobation* were firſt agitated out of deſign to magnifie *Mercy* and *Juſtice*; and all temporal Concernments are govern'd in ſuch a way as may moſt advance theſe two Attributes of Mercy and Juſtice; why now Mercy hath already had a larger ſhare of Glory in forbearing after ſo many Provocations, in waiting ſo long to be gracious, ſtaying year after year expecting your Repentance; and if you contemn the Riches of God's Grace and Mercy ſtill, have you not Reaſon to fear it will be the Turn of Juſtice to deal with you next? And believe it, the Commiſſion of *preſumptuous Sins* gives God a fair Opportunity to glorifie his *Juſtice* upon you to the utmoſt; and why ſhould you think God will loſe ſuch an Advantage? All the World muſt needs fall down, and with trembling, adore the juſt Severity of God, when they ſee a notorious Sinner cut off in the very Act of ſome notorious and preſumptuous Wickedneſs; in *Deuteron.* 17. 12, 13. when a *preſumptuous Sinner is puniſh'd*, ſays God, *all the People ſhall hear, and fear, and do no more preſumptuouſly*; and if ſo much Glory will accrue to God by deſtroying you, why then ſhould he ſpare you one moment longer than your next Sin? This is the beſt uſe he can make of *preſumptuous Sinners*, even to ſet them up as Examples and Monuments of his Wrath and Vengeance to terrifie others; and why ſhould you think then, ſince his *Mercy* hath been glorified already to you, in waiting and forbearing ſo long, that he will not upon the next Sin you commit, glorifie his *Juſtice* alſo? It may be God hath begun to deal thus already with ſome of you; in the very midſt of your Sins, hath not the Hand-writing of ſome remarkable Judgment appear'd againſt you? Hath not God ſmitten ſome of you in your Perſons, in your Eſtates, or in your Relations? Well, take Chriſt's Counſel, *ſin no more leſt a worſe thing befal you*, leſt the next Provocation he ſtrike you through, and ſink you to *Hell*? Oh, conſider what a fearful thing it is, while your Souls are on flame in the Commiſſion of Sin, then for God to hurl them down into everlaſting and unquenchable Fire, as he may take juſt Occaſion and Advantage to do, for the glorifying of his Juſtice!

Fourthly,

Fourthly, *Conſider this, It is very hard to bring preſumptuous Sinners to Reformation and Repentance*; The firſt Step to Evangelical Sorrow is legal Terror, which the Spirit of God works by convincing the Sinner of Judgment and Wrath to come; but now tell a *preſumptuous Sinner*, what Judgment and Wrath is due to him, that it is impoſſible for him to eſcape the Vengeance of God, that Juſtice will overtake him; read to him all the *Curſes* contain'd in the Book of God, and tell him that they are all entail'd upon his Sin; this moves him not; he knew and conſider'd all this before; a *preſumptuous Sinner* muſt be a knowing Sinner; he knows what *Hell* is, as well as as ever any Man that hath not felt it; he knows what a precious Soul he deſtroys, how Glorious a Heaven he forfeits, what dreadful Condemnation he expoſeth himſelf to; he knows all this, and yet he ſins; and tho' this were enough, one would think, *to daunt a Devil*, yet he breaks through all this Knowledge to his own Luſts again; the *Apoſtle* ſpeaks of ſuch in *Romans* 1. 32. *who know the Judgments of God, that they that commit ſuch things are worthy of death, yet preſumptuouſly continue in the commiſſion of ſuch ſins*; now what hope is there of reforming and reclaiming ſuch as theſe are, that ſin after they have caſt up their Accounts what it will coſt them? Certainly they that dare ſin when they ſee *Hell* before them, there is no hope that they will leave ſinning, till they ſee *Hell* flaming round about them, and themſelves in the midſt of it.

It is hard to bring preſumptuous Sinners to Repentance.

Now then, tho' theſe preſumptuous Sins being in their Nature and Aggravations ſo heinous, yet are the beſt Chriſtians exceeding prone to commit them. When the *Sea* is tempeſtuous, did we only ſtand ſafe upon the Shoar, it were enough to behold the woful Shipwracks of others, with that Horror and Commiſeration that ſuch a Spectacle deſerves; but when we are toſs'd in the ſame *Tempeſt*, and ſee ſome ſplit againſt *Rocks*, and others ſwallow'd up of *Quick-ſands*, unto which naturally the Stream ſtrongly carries us alſo; truly then, our Pity and Deteſtation of their Dangers, our Horror and Conſternation of their Ruin, is not ſufficient, without great Care and Diligence, for our own Security and Preſervation: Therefore, *O Chriſtians!* look to your ſelves; the glorify'd Saints in Heaven ſee the Dangers they have eſcap'd with Praiſe, and the Dangers others fall into with Pity; but thou, *O Chriſtian!* art not yet got to Shoar, ſtill thou ſaileſt upon the ſame *Sea* wherein moſt do periſh, even the raging Sea of Corruption, which is yet made more raging by the Storms of Temptation; and if thou ſeeſt many that are bound Heaven-ward, *make Shipwrack of Faith and a good Conſcience*; it is not enough for thee to ſlight their Dangers, or to cenſure and pity their Miſcarriages; but fear thou alſo, leſt the ſame Corruptions and Temptations overwhelm and drown thee in the ſame Perdition; this is the *Apoſtle*'s Caution, 1 *Cor.* 10. 12. *Let him that thinks he ſtands take heed leſt he fall*; and in *Rom.* 11. 20. *Thou ſtandeſt by Faith, be not high-minded, but fear.* And indeed, becauſe of that violent Inclination that is in All unto Sin, there is no State in this Life ſo perfect, as to make this Exhortation uſeleſs and unſeaſonable. *David* himſelf prays for reſtraining Grace: *Keep back thy Servant from preſumptuous Sins.*

From which Words I formerly collected, and ſhall now proſecute this Propoſition.

That in the beſt Chriſtians there is great Proneneſs to the worſt Sins.

The beſt Chriſtians prov'd to be prone to the worſt Sins.

In the handling of this too true a Point, I ſhall,

Firſt, By ſome Demonſtrations, make it evident, That there is a ſtrong Inclination in the beſt to the worſt Sins; and then ſearch out the original Cauſe whence it is, that ſince in the *firſt Creation* Man's Will was left wholly free, and indeterminate, without any other Inclination to Good or Evil, beſides what its free and arbitrary Choice made; yet in the *new Creation*, whereby Souls are repair'd, there ſhould be ſtill left in it that Biaſs that ſtrongly ſways it unto Evil. Theſe two Things, God aſſiſting, I ſhall at preſent do.

For the *Demonſtrations* of the Point, I ſhall give you them in theſe following Particulars.

From the Examples of others.

First, *The Examples of others may here be a convincing Argument.* If I ſhould ſummon in the moſt excellent of God's Saints, a Man might wonder that *Drunkenneſs*, *Inceſt*, *Murther*, and *Abjuration of Chriſt*, that ſuch Brats of *Satan* ſhould ever be found in Company with ſuch an *Angelical* Troop as they are; and yet *Noah* is *Drunk*, *Lot* is *Inceſtuous*, *David Murders*, and *Peter Abjures*; theſe glorious

glorious Stars have had their Twinklings; and if the Leaders and Champions are thus foiled, what may we think then hath in all Ages befallen the Croud of vulgar Christians? We may with Truth and Boldness say, Never was there a Sin committed in the World, how horrid soever, unless the *unpardonable Sin against the Holy Ghost*, but God may find it written down in his Book of Remembrance under their Names, whose Names he himself hath written down in the Book of Life. And what shall we say, when we see a Stone falling, that there is no Weight nor Propenseness in it to fall? Shall we say, when we see such eminent Christians falling into Sin, yea, even into great and gross Sins, that they have not strong Propensions and Inclinations to sin? Yet, *O ye Saints*, divulge not these things to wicked Men, whisper them softly one to another with Fear and Trembling, lest some *profane Wretch* or other over-hear you, and take that for Encouragement, which was only meant for Caution: What is more common, than for the vilest Sinners to plead for their Excuse, or Warrant rather, the foul Miscarriages of God's dearest Saints: Thus the *Drunkard* looks upon *Holy Noah* as a Pot-Companion, whereby he discovers his Nakedness in a worse Sense than ever *Cham* did. And thus the unclean Sensualist quotes *David*, and calls him in to be the Patron of his Debauchery; certainly if there be any Grief that can over-cast the perfect Joys of the Saints in Heaven, it is, that their *Names* and *Examples* should to the great Dishonour of God be produced by wicked and sinful Men, to countenance their grossest Sins and Wickednesses. But let such know, that tho' God hath set up these in his *Church* to be *Monuments* of his *Mercy*, to declare to humble and penitent Sinners how great Sins he can pardon; yet if any hereupon embolden themselves in Sin, instead of being set up as Monuments of Mercy, God will set them up as *Pillars of Salt*.

From those frequent Exhortations given in Scripture to Watchfulness against, and Mortification of these Sins.

Secondly, *It appears, that there is a strong Proneness in the best to the worst Sins, from those frequent and pressing Exhortations that are given us in* Scripture *to Watchfulness against them, and to the Mortification of them.* Wherefore were these Curbs necessary, but that God sees our Lusts are headstrong, and ready to fly out and hurry us into all Excesses; nay, these Exhortations are not so particularly, nor with so great *Emphasis*, given to the *Wicked*, as they are to the *Children of God*: Of the wicked God saith, *He that will be Wicked, let him be Wicked still*; that's all the Care God takes of them; as we use to say of them that we despair to reclaim; nay, Let them take their own courses: But he especially warns and exhorts the Godly to beware of those Sins, that one would think, a Godly Man were scarce liable to commit. See how Christ cautions his *Disciples*, Luke 21. 34. *Take heed to your selves*, says he, *lest at any time your Hearts be overcharg'd with Surfeiting and Drunkenness, and the Cares of this Life:* Why, would not any Man wonder, that our *Saviour* should so solicitously warn them against *Surfeiting* and *Drunkenness*, which are the Sins usually of a plentiful Estate? But what, warn them against these Sins, whose Poverty was such, and was to be such, that those that gave unto them a *Cup of cold Water, should receive a plentiful reward for their Pains*? Were they in such Danger to be *surfeited* by the one, and *drunk* with the other? And what, were they like to be choak'd with the Cares of this Life, and with carking to get what they had not, who had but just before renounced all that they had to follow Christ? Yea, but Christ knew, that even in these poor abstemious *Disciples*, there was a natural Proneness to Gluttony, and Rioting, and Drunkenness; and therefore he thus exhorts them, and he doth it, that Grace may keep them from enclining to these Sins, as their low and persecuted Condition should be sure to keep them from committing them. So also the *Apostle* in *Colos.* 3. 5. speaking to them, that they certainly should appear *with Christ in Glory*, as you may see *Verse* 4. yet these he commands *to mortifie their Members that were upon the Earth:* Well, but what Members are these? It may be, they are only Vanity and Inconstancy of Thoughts, Levity and Unfixedness of Affections, Deadness and Heaviness of Heart, and such other less Sins, that should they be perfectly free from, they should be perfectly Holy: No, says the *Apostle*, these Members are the big Limbs of the Old Man, they are *Fornication, Uncleanness, Inordinate Affections, Evil Concupiscence*, and *Covetousness*. And in *Verse* 8. he exhorts them again *to put off all these Things, Anger, Wrath, Malice, Blasphemy, Filthy Communication*, and *Lying*; and so he goes

goes on reckoning up foul and horrid Sins, and exhorts them to mortifie these Sins, who were to *appear with Christ in Glory*; those who never lived in them, not at least after their Conversion; Is it not strange, that such eminent Christians as these were, should need Exhortations against such foul Sins? Why, there's many a Person, in a State of Nature, that would count their Morals much wronged, if you should be officiously importunate with them not to commit *Adultery* or *Blasphemy*, not to be *Covetous* or *Drunkards*, or the like; this they would look upon as an Injury done to them, that you should suspect such things as these are of them; Would not they say, as *Hazael* said to the *Prophets*, *What are thy Servants Dogs, that they should do such great things as these are?* But the *Apostle* knew that the Inclinations of the Best were too strong, even to those Sins that a perfect Moralist would think Scorn that they should be suspected of, and therefore he exhorts them with all Earnestness, and frequent Importunity, to mortifie such foul Sins as these are.

Thirdly, *It appears also from the irritating Power that the Law hath*: Even in the best of God's Children there is accidentally, through our Corruption, such a malign Influence (if I may so call it) in the Holy, Just, and Good Law of God, that instead of quelling Sin, it doth the more enrage and provoke it, and this we call the irritating Power of the Law. Thus the *Apostle* tells us in *Rom.* 7. 11, 13. *That Sin takes occasion by the Law to work in us all manner of Concupiscence.* Why, now were it possible that Sin should grow strong by that Law that was given on purpose to destroy it, but that there is in us violent Propensions towards what is forbidden us, and eager Desires after that which God hath denied us? So strangely depraved are our corrupt Natures, that we swell with our Yoke, and labour to throw off whatever may lay a Restraint upon us; like green Sticks, which being bent one way, by natural Strength we start as far back the other way. Can none of us call to mind some Sins that possibly we should never have committed, had they not been forbidden to us? The Command oftentimes gives Corruption a Hint, in what, and how it may offend God: And is not this therefore a clear Demonstration of that mighty Proneness that there is in all of us unto Sin, when that Law that forbids Sin shall prove an Incentive to it? The more will a high-mettled Horse foam and fling, the harder you Rein him in: And if you stop a River in its Course, it will rise and swell till it overflows its Banks: And whence is this, but because there is a natural Proneness in it to run towards the Sea? And when God casts his Law before Men as a Stop to them in their sinful Course, they swell the higher, till they have born down or overflown all those Bounds and Dams that God hath set to bound them in: And whence proceeds all this, but only because there is a natural Tendency and Propension in Men's Hearts to Sin? And therefore the more they are opposed, the higher still do our Corruptions swell, and the more do they rage: And altho' the Force of this sinful Propension may be in some of God's Children in a good measure broken, yet in the very best of them is there some degree or other of this *irritating Power of the Law* to stir them up to Sin, even by forbidding of them to sin; and that's the last Demonstration.

From the irritating Power of the Law.

The next thing propounded, was to enquire into the *original Cause, whence this sinful Inclination proceeds; How it comes to pass that there is in all Men, and even in the best Christians, such a strong Propension unto Sin.*

Whence it is that Christians have a Proneness in them unto every Sin.

Now in the Enquiry into this, I shall lead you on gradually by these following Steps.

First, In Man's first Creation the Will had in it a natural Power to determine the Specification of its own Acts; that is, freely to sway itself, either unto Good or Evil, which of them it pleased; and if there was any Bias in it to draw it more one way than another, as some there was, it was an Inclination to that which is Good; for Man's Faculties were then entire and perfect, his Knowledge clear to discern what was his chief Good, and his highest Happiness, his Will free to chuse is, and his Affections ready to embrace and clasp about it: His Love, his Fear, his Joy, his Delight, were all of them center'd in God; that which is now in us from Grace, was in him from Nature: Since the Fall we need a twofold Assistance, one a *common Influence and Assistance*, such as is vouchsafed to all Men, to enable them to the Performance of the com-

mon and ordinary Actions of this Life; it is from God's immediate Influence that we are enabled to move, to think, to ſpeak; *for in him we live, move, and have our beings:* And then we need alſo a *ſpecial Influence*, vouchſafed only to the Children of God, whereby we are enabled to perform holy and ſpiritual Actions, as to love, fear, and obey God ſincerely; and this *ſpecial Influence* we commonly call *Grace*, whereby we are enabled to act divinely and ſpiritually: Now the Difference betwixt *common* and *ſpecial Influence* lies in this, That what God works in us by a *common Influence*, that is wrought without any Grudge or Reluctancy in Man's Nature to the contrary, but what is wrought in us by a *ſpecial Influence*; that is brought to paſs, Nature gainſaying and contradicting it: Thus when God enables a Sinner to act Faith, or Love, or any Divine and Heavenly Grace; this is contrary to the Tendency of corrupt Nature, and therefore this is called *ſpecial Grace*. Now while Man ſtood in the State of Innocency, there was nothing in his Nature that contradicted his Fear of God, his Dependance on God, or his Love to God; and therefore to enable him to act all theſe, he needed no *ſpecial Influence* of *ſpecial Grace*, but only of a common and ordinary Providence. Before the Fall, *Adam* ſtood in no need at all of any ſuch thing as *ſpecial Grace*, as we now ſtand in need of, but the ſame Aſſiſtance of God, for the Kind of it, that enabled him to move, or to ſpeak, or to think, was ſufficient alſo to enable him to perform the moſt ſpiritual Obedience; becauſe then the moſt ſpiritual Obedience was no more to him, than thoſe Actions which we call Natural, as Eating, and Drinking, Speaking, Walking, and Thinking are to us now; and therefore he required no more Aſſiſtance from God for the Performance of ſpiritual Obedience, than we now require from God for our natural Actions. Now, as he had this Perfection of Power to perform what was good, ſo he had a Proneneſs of Will alſo to it; but yet in that Proneneſs there was not *Perſeverance*; he might, as afterwards he did, turn aſide from God unto Satan, and notwithſtanding his Inclination to Obedience, and Proneneſs to that which was Good; yet having not a *Perſeverance* in that Proneneſs, but being Lord over his own Will, as he was over the reſt of the viſible Creation, he voluntarily and willingly conſented to the Commiſſion of Sin.

Why now, *Secondly*, This voluntary Inclination of *Adam* to Sin, hath ever ſince by a dreadful, yet righteous Judgment of God, brought upon all his Poſterity a natural and neceſſary Inclination unto Sin; ſo that now, either whatever they do is Sin, or there is Sin in whatever they do. Now that we may clearly apprehend how *Adam*'s firſt Sin and Provocation, committed ſo many Thouſand Years ago, cauſes ſuch ſtrong Propenſions to Sin in all his Poſterity, you muſt obſerve theſe following Particulars.

Firſt, Conſider this, That we and all Mankind were in *Adam*, not only as in our common Parent, from whom we received our Being, but as in our *common Head, Surety, and Repreſentative*, from whom we were to receive either our Well or our Ill-Being: He was the Head of the *Covenant*, both he and we were Parties in the *Covenant*, he obeying, we obeyed; and he ſinning, we tranſgreſſed: What he did, as in this *publick Capacity*, was not alone his perſonal Act, but it was ours alſo. Now what Right *Adam* had to Indent for his Poſterity, and to oblige them to the Terms of the *Covenant*, I have long ſince opened to you on another Occaſion, and I ſhall therefore paſs it by now.

Secondly, The Threatning annexed to the *Covenant of Works*, was Death: *In the day thou eateſt thereof*, ſays God, *thou ſhalt ſurely die*, Gen. 2. 17. Now there is a *threefold Death*, that by the Violation of this Command, Man was ſubject unto; A *temporal Death*, conſiſting in the Miſeries of this Life, and at laſt a Separation of the Soul from the Body; An *eternal Death*, conſiſting in the everlaſting Separation of the Soul from God; And a *ſpiritual Death*, conſiſting in the Loſs and Separation of God's Image from the Soul: And upon *Adam*'s Sin this *threefold Death* was threatned, namely, *temporal, ſpiritual*, and *eternal*: Of theſe Three, the *ſpiritual Death* was preſently inflicted upon Man's Fall, conſiſting in the Separation of the Image of God from the Soul; Man was immediately deprived of that Holineſs and perfect Righteouſneſs wherein the Image of God did conſiſt.

Then

Then, *Thirdly*, Obſerve, *No Action can be Holy, that doth not flow from the Image of God in the Soul, and from its Principle.* Every Action is ſinful that hath not the Glory of God for its End; now no Action can have the Glory of God for its End, that hath not the Image of God for its Principle; and therefore Man being deſpoil'd of this Image of God, there is no Action of any Man in the State of Nature, but what is ſinful and corrupt: And hence it is, that in Regeneration God again ſtamps his Image upon the Soul, not indeed ſo perfectly as at Man's firſt Creation, but yet in ſuch a Degree, as doth thro' Grace enable him to act holily, and in ſome meaſure according to the Will of God.

Fourthly, *Though Man be deſpoiled of the Image of God, and cannot act holily, yet he is a buſie and active Creature, and muſt and will be ſtill acting; he hath an active Nature, and he hath active Faculties ſtill left him, tho' the Image of God, that ſhould make thoſe Actions holy, is juſtly taken from him.* And here at laſt we have traced out the true Cauſe of that ſtrong Propenſion that there is in all Men unto Sin. While the Soul enjoy'd the *Image of God*, it ſought eſpecially to do all in Reference unto God, but now that it hath loſt that *Image*, it cannot any longer raiſe up its Actions to a Suitableneſs to the Will of God, and therefore now it ſinks them, and ſeeks only to pleaſe its own Carnal Deſires and Appetites. Take the whole Reſolution of it in two or three Words: The Nature of the Soul makes it prone and inclin'd to act, for it is a buſie active Creature; and if it acts, it muſt ſin, becauſe it hath not the Image of God to raiſe its Actions to a Holy and Divine Conformity to the Will of God; and therefore now to be prone to act, is to be prone to ſin; and this is the true Ground of that ſtrong Propenſion that is in all Men, to that which is evil and ſinful.

But, *You will ſay, if this Proneneſs to Sin be from the Loſs of God's Image, how comes it to paſs, that thoſe, who are renew'd again according to the Image of God, do ſtill complain of this ſtrong Proneneſs and Propenſion to Sin?* *Queſt.*

To this *I anſwer*, That thoſe of fallen Mankind, to whom God is pleas'd to reſtore his *Image* in Regeneration, accordingly as this *Image* is more or leſs perfect, ſo is this Proneneſs to Sin more or leſs ſtrong; but becauſe the beſt are but in part renew'd, therefore this ſinful Proneneſs is but in part deſtroy'd in the beſt; Grace weakens it, but Grace doth not quite remove it; and therefore the holieſt Chriſtian hath, and ſhall have, as long as he lives in this World, cauſe to complain with the *Apoſtle*, *Rom.* 7. 23. *I ſee another law in my members warring againſt the law of my mind*; there is a carnal, ſenſual Inclination in him, ſtrongly ſwaying him to ſin, contrary to the Bent and Inclination of his renew'd Part; and therefore he ſhall have Cauſe ſtill to cry out with the *Apoſtel*, *Oh wretched Man that I am! who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death?* Becauſe the *Image of God* is but in part reſtor'd in him, therefore there is partly alſo an Inclination in him to ſin. *Anſw.*

Yea, *but you will ſay poſſibly, this Inclination in the beſt Chriſtians may be to ſmaller and leſſer Sins, but it cannot be thought that a Child of God, who is renew'd again according to the Image of God, ſhould have a ſtorng Proneneſs and Inclination to thoſe foul Sins, that the wicked of the World lie in.* *Object.*

To this *I anſwer*, The moſt that Grace doth in the beſt of God's Children in this Life, is, to weaken and leſſen that natural Propenſion that is in a Child of God to every Sin, but not to deſtroy that Propenſion to any one Sin at all, no, not to the fouleſt and vileſt Sins: The *Old Man* in this Life never loſeth one Limb, tho' it be weakned and conſuming away in his whole Body. Take a Child of God, that before his Converſion had a ſtrong Propenſion to any Sin; ſuppoſe what Sin you will, tho' never ſo foul and horrid, the ſame Propenſion ſtill remains. It is not indeed ſo violent and raging as it was, but there it is, it is abated and overcome by *Grace*, but ſtill there is the ſame *Proneneſs* to Sin; it may be a Chriſtian is not ſo ſenſible of this Propenſion to Sin, not ſo frequently as formerly he hath; but yet the Experience of the beſt ſometimes can inform them, that even to the worſt Sins and moſt horrid Temptations, they find a Faction and Party in their Hearts to promote them; and it is as much Work as Grace can do to ſubdue and quell theſe great Sins. *Anſw.*

I come now to enquire into the Grounds and Reaſons, why God ſhould ſuffer, this *Proneneſs* to Sin to continue in his deareſt Saints and Children after their Converſion and Regeneration? Poſſibly ſome may think, it would have been far more conducible to God's Glory, as well as their own Peace and Comfort, if God

had at once at their firſt Converſion utterly deſtroy'd all the Seeds and Remainders of Corruption in them, and at firſt made them as perfectly Holy as they ſhall be at laſt; hereby God would not have been ſo provok'd as he is, nor his *Spirit* ſo griev'd, nor the *Devil* ſo rejoyc'd at the daily Miſcarriages of the beſt Chriſtians: Wherefore is it that God hath perfected the Saints now in Glory, but that they might yield him perfect Obedience and Service? Why, truly our Services would be as perfect and as well-pleaſing unto God, as theirs are, were our imperfect Natures as theirs are; and therefore God would have had a double Heaven, an upper and a lower Heaven, had he but deſtroy'd Sin in us upon Earth; and ſince it might ſeem ſo much to redound to his Glory, why hath he not conſummated our Sanctification? But ſtill left Thorns in our Eyes, and Goads in our ſides, with which not only we, but he himſelf is griev'd and vex'd; what ſhould be the Reaſon of this?

Why God leaves a Proneneſs to Sin in his own Children.

Now to anſwer this Queſtion, you muſt know the general and comprehenſive Reaſon thereof, is his own Sovereign unaccountable Good-will and Pleaſure, into which the Reaſon of all Things is moſt rationally reſolv'd; and therefore, that among all Mankind, that lay all alike in the ſame Maſs of Corruption, that ſome are ſanctify'd, and ſome are not; that among them that are ſanctify'd, ſome are ſanctify'd in one degree, and ſome in another, and yet none ſo perfectly as to be free'd from Sin; the beſt of God's Saints may reſt ſatisfy'd in this; it is God's good Pleaſure to give forth his Grace in ſuch a meaſure, to ſome more, to ſome leſs, as ſhall only weaken, not utterly deſtroy the Corruptions of his People: Therefore the *Apoſtle* in *Hebrews* 9. 10. ſpeaking of Chriſt's coming to do the Will of God, *by which Will*, ſays he, *we are ſanctify'd*: That we are ſanctify'd when others are not, is from the Will of God; that we are ſanctify'd in ſuch a meaſure, not more nor leſs, muſt be reſolv'd into the ſovereign and uncontroulable Will of God, *by which Will we are ſanctify'd*; and yet there are alſo many wiſe Ends and Reaſons of this Will of God, why he ſhould leave ſtill ſuch ſinful Propenſions and corrupt Inclinations, even in the beſt of his People.

Becauſe it is his Will ſo to do.

As Firſt, *Hereby God maintains a Beauty and Harmony in the Works of Grace, as well as in the Works of Nature*; the Beauty and Harmony of the Univerſe conſiſts in Gradation; whereby, as by little Steps or Rounds, we aſcend from one Kind of Being to another; thus God hath placed Man in the World, as it were a middle Step betwixt *Brute-Creatures* and *Angels*, and therefore he partakes ſomewhat of the Nature of both; his Soul and his Intellectual Part, that is made like the Nature of *Angels*; and then there is in him a ſenſitive Part, Deſires and Propenſions; and on this ſide he is a Kin even to the Beaſts that periſh. So is it alſo in the Works of Grace; a Chriſtian is as it were a Step betwxt a wicked Man and an *Angel*; a wicked Man hath no Grace, and a Holy *Angel* hath no Sin; now to make up this great Gap, God hath placed a Chriſtian as a middle Step betwixt them, to tack and unite the moral World together. There is in him a Heavenly and Spiritual Part, and by that he is of Affinity to the *Angels*; and there are alſo in him ſinful Deſires, and ſinful Inclinations, and by this he holds Hands with wicked Men, and is thereby joyn'd to them; and thus God illuſtrates his admirable Wiſdom, in cauſing ſuch an admirable Harmony and gradual Difference in the Works of Grace, bringing Men out of a State of mix'd Grace, to a State of pure and compleat Grace, where at laſt a Chriſtian ſhall be fully conſummated, and be as the *Angels* of God: Thus from Step to Step God gradually carries on the Work of Sanctification to Perfection; and hereby he maintains an admirable Beauty and Harmony in the Works of Grace, as well as in the Works of Nature; this ſets forth the Beauty of the World, that there is ſuch a Conveyance from one Kind of Creatures to another, whereby they touch one another, and are tack'd together by ſeveral Orders, as inanimate and ſenſitive, then rational as Men, then intellectual as *Angels*: So alſo it is in Grace, from a wicked Man to a Saint, partly Wicked, and partly Gracious; from a Saint on Earth to a Saint in Heaven, where the imperfect Work of Grace here on Earth is ſwallow'd up by perfect Grace and Holineſs.

Becauſe hereby he maintains a Harmany in the Works of Grace.

Secondly,

Secondly, *Therefore doth God suffer sinful Inclinations to remain in the best Christians, that he might have wherewithal continually to exercise the Graces of his People.* Some Graces are Graces of *War*, if I may so call them, which would never be exercised, if we had not Enemies to encounter with; and therefore, as it is said in *Judges* 3. 2. That God *would not utterly drive out all the Nations before the Children of Israel*, but lest some of them among them, that by continual combating and fighting with them, *they might learn War*; so neither hath God utterly expelled the *spiritual Canaanites* out of the Hearts of his People; to this End, that by daily conflicting with them, they might learn the *Wars* of the *Lord*, and might grow expert in the handling and using every piece of their *Spiritual and Christian Armour*; How should we keep up a holy Watch and Ward, if we had no Enemies to beat up our Quarters? And how should we exercise Faith, which St. *John* tells is *our Victory*, if we had no Enemies to conquer? And how should we exercise Repentance and godly Sorrow, whereby the Soul is recruited, and whereby its Graces are reinforced again, if so be we were never foiled nor overcome by our Spiritual Enemies? Part of our *Spiritual Armour* would soon rust, but that our Corruptions and sinful Inclinations put us daily upon a Necessity of using of them; shortly, when we come to Heaven, we shall have no need nor use of these Graces; there we shall be out of the reach of all Enemies; and therefore God is resolved to exercise these Graces here; and therefore he suffers Corruption to abide in this Life, that so Grace making way through this Corruption, may enter into Heaven, where it shall for ever rest and triumph: These warring Graces of the Saints, have no time nor place to be exercised in, but only in this Life; and because God will have all the Parts of Holiness have their due Exercise, therefore hath he left these Corruptions in the Soul, that their warring Graces might have Enemies to encounter with. *For the Exercise of their Graces.*

And Thirdly, *Hereby also the Almighty Power of God is exceedingly glorified in preserving us through Faith unto Salvation*; notwithstanding our own violent Inclination and Proneness to Sin, unto our own Destruction; though St. *Peter*, when he walked upon dry Land, was upheld by the Power of Christ, as God; yet that Power was not so remarkably glorious in his Preservation, and walking upon the *dry Land*, as when Christ lent him his Hand, and upheld him from sinking, when he walked and stood upon the *Surface* of the *Water*; because then he had a Proneness and Propension in him to sink more than when he stood upon the *dry Land*: So truly I may say, that the Standing of the glorified Saints in Heaven in a State of Holiness, although it may be, and is a Work of God's Almighty Power; yet it seems not altogether so much to magnifie the Power of God, in preserving them in that State of Holiness and Glory, no, not to Eternity, as it doth to preserve a poor weak Christian one Day in a State of Grace; because there is no Proneness in a *glorified Saint* to fall from his Happiness into Sin, but there is in a *Saint* on Earth to fall from Grace, and from the Work of God upon his Soul. *For the Glory of God's power.*

Fourthly and Lastly, *This glorifies also the Prevalency of Christ's Intercession, and the Triumph of God's pardoning Grace and Mercy.* O how exceedingly glorious is *free Grace!* in that God can, and doth for Christ's sake, pardon many and great Sins, tho' he certainly knows there is such a sinful Propension left behind in Man's Nature, that will again be breaking out into the same or greater Provocations. *The Prevalency of Christ's Intercession is hereby glorified.*

The Application of this Point shall be in these Particulars: First, Is there so strong a Proneness in the best Christians to the worst Sins? Hence then, *let wicked Men learn not to insult over them when they fall, nor to reproach Holiness with their foul Miscarriages*: Truly Grace hath always found it ill Neighbourhood to dwell in the same Soul with Sin; for wicked Men being themselves all of one piece, they know not how to distinguish betwixt the Propensions of the one, and of the other; they know not how to distinguish when a *Saint* in a *Christian* acts, and when the *Sinner*; and so they very irrationally charge *Holiness* with those Crimes, that, were they not in part unholy, they should never commit: When a Man that makes a forward Profession of Religion, and in the general Course of his Life makes Conscience of his Ways, when he doth through Temptation or Inadvertency fall into some Sin that becomes notorious, What is more common in the Mouths of prophane Scoffers than this? This is one of your Godly ones; This is one of the sanctified Gang: Thus they laugh and snear at *Use* I.

him. No, but, *Sinner*, let me tell thee, Thou miſtakeſt the Man; Did you ever hear him pray, ſo as to charm Heaven, and which is more, ſo as to melt even your Hearts into Affections? Did you ever hear him diſcourſe of Spiritual things, as if he had been intimate with *Angels*, and one of Heaven's Secretaries? Have you formerly obſerv'd in him a blameleſs and exemplary Converſation? Then indeed you might ſay, this is one of the *Godly*. Holineſs owns him, Religion glories in him, while he thus adorns his Profeſſion; but when he ſins, ſay not, Behold, one of the *Godly*; this is Blaſphemy againſt Religion. No, it is not the Godly Man that ſins; no, 'tis the corrupt and unholy Part in him; it is that Part in him that is moſt like to thee. In *Rom.* 7. 17. ſays the Apoſtle there, *It is no more I, but ſin that dwells in me*; and if it be *indwelling Sin* that is the Cauſe of *actual Sin* in the Beſt, why then do you bely their Graces? Why do you accuſe them whom the Apoſtle vindicates, and tells you plainly, that it is not they, but Sin in them? Learn therefore to put a Difference betwixt a *Saint* and a *Sinner* in every Child of God; and if it be the Sinner in them that expoſeth them to your Scorns and Flouts, what elſe do you in upbraiding of them, but more upbraid your ſelves, that are nothing but Sinners throughout? Judge therefore how ſenſleſs and unreaſonable it is for you to reproach them, who, were they not ſo much like you, you would have nothing to reproach them with; therefore let wicked Men never more flout and jear at the Falls and Sins of thoſe that are holy, imputing them to them as holy, for it is the Sinner in them that ſins, and not the Saint; and by upbraiding them for Sin, they do more upbraid and reproach themſelves.

A Proneneſs to Sin in God's Children ſhould make them humble.

Secondly, *Is there ſuch a ſtrong Propenſion in the beſt to the worſt Sins? See then what Cauſe even the Beſt have to be continually humble.* Oh! this is that which breaks the very Heart, and rends the very Bowels of a true Chriſtian, that he ſhould be ſo violently inclined to that, which of all things in the World his God is moſt averſe to; and which, of all things in the World, as it is the only thing he never made, ſo it is that which he always hates: This is that which makes him ſmite his Breaſt with Anguiſh, and to cry out with the Apoſtle, *O wretched Man that I am!* And well truly may the beſt Saint call himſelf a wretched Man, ſince he carries that in his Boſom, that will be a perpetual Torment and Vexation to him as long as he lives: There are Factions and Rebellions, inteſtine Diſcords, and Civil Wars within, *the Fleſh luſting againſt the Spirit, and the Spirit luſting againſt the Fleſh*; there's a Sea of Wickedneſs, and yet in the midſt of it true Grace, like Fire, ſtriving to burn it up: Nay, no wonder this great Combuſtion makes ſuch a Smoke and Smother, as wrings Tears from his Eyes; for when he meditates, this choaks his Meditation; he begins with God, but through this *ſinful Proneneſs*, he falls, he knows not how, into ſome impertinent Thought or other, and in a Moment he ſlides from Heaven to Earth: His Thoughts are like ravell'd Thread, he knows not their Method and Order, nor End of them: When he prays, this Corruption ſits very heavy upon his Heart; and as at the Evening the Shadow of the Body moves much faſter, ſo truly many times the Lips move apace in Prayer, when yet the Heart is dull and drowſie; where ever he is, whatever he is about, *Luſt* is intruding into his Company, *Corruption* will be thruſting itſelf into all his Actions: This is that which makes him weary of his very Life, ſo that he could very well be content, nay, he really and heartily wiſhes from his Heart, that this *Houſe of Clay* were pulled down about him. Truly, when we look abroad into the World, and take notice in what filthy Sins it wallows, what Oaths and Curſing, what Blaſphemies and Drunkenneſs, what Murthers, Uncleanneſſes, and Riots, have everywhere overſpread the Face of the whole Earth: What do we ſee, but the Effects of that ſinful Nature that is common to us, as well as unto them? There we ſee our own Hearts unbowell'd, and there we can diſcern what our ſelves are, at the coſt of other Men's Sins. What ſays the *Wiſe Man* in *Prov.* 27. 19? *As in water face anſwereth unto face, ſo doth the heart of a Man to a Man.* It was the proud *Phariſee*'s boaſt, *Lord, I thank thee that I am not as other Men are, Extortioners, Unjuſt, Adulterers, or as this Publican*; as it is in *Luke* 18. Yes, believe it, you, and I, and all, yea, the beſt of us all, we are even as others are; the vileſt Sinners are the trueſt *Glaſſes* to repreſent to our view what our Hearts are; Their Wickedneſs gives in a true Inventory of what lies lock'd up in our Breaſts; there we have the

ſame

ſame *Vipers* knotting and ſprawling within, that crawl forth in others Lives; there is *Rancour*, and *Malice*, and *Hatred*, and *Slaughters*, and *Adulteries*, and the whole Spawn of all thoſe black Sins that have made Men either infamous in Story, or mighty in Torment; and that we have not yet out-ſinned all the Copies that ever were ſet us, that we have not yet diſcovered ſome new unknown Wickedneſs to the World, is not becauſe our Inclination to Sin, or our Stock of Corruption fails us; but becauſe God's Grace either preventing or renewing, fails not. Where then is the *Chriſtian* that hath not cauſe to go mourning to his Grave? Can you blame him to ſee him ſad and diſconſolate, when he hath no leſs Reaſon for it, than a Heart brim-full of Sin? Certainly that Man neither loves God, nor his own Soul, that can hear that there is in him ſuch a *violent Propenſion* to injure the one, and ruin the other, without exclaiming with the Prophet, *Woe is me, for I am undone, becauſe I am a Man of an unclean Heart, and of polluted Lips.* It is but juſt, yea, it is all the reaſon in the World, that while our Hearts continue to be Fountains of Sin, our Heads ſhould continue to be Fountains of Tears.

That Proneneſs that is in God's Children to Sin ſhould make them long for Heaven.

Thirdly, *Is there in the Beſt a ſtrong Proneneſs to the worſt Sins? What cauſe have we then to long and breathe after Heaven? For not till then ſhall we be free from it.* Indwelling Sin hath taken a Leaſe of our Souls, and holds them by our own Lives; it will be in us to the laſt Gaſp; and as the Heart is the laſt that dies, ſo alſo is that Corruption that lodgeth in it; but yet die it muſt, and die it ſhall: And this is the Comfort of a Child of God, that tho' he brought Sin with him into the World, yet he ſhall not carry it with him out of the World: God hath ſo wiſely ordered and appointed it, that as *Death* came in by *Sin*, ſo alſo ſhall *Sin* it ſelf be deſtroyed by *Death:* As Worms, when they creep into their Holes, leave their Slime and their Dirt behind them: Why truly ſo is it with a Chriſtian; when he dies, he leaves all his Slime, all his Filth and Corruption at the Mouth of the Grave, and his Soul gets free from that Clog, and mounts up into the Boſom of God; and there alone is it that it ſhall no more ſtrive and ſtruggle againſt *ſinful Propenſions and Inclinations*; there ſhall it be eternally fix'd and confirm'd, not only in Glory, but in Holineſs alſo; we ſhall there be out of the reach of *Satan's Temptations.* We read indeed, that ſometimes the *Devil* appears before God as an Accuſer; but we never read, that he comes there as a Tempter; we ſhall no more feel the firſt Riſings and Streamings up of Corruption there; no more ſhall we caſt kind Glances upon our Sins, nor have hovering Thoughts toward them. *O bleſſed Neceſſity, when the Soul ſhall be tied up to one all-ſatisfying Good; when it ſhall have as natural a Proneneſs and Ardour to delight in God, as to love it ſelf, and to delight in its own Happineſs!* And who then would deſire to linger any longer here Below, and to ſpin out his wretched Life, wherein Sin and Sorrow ſhall have the greateſt ſhare? Here the Beſt of us are in perpetual Combats and Quarrels betwixt Sin and Grace; the one will not yield, and the other cannot: Corruption, that compels one way, and Grace commands another: *Haſte therefore, O Chriſtian, out of this Scuffle; make haſte to Heaven, and there the Controverſie will be for ever decided; there ſhalt thou no more live in fear of new Sins, nor yet in Sorrow for old Sins; but all Sorrow and Sighing ſhall flee away; all Tears ſhall be wiped from our Eyes; and all Sin ſhall be rooted out of our Hearts, and we ſhall be perfectly holy, even as the Angels themſelves are.*

A Proneneſs in us to Sin ſhould make us careful to avoid Occaſions of Sin.

Laſtly, *Is there ſuch a ſtrong Proneneſs in the beſt to the worſt Sins? This then ſhould teach us carefully to avoid all Temptations to Sin, and whatever may be an Occaſion to draw forth that Corruption that lies latent within us:* Wherefore is it that one Petition of thoſe few that Chriſt taught his Diſciples, was, That God would not lead them into Temptation, but becauſe he knew there is in all of us ſinful Natures, that do too too well correſpond with Temptations? And he knew that if we were brought into Temptations, it is very ſeldom that we are brought off from them without Sin. Were we as free from *inherent Sin*, as *Adam* was at firſt; or were we confirmed in Grace, as the *Saints* in Heaven now are, we might then repel all Temptations with eaſe; and therefore our Saviour, whoſe Nature was ſpotleſs, by an extraordinary Conception, and whoſe Holineſs was ſecure to him by an unſpeakable Union of the *Godhead*, he tells us, in *John* 4. 13. *The Prince of this World came, and found nothing in him.* The *Devil* came to tempt

tempt him; but becauſe he found nothing in him, therefore he could faſten nothing upon him; no Temptation could enter, becauſe there was no Corruption to receive it; and therefore when he tempted Chriſt, he only caſt *fiery Darts* againſt an impenetrable Rock, a Rock that will beat them back again into his own Face; but our Corruptions have made us combuſtible Matter, that there is ſcarce a *Dart* thrown at us in vain; when he tempts us, it is but like the caſting of Fire into Tinder, that preſently catcheth; our Hearts kindle upon the leaſt Spark that falls; like a Veſſel that is brim-full of Water, upon the leaſt Jogg, runs over: Were we but true to our ſelves, tho' the Devil might knock by his *Temptations*, yet he could never burſt open the everlaſting Doors of our Hearts by Force or Violence; but alas! we our ſelves are not all of one Heart and one Mind; *Satan* hath got a ſtrong Party within us, that as ſoon as he knocks, opens to him, and entertains him: And hence it is that many times ſmall Temptations, and very petty Occaſions, draw forth great Corruptions; as a Veſſel that is full of new Liquor, upon the leaſt Vent given, works over into Foam and Froth; ſo truly our Hearts, almoſt upon every ſlight and trivial Temptation, makes that *inbred Corruption* that lodgeth there, ſwell, and boil, and run over into abundance of Scum and Filth in our Lives and Converſations. Have we not great cauſe therefore to be jealous and ſuſpicious of our ſelves, and to keep a watchful Eye over all the Motions of thoſe Boſom-Traytors, our own Hearts. *He that truſteth to his own heart*, ſays *Solomon*, *is a Fool*, Prov. 28. 25. Certainly it were the greateſt Folly in the World to truſt our Hearts after ſo frequent Experience of their Treachery and Slipperineſs; venture them not therefore upon *Temptations:* What Security have you, that your ſinful Hearts will not ſin? Yea, and it may be, betray you into ſuch great Abominations as you cannot now think of without Horror; as Men preſume upon the Mercy of God to pardon their leſſer Sins, ſo they preſume alſo upon their own Strength to preſerve them from greater Sins: They ſay of *ſmall Sins*, Is it not a little one, and our Souls ſhall live? And they ſay of *great Sins*, Is it not a great one, and our Souls ſhall never commit it? Alas! how know you, but if once you lay your Head in the Lap of a *Temptation*, theſe *Philiſtines* will be upon you; and you, like *Sampſon*, think to go and ſhake your ſelves, as at other times, but alas! your great Strength is departed from you, and you left a Prey to the fouleſt and worſt of Sins whatſoever. And thus now you have ſeen in *David*'s Prayer, the beſt Saint's Proneneſs to the worſt of Sins.

The next Thing obſervable is, *The beſt Saint's Weakneſs and Inability to preſerve themſelves without the Aſſiſtance of Divine Grace*; And both theſe, namely, their Proneneſs to commit Sin, and their Weakneſs to reſiſt it, are evident Demonſtrations of the general Propoſition; the Almighty Grace of God is their beſt, yea, and their only Security.

Now, as the Bottom and Foundation of this preſent Exerciſe, I ſhall lay down this Point to be treated of:

Doct. Advantages that Men have to keep themſelves from preſumptuous Sins.

That it is not a Chriſtian's own, but God's Power only, that can preſerve him from the Commiſſion of the moſt daring and preſumptuous Sins: And yet truly, if any Sins are eaſie to be reſiſted and overcome, they are the Sins of the groſſer ſort; for many times it is with Sins, as with over-grown Bodies, the vaſter the Bulk of them is, the leſs is their Force and Activity. The Soul hath great Advantage to lay hold on great Sins, and to keep them off at Arm's length, when leſs Sins ſlip in, and ſeize upon the Heart unperceivably.

Preſumptuous Sins give warning to prepare for Reſiſtance.

For, Firſt, *Great and Preſumptuous Sins ſeldom make an Aſſault upon the Soul, but they give Warning before-hand to prepare for Reſiſtance.* The Stratagems of *War*, if they are but diſcovered, they uſually prove unſucceſsful; as ſtrong Liquors taking Vent, loſe their Strength and Spirits; ſo is it in this holy War alſo; the Soul may eaſily foreſee *groſs Sins*, and therefore may more eaſily avoid them: If a Man feels in himſelf ſinful Thoughts ſtirring, and ſinful Deſires ſtruggling, hereupon an Aſſault is made, and the Devil hereby gives us Warning what Sins we ſhould eſpecially watch againſt. Are they laſcivious Thoughts? Beware of *Uncleanneſs*. Are they wrathful Thoughts? Beware of *Murther*. Are they murmuring Thoughts? Beware of *Blaſphemy*. Are they worldly Thoughts and Deſires? Beward of *Oppreſſion* and *Injuſtice*. Thus theſe Giant-like Sins ſtand forth in view, and ſend open Defiance to the Soul, and bid it prepare for

for the Combat; sinful Thoughts and sinful Desires go before, as *Armour-bearers* use to go before their *Champions*, and proclaim what great Lust is about to make an Assault upon the Soul. Now such Fore-warnings as these are, is a great Advantage that we have to repel and subdue them. *Job* 34. 32. *That which I see not, teach thou me.* And what follows? Why, *If I have done Iniquity, I will do so no more.* When a Man sees an Enemy before him, this is a mighty Advantage, either to avoid or to conquer. This Advantage now we have not against *smaller Sins*; we cannot so easily escape Sins of Ignorance, because we cannot see them; nor yet the Sins of our Thoughts and Desires, because we cannot fore-see them: Who of us all knows, what Thoughts will next bubble up in our Hearts, whether Holy and Gracious, or whether Sinful or Prophane? These strike without Warning, and as an Enemy within, rise up in the midst of our Hearts unseen. Sins are of two Sorts; either such by which we are tempted, or such to which we are tempted: The *Devil* makes use of one Sin to tempt another; of a less to tempt a greater; thus wicked Thoughts are at once Sins in themselves, and also Temptations unto wicked Actions. Now it is very hard, because these spring up immediately in the Heart, without any fore-going Temptations to them; but while the Devil is tempting us to sinful Actions by sinful Thoughts, then the Soul hath Leisure to recollect it self, to muster up all its Graces, to set its Guards to call in Divine Help and Assistance; and upon these Preparations it may more easily resist the Sin, and overcome the Temptation; and that's one great Advantage we have to keep our selves from presumptuous Sins.

Natural Conscience opposeth the commission of presumptuous Sins.

Secondly, *Natural Conscience also abhorrs more, and doth more oppose these outragious, presumptuous Sins, than it doth those Sins that it judgeth proceed only from Weakness and Infirmity; and this also gives us a mighty Advantage to keep our selves from them.* Little Sins do not much disturb the Peace and Quietness of a Man's Conscience; and therefore the *Apostle* speaks of his himself before his Conversion, in *Acts* 23. 1. *I have lived,* says he, *in all good Conscience before God, until this very day.* And so in *Phil.* 3. 6. *Teaching the Law,* says he, speaking of himself before his Conversion, *I was blameless.* How could that be? What, blameless, and unconverted, and in a State of Nature! Yes, he was not guilty of notorious, scandalous Sins; and as for lesser Faults, his Conscience over-look'd them, and never blam'd him for them; and so truly is it with many a moral Man; his Conscience hath not a Word to say against their small and petty Sins; let their Hearts be sensual, and their Thoughts vain, and their Discourse unsavoury, and their Lives unprofitable; yet still Conscience and They live very friendly together: But let the Devil tempt such a sober Sinner as this is, to Murther, or Adultery, or Drunkenness, or some such branded Impiety, Conscience then flings Fire-brands, and storms and cries out with *Hazael, What is thy Servant a Dog, that he should do such Things as these are?* As *Subjects* pay to their *Prince* many little Sums without grudging, which, were they exacted from them all at once in one great Tax, would make them repine, if not rebel; so is it with us; we stand not with the Devil for small Sins, but if he tempts us to greater Abominations, then *Conscience* makes an Alarm, an Uproar in the Soul, and will not, nay, cannot consent to damn it self by Wholesale; certainly, that Man that can, as our Saviour speaks of the *Pharisees*, swallow Camels, Sins of a huge Bulk and Size, without any Check or Straining at them, must needs have a *Conscience* as wide-mouth'd as *Hell*; and he, who hath so large a Conscience, hath no Conscience at all; and that's another Advantage we have against presumptuous Sins.

Fear of Shame and Infamy, a Remedy against presumptuous Sins.

Thirdly, *The Fear of Shame and of Infamy in the World, many times puts a great Restraint upon the Lusts of Men, and keeps them from breaking out into those daring and presumptuous Wickednesses, that otherwise they would do.* Therefore our Saviour describes the *unjust Judge* to be one of a strange Temper, *that neither feared God, nor regarded Man,* Luke 18. 2. Why, those that have worn off all Fear of God from their Hearts, yet usually have some Awe of Man still left them; though they are hardned, that they fear not God's judging them, yet they are withal so Childish, that they fear Man's censuring them; loth they are that their *Names* should be toss'd to and fro, from Tongue

to Tongue, that the World ſhould ſay of them, this Man is a *Drunkard*, and that Man is an *Unclean Perſon*, and that Man is a *Thief*. Tell me, *O Sinner*, why elſe doſt thou ſeek Corners to hide thy Wickedneſs in? Why doſt thou not do it in the Face of the *Sun*, and before the Eyes of the whole World? Why, that very Shame that makes Men ſculk in ſecret when they ſin, had they no Secrecy to hide themſelves in from the Notice of Men, it would keep them alſo from the Sin it ſelf. It doth not terrifie Men to conſider, that God writes down all their Sins in his Book of Remembrance; but ſhould he write all their Sins upon their Fore-heads in viſible Letters, that all the World might read them, where is the Wretch ſo impudent that would dare to be ſeen abroad? Our Streets would be deſolate, and your *Pews* would be empty, and the World would grow a Wilderneſs; and thoſe that we took for Men, would appear to be but very Monſters and Beaſts; ſuch woful Transformation hath Sin made in the World: How many *Swines* are there wallowing in their own Vomit? How many *Goatiſh* Senſualiſts are become Brutiſh in filthy Pleaſures? How many *Earth-Worms* are there crawling up and down in the Muck of this World, loading themſelves with thick Clay? Certainly, if every Sinner ſhould be ſeen in his own Shape, we ſhould meet with very few Men in the World. Why, now wicked Men are aſham'd to be ſeen abroad in ſuch Diſguiſes as theſe are, and therefore they ſtudy to ſin in ſecret; or if that cannot be, they force themſelves to abſtain from Sin; unwilling they are to be pointed at in the Streets, there goes a *Drunkard*, or an *Extortioner*; there a *Cheater*, or an *Adulterer*, and the like; and for the very Fear hereof, ſometimes they are kept from the Commiſſion of thoſe infamous Sins, that would make them a *Reproach* to all their Neighbours: And that is another Advantage.

The Laws of Men keep Men from Sin.

Laſtly, *The Fear of Human Laws and Penalties doth many times keep Men from the committing many great and horrid Impieties, ſuch as would fall under the Notice of the Law.* It is a great Mercy that God hath inſtituted *Magiſtracy*, that it may be a Terror to *Evil Works*, as the *Apoſtle* ſpeaks, *Rom.* 3. 13. were it not more for Fear of *Human Laws*, the inflicting of Corporal Puniſhments upon Men, more than God's threatning of Eternal Puniſhments, the whole World would become worſe than a *ſavage Wilderneſs*; within would be Fears and Tumults, without would be Rage and Violence; our Dwellings, our Perſons, our Poſſeſſions, would be all expos'd to the furious Luſts of ungodly Men, and *by ſwearing, and lying, and killing, and ſtealing, and committing adultery, Men would break forth, till blood touch'd blood*, as the Prophet ſpeaks, *Hoſ.* 4. 2. but the *wiſe Providence of God*, who hath ſubdu'd the Beaſts of the Earth to Man, hath alſo ſubdu'd Man (who elſe would become more wild and brutiſh than they) to Man; God hath therefore ſubdu'd Man to Man, ſo that thoſe that ſtand not in any Awe of the God of Heaven, yet are they aw'd by the Gods of the Earth; and they whom the Thoughts of Hell and Eternal Wrath cannot ſcare from Sin, yet many times the Thoughts of a *Priſon* and *Gibbet* doth. Now this Fear is of great Advantage to keep Men from the Commiſſion of *preſumptuous Sins*, which they have not to keep them from the Commiſſion of *leſſer* and *ſmaller Sins*; and what, is not this Security enough againſt them? Is there need of any more? Were it not ſtrange, if that Warning given before-hand to prepare for Reſiſtance, if the Reluctancy of natural Conſcience, if the Shame of the World, and the Fears of Human Laws and Penalties ſhould not be ſufficient to preſerve us from them? Were not this ſtrange? Yes, it were ſo; yet ſo it is; notwithſtanding all theſe Advantages, ſtill we have great Cauſe to pray with *David, Lord, keep back thy Servants from preſumptuous Sins*; all other Defence is but weak, and all other Security is but unſafe, *Lord, therefore do thou keep us*; and this I ſhall endeavour to demonſtrate unto you by two Particulars; the one from *Scripture*, and the other from *Experience*.

Firſt, From *Scripture*. All our Ability, whether for the Performance of Duties, or for the oppoſing of Corruption, is in *Scripture* entirely aſcrib'd unto the Power of God; thus the *Apoſtle* exhorts the *Epheſians* in *Chap.* 6 10. *My Brethren*, ſays he, *be ſtrong*; but in whom? What, in your ſelves? No, ſays he, but *be ſtrong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*; for in his Almighty Power, tho' mighty Corruptions ruſh in upon you, and threaten your Ruin; tho' the *Devil* and the Powers of *Hell* puſh ſore at you, to make you fall; yet God calls upon

upon you to stand, and to withstand them all: Stand, alas! how can we? Such poor weak feeble Creatures as we are, how can we stand? Why, says the *Apostle, be strong in the Lord*, there's your Security against all the Force of your spiritual Enemies; lay hold on his *Almighty Power*, and engage that for you, and this will bring you off the Field with Victory and Conquest. So again in 2 *Cor.* 5. 3. *We are not sufficient*, says the *Apostle, of our selves, to do any thing as of our selves*; not sufficient to think a good Thought, and therefore not sufficient to resist an evil Thought; for our resisting of an evil Thought, must be by thinking a good one: If an evil Thought rise up in our Hearts, we cannot of our selves so much as think, that that Thought is evil, nor think that it ought to be suppressed and stifled; and much less can we then of our selves suppress any Sin; and what should we do under this utter Impotency and Inability, but call in Divine Help and Assistance? *Our Sufficiency is of God:* Why now, yet in this we cannot think our Sufficiency to be of God, nor can we depend upon the Sufficiency of God to enable us to do it; *for it is God*, says the *Apostle, that worketh in us both to will and to do of his own good pleasure*, both to think and to act: So you have it in *Philippians* 2.12. So that it is most evident to all that will not wilfully shut their Eyes against the Light of Truth, that both the first Motions, and the whole succeeding Progress of the Soul, either to the Performance of Duty, or to the Resistance of Sin, is wholly from God's Almighty Power engaged for them, and strengthning them to the one, and for the other.

Secondly, *Another Demonstration of this Truth, shall be from the common Experience of all.* Have you not found sometimes, that you could with holy Scorn and Disdain reject those very *Temptations to Sin*, that at other times, when God hath absented himself from you, when he hath withdrawn his Power and Grace, they have sadly prevailed upon you, it may be, to the Commission of some daring and presumptuous Sin; Have you not found it to be so? What else is this, but an evident Argument, that it is not your own, but God's Power, that keeps you from the worst Sins? We may conclude, by our Falls, when God doth forsake us, that when we stand, we stand not by our own Strength, but by his. Why do you not always fall? or why do you not always stand? Will you say it is because we are not always alike tempted? If you be not, why then, since the *Devil* is always alike malicious? Even herein appears the Mercy and Power of God, who Almightily rebukes him; But when you are alike tempted, whence proceeds it, that sometimes you yield, and sometimes you resist and conquer, but only from hence, sometimes God is present to assist you, and sometimes he departs from you to humble you? He is present sometimes, that you might not utterly sink and perish under your Sins; and he absents himself sometimes, that you may be sensible by your Falls, that formerly it was not your own, but his Power that preserved you; and this may suffice for the Demonstration of the Truth, That *it is not in the Power of the best Christians to keep themselves from presumptuous Sins, but God's Power only.*

Now by this time *possibly it may arise up in the Hearts of some prophane ones, to make the same* Objection, *as some did* in the Apostles Days, *against the* Doctrine of Election; *if it be so, that it is not in my own Power to keep my self from the Commission of Sin, yea, of the greatest and worst Sins, but only* God's Power; *why doth he yet complain? Why doth he yet find fault with us, for doing that which we cannot but do, unless he himself preserve us from it?* *Object.*

I might here take Occasion to vindicate the Equity and Righteousness of God, in requiring from us the Exercise of that Power, that he bestow'd upon our Natures at first, and which we lost only through our own wilful Fault: But I have done this divers times already, and therefore I shall only at present briefly consider what Power Men have still left them, both in *a State of Nature*, and in *a State of Grace*, to keep themselves from the Commission of Sin, and that in a few Particulars briefly. *Answ.*

First then, *Clear it is, that whatever Power Men have, either to Naturals or to Spirituals; yet they cannot act or exercise that Power, without exciting Influence from God to quicken and rouze it:* Who will say, that a Man that sits hath not Power to rise, and that a Man that stands hath not Power to walk? And yet it is certain he neither shall rise nor walk, unless God move, and excite, and rouze that Power of his, and put it upon that Work, *for in him* as *we live*, so *we move*,

and

and have our being: So then the Power to uſe our Power is from God's quickning, enlivening, and actuating of us.

Secondly, *A Child of God, who is regenerated and born again, hath a Power to do ſomething that is not Sin*; becauſe he hath a gracious Principle wrought within him, and he acts for a right End, even the Glory of God in the Salvation of his Soul: But yet this withal muſt be ſuppoſed, that he ſhall never ſo act without the ſpecial Aid and Aſſiſtance of God's quickning and ſtirring up his Graces.

Thirdly, *A Man in a State of Nature hath no power to keep himſelf from Sin in general*; that is, he hath no Power to do any thing but what is ſinful; for whatever Action is not ſinful, muſt flow from a gracious Principle, and muſt be directed to a right End, which no Action of a wicked Man can be; for both the *firſt Principle*, and alſo the *laſt End* of every Action that a wicked Man doth, is carnal ſelf.

Fourthly, *Though wicked Men have not a Power to do that which is not ſinful, yet they have a Power to reſiſt this or that particular Sin:* They are ſadly neceſſitated to act within the Sphere of Sin; that is, whatever they act is ſinful; but yet they may, as it were, chuſe which Sin they will act; neither doth this overthrow what was delivered before; for when they choſe a leſs Sin rather than a greater, when they avoid the Commiſſion of a daring and preſumptuous Sin, and choſe rather to perform a Duty: This proceeds not meerly from their own Power, but from the Power and Influence of God, raiſing and exciting their Power, that Men chuſe to feed upon wholſome Meat, rather than upon a Poiſon, tho' they have a Free-will to do ſo; yet this doth not meerly proceed from their Free-will, but from God's guiding and exciting that Free-will to chuſe wholſome Food rather than Poiſon; ſo is it here, what Sin Man avoids, is not to be aſcribed to his own Power, tho' a Power he hath; but it is to be aſcribed only to God's common, or to his ſpecial Grace and Influence, whereby that Power that would otherwiſe lie dead and unacted, is quickned and actuated in us: What Difference is there betwixt a Man that hath no Power, and a Man that hath a Power, but yet cannot uſe it? Truly, ſuch are we: What Power we have againſt Sin, we cannot make uſe of it, till God raiſe and act us by his exciting Grace; therefore have we ſtill need to pray with *David*, *Lord, do thou keep me from Sin*; for tho' I have a Power, yet it is but a latent and ſleepy Power, and will not be available, till thou doſt awaken and quicken it.

The next thing to be enquired into is, How God keeps Men back from preſumptuous Sins, even then when their Proneneſs to them is moſt violent and eager.

Now for Satisfaction to this you muſt know, God hath two Hands, whereby he holds Men back from their Sins.

Firſt, *The ſtrong Hand of his Providence:* Secondly, *The powerful Hand of his Grace*; and ſometimes God puts both theſe Hands to it, in a mix'd way of *Providence* and *Grace* together; theſe are as it were God's Left-Hand, and his Right-Hand; by the one he over-rules the Actions, and by the other he over-rules the Hearts of Men, and both Almightily.

God by his Providence keeps Men from Sin.

Firſt, *God frequently with-holds Men from the Commiſſion of Sin, by a ſtrong Hand of Providence upon them*; frequently he doth ſo; and that he doth not ſo always, is not becauſe he is defective, either in Power or Goodneſs, whereby he ſhould reſtrain them from Evil, but becauſe he is Infinite in Wiſdom, whereby he knows how to bring Good out of Evil; and therefore before I proceed to lay down thoſe ſeveral Ways that *Providence* takes to hinder the Commiſſion of Sin, I ſhall premiſe this, That it is no Taint at all to the pure Holineſs of God, that he doth by his *Providence* concur to thoſe Wickedneſſes of Men, that if he pleaſed he might prevent and hinder: That God doth, ſo is clear; for *Providence* is not ſo often a Reſtraint from Sin, as it is a powerful Temptation unto Sin; it is a Temptation, as it adminiſters *Objects* and *Opportunities*; and as it ſuits them both unto the Luſts of Men: Thus *Cain* killed his Brother *Abel* by a *Providence*, and *Achan* ſtole *the Wedge of Gold*; *Judas* betrayed his Maſter, and the *Jews* Crucified him by a *Providence*; yea, all that Villany that ever was acted under the Sun, was all brought forth out of the curſed Wombs of Mens Luſts, and made fruitful by God's *Providences*; neither is it hard to conceive how God ſhould, without Sin himſelf, concur to Sin in others; ſince his moſt *Sovereign Will*, being above all Law, cannot poſſibly fall under any Guilt: We are obliged

obliged to keep back Men from the Commission of Sin; when it is in our power to do it; but no such Obligation lies upon God, tho' he can easily keep all wicked Men in the World from ever sinning more; yea, tho' they are so tied up, that they are not able to sin without his Permission and Concurrence, yet he permits wisely, concurs holily, and yet notwithstanding at last punishes justly. In brief, God doth whatever Man doth; for as the *Prophet* saith, *he works all our works in us and for us; and in him we live, move, and have our beings*; and yet in one and the same Action Man sins, and God is holy; because Man acts contrary to that Law which God hath set him, but God himself is subject to no Law besides his own *Soveraign Will*; and *where there is no law, there is no transgression*, as the *Apostle* speaks in *Rom.* 4. 15. God is not bound to hinder the Commission of Sin as we are; and therefore, when he *permits*, nay, when *Providence* accomplisheth it, still is he holy, just, and good; still is he *righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works*; tho' he works that together with Men, that makes them unrighteous and unholy: This I thought fit to premise, that so when you hear how many ways God is able to hinder the Commission of Sin by his *Providence*, you should not suffer any undue Thoughts to rise up in your Hearts against his Holiness; when he chuseth sometimes rather to permit and concur to the Sins of Men, than to hinder and forbid them; who when he permits Sin, permits it righteously; and when he hinders Sin, hinders it almightily. Now there are four remarkable Ways, whereby the *All-wise Providence of God* hinders the Commission of a Sin, even then when Men are most bent and eager upon it.

Providence prevents Sin, by shortning the Life of the Sinner.

First, *Sometimes where his Grace doth not sanctifie the Heart, his Providence shortens the Life of the Sinner*; where he doth not cleanse the Fountain, yet there he removes the Foundation of a Sin; that is, he takes away the very Life and Being of the Sinner; many times when wicked Men have imagined some presumptuous Sin, and go big with it, God suddenly cuts them off from the Land of the Living, and gives them no Space to bring it forth, unless it be in *Hell* among those *Devils* that inspired it; *Psal.* 64. 6, 7. says the *Psalmist* there, *They search out iniquity, they accomplish a diligent search*: But what follows? *God shall shoot at them with an arrow, suddenly shall they be wounded*, while they are thinking and contriving Wickedness in their Hearts, in that very Day they perish, and their Thoughts with them: Thus proud *Pharaoh* resolves, in spight of God and his Miracles, to bring back the *Children* of *Israel* to their old Bondage; but before he could bring his Purpose into Execution, God brings him to Execution: And so *Senacherib* intends the Destruction of *Jerusalem*; but before he could compass it, God slays his Army, and his own Children also. *Herod*, he intends a bloody Persecution against the *Church*, but God smites him, Lice devour him, and eat a Way into that very Heart that conceived so wicked a Purpose: It were endless to cite Instances in this Particular. *Histories* and *Hell* are full of those whom God's *Povidence* hath cut off before they could fulfil their ungodly Designs; upon whom that Threatning in *Ecclesiastes* 8. 11. hath been signally verified, *It shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, because he feareth not before God.* Now this Providence God doth usually, if not only, exercise upon wicked Men, snatching them away from their Sins, and yet in their Sins also: Yea, and herein he deals with them also in some kind of Mercy, in that he abridges the Time of his Patience to them, whom he foresees will only abuse it, and *treasure up to themselves Wrath against the day of wrath*; for hereby their Account is lessened, and their Torments made more tolerable: It had been better for Sinners, that they had dropt immediately from the Womb to the Tomb, better that they had been swadled in their Winding-sheets; yea, shall I say it had been better for them, that they had been doomed to everlasting Torments as soon as they saw the Light, than that God should suffer them to live Twenty, Forty, or Sixty Years, adding Iniquity to Iniquity without Repentance, and God accordingly adding Torments to Torments to punish them, never to be repented of! O *the desperate Conditions that Sinners are in! Unless God give them Repentance; the sooner they are in Hell, the better it will be for them*; *and it is a Mercy if God will damn them betimes*; those whom God doth not endear to his Grace by changing their Natures, yet he indebts to his *Providence*, by shortning their Lives; and yet are there none of

us, that wiſh our Lives were prolong'd to a thouſand Years, were it poſſible; not that we might have a longer Time and Space to repent, but that we might the longer enjoy our Sins: Why, if God ſhould grant your Wiſh, and keep you alive till the *Day of Judgment*; would not that Day become a thouſand-fold more gloomy and dreadful to us, than if God had cut us off at the ordinary Time and Age? And therefore it is a great Favour, that God vouchſafes both to the Elect and to Reprobates, in that, ſince the Flood, he hath cut ſhort the Days of Man upon Earth; for hereby the Elect come to enjoy the Glory and Happineſs of Heaven the ſooner, and Reprobates feel the Torments and Puniſhments of Hell the lighter; *Providence* by a ſpeedy Diſpatch preventing thoſe Sins that otherwiſe would ſink them the deeper into Condemnation.

Providence prevents Sin in Men by ſhortning of Mens Power.

Secondly, *God providentially keeps Men from ſinning, if not by ſhortning their Lives, yet by cutting ſhort their Power, whereby they ſhould be enabled to commit Sin.* All that Power that wicked Men have to Sin, it is either from themſelves, or from their wicked Aſſociates, whom they make uſe of as Inſtruments for the Accompliſhment of their Impieties; but *Providence* can ſtrike them in both, and thereby give their Luſts a *miſcarrying Womb, and dry Breaſts.* Sometimes God by his *Providence* cuts off their evil Inſtruments, and thereby diſables them from ſinning; ſometimes their Inſtruments for Counſel: Thus *Providence* by over-ruling *Abſalom* to reject the Counſel of *Achitophel*, prevents all that Miſchief that ſo wiſe and ſo wicked a Stateſman might have contriv'd; and thereupon he goes and hangs himſelf. Sometimes he cuts off their Inſtruments of Execution; and ſo God diſappointed the Hopes of blaſpheming *Rabſhekah*, and ſent an *Angel*, that in one Night kills almoſt two hundred Thouſand of the *Aſſyrians* dead on the place. Certainly it is great Folly for Men, upon Confidence of their wiſe and powerful Inſtruments, to ſet themſelves up againſt that God that can, without, or againſt all Means and Inſtruments, confound their Deſigns, and fruſtrate all their Enterprizes: And as God thus ſtrikes their Inſtruments, ſo ſometimes he ſtrikes their Perſons, and takes from them the Uſe of thoſe natural Faculties by which they ſhould be enabled to commit their Sins: Sometimes he hides their Wits from them, and beſots them; ſo he did to the *Jews*, Joh. 7. 30. *They ſought to apprehend Jeſus*; Why, who did hinder them? Was he not there among them? Was there not enough of them to do it? Yes, there was; but yet they only ſtand gazing at him, like Men beſotted, *till he eſcaped away from them.* Sometimes God hides away their Hands from them, and enfeebles them; as in *Pſal.* 76. 5. *None of the mighty Men have found their hands*; God hath benumm'd them, and laid their Hands out of the way, when they ſhould have uſed them. The *Sodomites*, you know, ſwarm'd thick about *Lot*'s Houſe, intending Villany to his Gueſts, and God ſmites them with Blindneſs, that they grope for the Door, even at Noon-day. *Jeroboam* ſtretcheth out his Hand againſt the *Prophet*, and God ſuddenly *withers* it. This is God's frequent Courſe with wicked Men; when he doth not ſubdue their Wills, yet he oftentimes ſubdues their Power of ſinning; yea, and poſſibly, altho' we have not ſuch frequent Inſtances of it, God may deal thus ſometimes with his own Children: Thus he hath threatned, or promiſed rather to his Church, that he will *hedge up her way with Thorns, that ſhe ſhould not be able to break through to her Idols*, as formerly ſhe had done: So you have it in *Hoſ.* 2. 6. And indeed it is a great Mercy that God doth take away that Power from Men that he ſees they will only abuſe to their own Deſtruction: It is not Cruelty, but Compaſſion, that chains up *Mad-men*, and takes from them thoſe *Swords*, *Arrows*, and *Fire-brands*, that elſe they would hurl up and down abroad, both to their own and others Miſchiefs; and ſo it is God's common Pity to Sinners, that are very *Mad-men*, that fetters and chains them up, and lays ſuch a powerful Reſtraint upon them by his *Providence*, that where their Wills are not defective, yet their Power to execute Sin, ſhould be. What would wicked Men think, if God ſhould now ſuddenly ſtrike them *dumb*, or *blind*, or *lame*, or *impotent*? Would they not judge this a heavy Judgment inflicted upon them? They would ſo; and yet believe it, it were better for them that God ſhould ſtrike them dumb upon the place, than that they ſhould ever open their Mouths more to blaſpheme and rail at God and his People; better they were ſtruck blind, than that the *Devil* and vile Luſts ſhould enter into the Soul by thoſe Caſements; better that God ſhould maim them, than that they ſhould have

have Strength to commit those Sins, that if but will'd, will damn them; but if executed, will sink their Souls seven-fold deeper into Condemnation. Now the *Providence of God*, by taking away their Power, prevents their Wickedness, and so mercifully mitigates their Condemnation.

Thirdly, *Sometimes God keeps Men from the Commission of Sin, by raising up another Power against that by which the Sinner is to execute his Sin.* Thus when *Saul* would have put *Jonathan* to Death for breaking a rash Vow that himself had made, God raiseth up the Spirits of the People to rescue him; and they plainly tell him, *Jonathan shall not die.* The *Jews* hated Christ, and would have kill'd him, but that they fear'd the People, whom his *Miracles* had oblig'd to him; so that they durst not venture upon him, till his Hour was come. *Providence raiseth up another Power to oppose Sinners.*

Fourthly, *Sometimes Providence casts in some seasonable Diversion, that turns them off from the Commission of that Sin that they intended.* When they are hotly pursuing their Wickedness, *Providence* starts some other Game from them, and sets them upon some other Work. Thus it far'd with *Antiochus*, in *Dan.* 11. 30. He sets himself against the *Holy Covenant*; but for all his Rage against it, he shall return into his own Land, says God; *for the Ships of Shittim shall come against him, and the Ships of the Romans*; and instead of invading others Dominions, he must return to defend his own; thus God diverted him from his Design of ruining the *Jews*. And sometimes where God doth not dry up the Spring of Corruption, yet he turns the Streams of it which way he pleaseth: As a skilful *Physician*, when one Part of the Body is oppress'd with ill Humours, he draws it to another Part that is less dangerous; so God, by his Providence, turns Men from the Commission of a greater to a lesser Sin. Thus he over-rul'd *Joseph's Brethren*; they consulted to cast him into a Pit, and there to let him starve, unless he could feed upon his Dream of *Wheat-sheaves*; but God by his Providence so orders it, that Merchants pass by that Way, and to them they sell him. There are, I believe, but few Men, who, if they will examine back their Lives, cannot produce many Instances both of the *Devil's Policy*, in fitting them with Occasions and Opportunities of Sin, and of *God's Providence*, causing some emergent Affairs, some unexpected Action to interpose and hinder them from those Sins that they purposed. *Providence sometimes prevents Sin by some seasonable Diversion.*

Lastly, *God sometimes keeps Men from Sin, by removing the Object against which they intended to commit it.* Thus, when *Herod* intended to put *Peter* to Death the next Morning, that very Night God sends an *Angel*, and makes his Escape, and so prevents that Sin; and so truly in all Ages, God hides away his Children from the Fury of ungodly Men. *Providence prevents Sin by removing the Object.*

There are doubtless many other various and mysterious *Providences*, whereby God hinders the Sins of Men; but these are the most common and most remarkable Ways, by shortning their Lives, by lessening their Power, by raising up another Power to oppose them, by diverting another Way, and by removing the Objects of their Sins.

The next Thing is, to shew you how God hinders the Commission of Sin in a Way of Grace; but I shall leave this till another Time, and make some Application of what hath now been spoken.

And First then, *See here the sad and woful Estate of wicked Men, whom Grace doth not change, but only Providence restrain.* A meer Restraint from Sin, when the Heart continues fully set and bent upon it, must needs cause Torment and Vexation; their own Corruptions urge them forward; but *God's Providence*, that meets them, and crosses them at every Turn; and that Disappointment that they meet with, when they fully resolve upon Sin, causes great Vexation of Spirit; as God will torment them hereafter for their Sins, so he torments them here by keeping them from their Sins. All the Wicked in the World are strangely hamper'd by *God's Providence*, as so many *Bulls* in a *Net*; that tho' they struggle, yet they cannot possibly break through; and by their struggling, they only vex and weary themselves. God doth, as it were, give up the Hearts of wicked Men to the Devil, only he ties their Hands; let them intend and imagine as much Evil and Mischief as they can, yea, as much as Hell can inspire into them, yet none of these shall execute any of it, otherwise than as God permits them. Now, if there be any real Pleasure in Sin, it is in the Execu-

tion in it; that which Men take in plotting and contriving of it, is meerly the Delight of a Dream and Fancy; and herein lies the exceeding Wretchedneſs of wicked Men, that tho' *Providence* almightily hinders them in the Execution of Sin, yet Juſtice will juſtly puniſh their Intention and Plotting of it.

Secondly, *This ſhould teach us to adore and magnifie this Sin-preventing Providence of God.* Our Lives, our Eſtates, yea, whatever is dear and precious to us hitherto, have been ſecur'd to us only by his powerful Hand, which hath curb'd in the unruly Luſts of Men, and kept them from breaking forth into Violence, and Blood, and Rapine. Should God ſlack the Reins, ſhould he throw them upon the Necks of ungodly Men, how would Uproars, and Confuſions, Murders, and Slaughters, overſpread the Face of the whole Earth, and make the World a *Hell* above-ground. *Redemption* and *Providence* are two wonderful Works of God; by the one, he pardons Sin that is committed; and by the other, he prevents Sin, leſt it be committed; both of them are Contrivances of infinite Wiſdom, and both of them are unſearchable, and paſt finding out; and therefore we ought to aſcribe the Glory of both unto God, that hath laid both the Deſign of *Redemption* and of *Providence* for Man's Good, and for Man's Salvation.

Thirdly, *If at any time we can recal to mind, as indeed who is there that cannot? That God hath thus by his Providence prevented us from the Commiſſion of Sin, how ſhould this oblige us thankfully to own this Mercy of God to us?* May not all of us ſay, had not God taken away our Power, had he not taken away the Objects of our Luſts, had he not diverted us ſome other way, we had now been deeply engag'd in thoſe Sins, that the *merciful Providence* of God hath diverted us from? He it was that hedg'd up the broad Way with Thorns, that ſo he might turn us into the narrow Way, that leads unto Eternal Life and Happineſs.

Fourthly, *Hath God's Providence ſo many Ways and Methods to hinder the Commiſſion of Sin? Why then we may be aſſur'd that he will never permit it, but when it ſhall redound to his own Praiſe and Glory.* It is an excellent Saying of St. *Auſtin, He that is moſt good, will never ſuffer evil, unleſs he were alſo moſt wiſe; whereby he is able to bring good out of evil.* And therefore when we ſee wicked Men alone to accompliſh their helliſh Deſigns, we may then quiet our ſelves with this; God knows how to make his own Advantage out of their Wickedneſs; he knows how from ſuch Dung and Filth to reap a moſt fruitful Crop of Glory to himſelf. *The Rage of Man,* ſays the *Pſalmiſt, thou wilt reſtrain, and the reſidue thereof ſhall turn to thy praiſe*; that Wickedneſs which God doth not reſtrain, he will make redound to his own Praiſe and Glory.

Fourthly, *and* Laſtly, *This may eſtabliſh our Hearts in Peace, when we ſee the Wickedneſs of Men moſt raging and violent, why they cannot ſin, unleſs God gives them a Power*; as *Chriſt* told *Pilate, Thou haſt no power over me,* in *John* 19. 10. *except it be given thee from above.* And certainly that God, that gives them a Power to ſin, ſtill keeps a Power in his own hands to limit them in their Sins; and when their Luſts are moſt unruly, he can ſay to them, hitherto ſhall ye go, and here ſhall your proud Waves be ſtay'd: He ſtints them, and bounds them; and he alſo can totally reſtrain them when he pleaſeth, and when it ſhall be moſt for his own Praiſe and Glory.

Now as God doth thus keep Men back from the Commiſſion of *preſumptuous Sins* by a ſtrong Hand of *Providence*, ſo ſometimes he doth by his *Grace*; and this Grace is either meerly reſtraining, or elſe it is ſanctifying and renewing; both of them are of very great Force and Efficacy; by the one he holds Men back from Sin, and by the other he turns them againſt Sin. You have doubtleſs heard much concerning *Sanctifying* and *Reſtraining Grace*; but yet that your Notions and Apprehenſions of them may be more dear and diſtinct, I ſhall give you the Difference that there is betwixt theſe two in ſeveral Particulars; they differ in their Subject, they differ in their Eſſence, and in their Manner of Operation.

How reſtraining and renewing Grace do differ.

In their Subject.

Firſt, *They differ in Reſpect of their Subject.* Reſtraining Grace is but common, and it works upon wicked Men and Reprobates, as well as others: But *Sanctifying Grace* that is ſpecial, and belongs only to thoſe, who belong themſelves to the Election of Grace. *Eſau,* whom the *Scripture* notes as the great Inſtance of Reprobation, comes out againſt *Jacob* with a Troop of four Thouſand Ruffians, intending doubtleſs to revenge himſelf upon him, for the Loſs of his *Birth-*

Birth-right and *Bleſſing*; but at their firſt Meeting, God by a ſecret Work ſo mollifies his Heart, that inſtead of falling upon him, and killing him, he falls upon his Neck, and kiſſes him; here God reſtrains him from that *preſumptuous Sin* of Murder, not in a Way of meer External Providence, but with his own Hand immediately turns about his Heart, and by ſeeing ſuch a Company of Cattle bleating and bellowing, ſo many timorous Men and helpleſs Children all bowing and ſupplicating unto him, he turns his Revenge into Compaſſion, and with much urging receives a Preſent from him, whom before he intended to make a Prey. The ſame Power of Reſtraint God laid upon the Heart of *Abimelech* that *Heathen King*; you have it in *Gen.* 20. 6. when he had taken *Sarah*, *Abraham*'s Wife, intending to make her his Wife or Concubine; God tells him in a Dream, *I with-held thee from ſinning againſt me, therefore ſuffer'd I thee not to touch her:* Here was nothing viſible to hinder *Abimelech* from ſo great a Wickedneſs, but God inviſibly wrought upon his Heart, and unhing'd his wicked Deſires; now from the Inſtances of *Eſau* and *Abimelech*, we may clearly collect, how *Reſtraining Grace* differs both from *Reſtraining Providence*, and alſo from *Sanctifying Grace:* From Providence it differs, becauſe uſually when God providentially reſtrains from Sin, he doth it by ſome viſible apparent Means that doth not work by bringing any Change or Alteration on the Heart, but only by laying an External Check upon Men's Actions; but now by *Reſtraining Grace*, God deals in a ſecret Way with the very Heart of a Sinner; and tho' he doth not change the Nature of his Heart, yet he alters the preſent Frame and Diſpoſition of it, and takes away the Deſire of committing thoſe Sins, that yet it doth not mortifie; and from *Sanctifying Grace* it differs alſo, in that God vouchſafes *Reſtraining Grace* to wicked Men, as you have heard, but none partake of *Sanctifying Grace* beſides the Children of God, and the Remnant according to Election; *thoſe whom he predeſtinates them, he alſo calls*; that is, them he *ſanctifies*, as you have it in *Rom.* 8. 30. *Election* and *Sanctification* are of the ſelf ſame Breadth; *Election* is the Cauſe of *Sanctificatien*, and *Sanctification* is a Sign of *Election:* Thoſe whom God will bring to himſelf in Glory, he cauſeth a double Separation to paſs upon them; the one from Eternity, when he calls them out from the Maſs of thoſe that he leaves to periſh in their Sins; and the other in Time, when thoſe whom he hath ſet apart for himſelf by *Election*, he brings home to himſelf by *Converſion:* And therefore whatever Meaſure of *Reſtraining Grace* God may afford to wicked Men and Reprobates, yet *Sanctifying Grace* is the Fruit only of *Election*, and the Portion only of thoſe who are Elected. And that is the firſt Difference.

In their Nature and Eſſence.

Secondly, *They differ alſo in their Nature and Eſſence. Sanctifying Grace* is a Habit wrought in the Soul by the Spirit of God, call'd therefore *a Writing of the Law on the Heart, and a putting God's Fear into our inward Parts*, Jer. 31. 33 And St. *John* terms it, *a Seed that remains*, *John* 1. 9. Theſe Expreſſions clearly denote it to be an internal Principle, or Habit, deeply rooted and fix'd in the Soul; and whatever Holy Actions a Saint performs, as they are caus'd by a Divine Influence without him, ſo they flow alſo from a Holy Principle within him. Hence our Saviour tells us, in *Mark* 12. 35. *That a good Man out of the good Treaſure of his Heart bringeth forth good Things*; that is, out of that inward Habit and Principle of Grace, that the *Holy Ghoſt* hath wrought in him the Work of Regeneration. But *Reſtraining Grace* hath no ſuch Habit and Principle implanted in the Soul, but is only a Merciful Actual Influence from God, hindering the Commiſſion of thoſe Sins, to which Men's Natural Corruptions make them enclin'd: In brief, *Sanctifying Grace* is a Quality wrought in us, but *Reſtraining Grace* is only an Action flowing from God.

In the Manner of their Operation.

Thirdly, *Sanctifying and Reſtraining Grace differ in their Manner of Working and Operation*; and here we may obſerve a Four-fold Difference.

Sanctifying Grace deſtroys Sin, Reſtraining Grace only impriſons it.

Firſt, *Sanctifying Grace keeps the Soul from Sin by deſtroying of it, but Reſtraining Grace keeps the Soul from Sin only by impriſoning of it.* God many times ſhuts up the Sins of thoſe in Priſon, whom notwithſtanding he will at laſt ſhut up in *Hell:* It is Sanctifying Grace alone that can do Execution upon them; *Reſtraining Grace* may debar them of their Liberty, but it is only *Sanctifying Grace* can deprive them of their Life. There may appear but little Difference betwixt the Converſation of a Child of God, whom *Special Grace* doth ſanctifie, and

and one in a State of Nature whom common Grace doth only reſtrain; doth the one walk blameleſly without Offence? Doth he avoid the groſſer Pollutions of the World? So doth the other: A *Star* is not more like a *Star*, than theſe *Meteors* may be like them: But now here lies the Difference, *Reſtraining Grace* only ties the Hands, but *Sanctifying Grace* ſtabs the old Man to the Heart: It is one Thing to bind a *Thief* to a Tree, and another Thing to nail him faſt to the Croſs. *Reſtraining Grace* only binds Corruption faſt that it cannot ſtir, not outwardly, but ſtill it hath as much Strength as ever: But now *Sanctifying Grace*, that crucifies it, and nails it to the Croſs of Chriſt, where it weakens and languiſheth, and hangs a dying Body of Death. The *Earth* is as dry and hard in a froſty Winter, as it is in a parching Summer; yet there's a great Deal of Difference in the Cauſe of it; in Summer the *Sun* dries up the Moiſture, and in Winter the *Froſt* binds it in: Truly, *Reſtraining and Sanctifying Grace* are for all the World like *Froſt* and *Sun*; the Ways of thoſe, who have only a Reſtraint laid upon them, may be altogether as fair and clean, as the Ways of thoſe that are ſanctify'd are; but there's a great Difference in the Cauſe, *Sanctifying Grace* dries up the Filth and Corruption in the Heart of the one, but *Reſtraining Grace* only freezeth in, and binds up the Filth and Corruption of the other.

Sanctifying Grace ſtrikes at the Sins of the Heart, Reſtraining Grace only hinder the Sins of the Life.

Secondly, *Sanctifying Grace ſtrikes eſpecially at the Sins of the Heart, but Reſtraining Grace uſually only hinders the Sins of the Life.* An unregenerate Man, tho' never ſo Moral, hunts his Sins only in Purlues; as ſoon as they are gotten within the Pale, he ceaſeth his Purſuit. It is uſually the higheſt Care and Upſhot of a Moral Man's Endeavours, to keep his Luſts from boiling over, and raiſing Smoak and Aſhes about him; and if he can but obtain this, let the Heart be brim-full of Sin, let the Thoughts ſoak and ſtew in malicious, unclean, covetous Deſigns and Contrivances, he never oppoſeth or laments them; a meer Reſtraint walks only round about the outward Man, and if it meets with any Luſt ſtruggling abroad, it drives it in again into the Heart; but for thoſe Sins that lie pent up there, it ſeldom moleſts, and never ſubdues them: The Heart may indulge it ſelf in vain, filthy, deſtructive, and pernicious Thoughts, it may ſet brooding over *Cockatrice-Eggs*, till it hatch them into *Serpents*, and in them be ſtung to Death; it may toſs a Sin to and fro in the Fancy, and thereby make ſome Kind of Recompence to the Devil for not committing of it; and yet this Man be only under a powerful Reſtraint from God's *Reſtraining Grace*. But now *Sanctifying Grace* doth more eſpecially oppoſe the Sins of the Heart and of the inward Man, for there is its Seat and Reſidence in the Heart: *Reſtraining Grace* watcheth without, but true Grace dwells within. And as Chriſt ſpeaks of the Church of *Pergamos*, it dwells there where *Satan's Seat* is, it rules in the midſt of its Enemies, and it is engag'd ſo to for its own Security, that it may ſtill cruſh them as they ariſe in the Heart. Now from this Particular we may be help'd in Judging, whether our abſtaining from Sin be only from common *Reſtraining Grace*, or from *Sanctifying* and *Renewing Grace*: See what Sins they are that you moſt of all labour to beat down; do you ſtrive only againſt the Sins of your Lives, and not againſt the Sins of your Hearts that are the Spring and Fountain of the other? Are you content when you have beaten your Corruptions from the Out-works, and driven them in, where they do not rage ſo furiouſly as they have done; whereas before they ſallied forth at Pleaſure, and made Havock of your Souls, and wounded your Conſciences, now they are pent up in a narrower Room and Compaſs? Doth this content you; do you think it enough to lay cloſe Siege to your Corruptions by Conviction and legal Terrors, and to ſhut them up, that they may no more break forth as formerly they have done done, to the groſs Defilement of your Lives? If this be all, then know, this is no more than what a meer *common Reſtraint* may effect upon you, without any Work of *Sanctifying Grace* upon the Heart. True Grace, when it beats back Sin, it follows it, aud purſues it into the Heart, and there ſearcheth for it, and if it ſees it but breath in a Thought, or ſtir in a Deſire, preſently it falls upon it, and deſtroys it.

Sanctifying Grace ſets the Will againſt Sin, but Reſtraining Grace only awakens the Conſcience.

Thirdly, *Sanctifying Grace when it keeps a Soul from Sin, it always engageth the Will againſt it; but common and reſtraining Grace only awakens and rouzeth up the Conſcience againſt it*; the *Will* and the *Conſcience* are two leading Faculties of the Soul; the one commands what ſhall be done, and the other informs what ought to be done; and all the reſt of the Faculties and Affections of the

the Soul take part and ſide with theſe two: Now in a godly Man theſe two are at an Agreement, what *Conſcience* prompts, the *Will* commands, and the inferiour Faculties are all ready to execute: Sanctifying Grace, that works immediately and ſpecially upon the Will, and makes a mighty Change there; whereas before Converſion Man's Will is ſo utterly depraved, that it can like nothing but Sin; after Grace hath touch'd it, and mightily turn'd it about, it cannot now any longer give its full and free Conſent to the Commiſſion of any Sin; if ſuch a one ſins, he doth it truly and properly againſt his Will, as the *Apoſtle* ſpeaks in *Rom.* 7. 15. *What I do, I allow not:* Now a wicked Man may ſin againſt his *Conſcience*, but it is impoſſible that he ſhould ever ſin againſt his *Will*, that is continually ſet upon Sin; and were it not that God ſometimes raiſeth up natural *Conſcience* in him to oppoſe his corrupt *Will*, he would every Moment ruſh into the moſt damning Impieties, without any of the leaſt Regret or Senſe of it: When the Devil preſents a Sin to the Embraces of the *Will*, and when the *Will* cloſeth with it, and all the Faculties of the Soul are ready to commit it, God ſends in *Conſcience* among them: What, *Conſcience*, art thou aſleep! ſeeſt thou not how the Devil, and thine own deviliſh Heart, are now plotting and contriving thine eternal Ruin? Now this rouzeth *Conſcience*, and makes it ſtorm and threaten, and hurl Fire-brands into the Face of Sin, while it lies in the very Embraces of the *Will*; and tho' it cannot change the *Will* from loving of it, yet it frights the *Will* from committing of it: This is the moſt uſual Way reſtraining Grace takes for the Prevention of Sin, by ſending in *Conſcience* to make ſtrong and vigorous Oppoſitions againſt it: There are none of us here, but through Divine Grace have been kept from many Sins, that we were in great danger, through the Corruptions of our own Hearts, to have committed: Sin hath been conceived by us, but God hath ſtifled and ſtrangled it in the Womb: Would you know now whether this hath proceeded from God's *Reſtraining*, or from God's *Sanctifying Grace*? Why then make a Judgment according to this *Rule*, Where *Reſtraining Grace* only reſiſts and hinders Sin, it doth it by ſetting one Faculty and Affection of the Soul againſt another; but where *Sanctifying Grace* hinders it, it ſets the ſame Faculty and Affection of the Soul againſt it ſelf; *Reſtraining Grace* ſets one Affection againſt another; *Conſcience* againſt *Will*; the *Fear* of *Hell* againſt the *Love* of *Sin*; *Helliſh Terrors* againſt *Sinful Pleaſures*, *God's Threatnings* againſt the *Devil's Flatteries*; it martials up theſe, and ſo enters the Combat: Here are Bandyings of one Power of the Soul againſt another; but now the *Will* that is entirely on Sin's Part; and if *Conſcience* prevails and pulls away a beloved Luſt from the Embraces of the *Will*, the Sinner parts with it very heavily and unwillingly, following it, as *Phaltiel* did *Michael*, weeping, tho' he durſt not make reſiſtance; but now when *Sanctifying Grace* oppoſeth and hinders Sin, it ſets the ſame Faculty and Affection of the Soul againſt it ſelf, *Will* againſt *Will*, and *Love* againſt *Love*, *Deſire* againſt *Deſire*; He wills the Commiſſion of Sin, it is true, but yet at the ſame time he wills the Mortification of it; He loves to gratifie his Sin, but yet at the ſame time he wills the croſſing of it too; He deſires to enjoy that Pleaſure and Contentment that he fancies he may take in Sin, and yet he deſires at the ſame time to deſtroy it: Here is one and the ſame Faculty bandying againſt it ſelf; and the Reaſon of this is, becauſe a Child of God hath two Principles in every ſingle Faculty; there is in him a Mixture of Fleſh and Spirit; a Carnal Part that ſides with Sin, and a Spiritual Part that always contradicts and oppoſeth it; and theſe two are ſpread over his whole Soul, and are mingled with every Power and Faculty thereof; ſo that he can neither do the Evil, nor do the Good, that he would do, without Contradiction, Strife, and Reluctancy: Now try your ſelves by this, when you are tempted to Sin, what it is that reſiſts it? Is it your *Will*, or is it only your *Conſcience*? Are you only frighted from it? Doth the Fear of *Hell* overcome the Love of Sin? Why, all this may be from a meer *Reſtraint* in thoſe who are altogether unacquainted with the Power of *ſanctifying Grace*; this is the Symptom and Character of a gracious Soul, that when it is moſt inclinable unto Sin, yet at the ſame time is moſt averſe from it; when it moſt wiſhes the *Accompliſhment* of Sin; yet even then it ſtrongly wiſhes the *Subduing* and *Mortifying* of that Sin; I know this appears a *Riddle* and a ſtrange *Paradox* to wicked Men, but thoſe, who have any true Senſe of the Work of Grace upon their own Hearts, know it to be a Truth, and rejoyce in the Experiences that they have of it. Fourth-

Rom. 7. 15.

Fourthly and Laſtly, *Reſtraining and Sanctifying Grace differ in the Motives and Arguments, that they make uſe of for the reſiſting of Sin:* There are two general *Topicks*, or Common Places, whence all Arguments againſt Sin are drawn, and thoſe are the *Law* and the *Goſpel:* Both of theſe adminiſter ſuch Weapons, that if rightly uſed, are very effectual for the beating down of Sin; and commonly *Reſtraining Grace* uſeth thoſe only that are borrowed from the *Law*; it urgeth the Command, it thunders the Curſe, it brandiſheth the Sword of Juſtice, and makes Reports of nothing but Hell and eternal Damnation, and ſuch-like Arguments, that ſcare Men from the committing of their Sins, though ſtill they love them: Now *Sanctifying Grace*, though it alſo makes a moſt profitable Uſe of theſe very Arguments, yet it chiefly uſeth more mild and more ingenious Motives, drawn from the Love of God, from the Death of Chriſt, from the Comforts of the Holy Ghoſt; and theſe, tho' they ſtrike ſofter, yet they wound deeper: Now hereby alſo you may give a Gueſs, whether your abſtaining from Sin, be meerly from *Reſtraining* or from *Sanctifying Grace*, obſerve what Weapons you uſe? What Conſiderations do over-awe your Hearts? Are they ſuch as are drawn only from the *Law*, and the ſad Reflections of the End and Iſſue of Sin, that it brings *Shame*, and *Death*, and *Hell?* Muſt you run down to *Hell* every time a Temptation comes, to fetch Arguments thence to oppoſe againſt your Corruptions? Can you no where elſe quench the *fiery Darts* of the *Devil*, unleſs it be in that Lake of Fire? If this be all (tho' this too is well) yet know if it be all, this is no more than what *Reſtraint and common Grace* may perform: It is the proper Character of *Reſtraining Grace*, to keep Men back from the Commiſſion of Sin, only by Dread and Fear of Puniſhment; but now *Sanctifying Grace*, that eſpecially betakes it ſelf to *Goſpel Arguments*, and conſiders how diſingenuous it is to ſin againſt a reconciled and a gracious Father, againſt a crucified and a bleeding Saviour, againſt a patient and long-ſuffering Spirit, and heaps up many ſuch like ingenious Arguments, that work kindly upon the Heart; he leads every Temptation to the Croſs of Chriſt, and there ſhews it his Saviour, hanging and bleeding; And can I commit this Sin, that hath drawn ſo much Blood from my *Saviour* to expiate it, and would draw ſo much Blood from my *Conſcience* to perpetrate it? Did he die to free me from the Condemnation of it, and ſhall I wilfully ruſh into the Commiſſion of it? No, O *Lord*, thy Love with-holds me, I cannot do this thing and ſin againſt ſo rich, ſo free, and infinite Mercy and Goodneſs, that thou daily extendeſt towards me. Thus true Grace uſually teacheth a Child of God to argue againſt his Sins; and this keeps him from the Commiſſion of thoſe Sins, that others, riſing up againſt them, only from the Terrors and Threatnings of the *Law*, and other ſuch dreadful Conſiderations, fall into notwithſtanding: A *Wooll-pack* ſooner damps a Bullet than a *Stone-wall*; and truly, *ſoft Arguments* taken from the Goſpel, from the Love of God, from the Death of Chriſt, from the Patience and Long-ſuffering of the Spirit; theſe *ſoft Arguments* ſooner damp a Temptation, and reſiſt a Corruption, than more rigid and ſevere ones will, when alone uſed by themſelves.

Now having thus in general ſhew'd you the Difference betwixt *Sanctifying and Reſtraining Grace*, I ſhall now deſcend to more particular Conſiderations of thoſe Ways and Methods that God uſeth in keeping Men back from Sin by his Special and Sanctifying Grace; and here I ſhall premiſe this, That whatever Sin God doth, I mean by his *Sanctifying Grace*, prevent his own Children from the Commiſſion of, he doth it by exciting the inward Principle of Grace to the actual Uſe and Exerciſe of it. There is a *two-fold Grace* always neceſſary to keep the beſt Chriſtians from Sin, *Habitual* and *Exciting Grace*; and God makes uſe of the one to quicken and ſtir up the other; He makes uſe of *Exciting Grace* to quicken *Habitual Grace*, that elſe would lie ſluggiſh and dormant in the Soul. *Habitual Grace*, that denominates the Soul alive unto God, but yet it is no otherwiſe alive than a Man in a Swoon is; it is *exciting Grace* that alone can enable it to perform the Functions and Offices of Life: In the deepeſt Winter there is Life in the Seed that lies buried under-ground, but yet it acts not till the *Sun's Influence* draws it forth, and then it heaves and ſhoves away the Earth that covered it, and ſpreads it ſelf into the Beauties of a Flower. So is it here, *inherent habitual Grace* is an immortal Seed, and it is but a

Seed

Seed till the Influences of the approaching and exciting Grace of God awaken it, and chase its benumm'd Vertue, and then it stirs and thrusts away all that Dung and Filth of *Corruptions* under which it lay buried, and then it flows forth into *actual Grace*: *Habitual* and *exciting Grace* must both concur to the producing of *actual Grace*, as necessarily as there must be the Concurrence both of the Heat of the *Sun*, and of Life in the *Seed*, to produce a Flower: Now by God's *exciting, inherent, habitual Grace* in the Soul, he keeps Men from sinning two ways: First, By *Prevention*; and secondly, By *Suppression* of Sin. First, Hereby he *prevents and excludes those Sins, that, were we not employed in the Exercise of Grace, we would commit.* When the Soul is constantly employ'd in holy and spiritual Affairs, Sin hath then neither Room nor Opportunity to put forth it self; it is kept out from the Thoughts, when they are busied in holy Meditation; it is kept out from the Affections, when they are set upon *heavenly Objects*; it is kept out from the Life and Conversation, when the Duties both of the general and particular Calling are duly perform'd in their respective Seasons. The Apostle exhorts us, in *Ephesians* 4. 27. *not to give place to the Devil:* Truly, when God's *exciting Grace* quickens our *inherent Grace* into continual Exercise, when every Faculty is filled with holy Actings, and every Season with holy Duties, the Devil can have no Place to tempt, nor Corruption to stir: It is the best Security God can give from the Commission of Sin, to quicken to the Performance of Duty: When we pray, or meditate, or attend upon publick Ordinances, we ought to bless God for his exciting Grace, whereby we have not only performed a Duty, but also escaped some foul and notorious Sin, that we might have committed, had we not been so holily employ'd; we, who are here now present before the Lord this Day, had we neglected this present Opportunity, who of us knows what horrid Temptations and foul Sins we might have been exposed to in our *own Houses*, which in the *House of God* we have avoided? *David*, when he walked idlly upon the Roof of his House, he lies open to the Snares of the Devil, and sins foully; had he then been at his *Harp* or *Psalms*, he might thereby have driven the Evil Spirit from himself, as formerly he did from his Master *Saul*: *Running Streams* preserve themselves pure and clean, when *standing Pools* soon grow corrupt and noisom, and venomous Creatures breed in them; so is it with the Heart, whilst God's exciting and quickning Grace puts it upon continual Act, it is preserved from Corruption; but when once it grows sluggish, and doth not freely flow forth into the Actings of Grace, and Performance of Duties, the Spawn of all manner of Sin breeds there, and filthy Lusts crawl to and fro in it without any disturbance; and therefore we should continually pray, that God would vouchsafe us the *quickning Influence* of his Spirit, that he would fill our Sails with that Wind that blows where it listeth; *Arise, O North Wind, and come thou South Wind, and blow upon our Gardens, that the Spices thereof may flow forth*; for if the Spices do not, the Stench will.

Secondly, *As God by his exciting Grace hinders those Sins that might arise in the Heart, so he also suppresseth those Sins that do arise.* There is the greatest Contrariety imaginable betwixt *inherent Sin* and *inherent Grace*; when the one is vigorous, the other languisheth; when the one is acted, the other grows dull and sluggish: Now both these opposite Principles have their Seat and Abode in the same Heart, and both of them are in continual Expectation of exciting Influence to call them forth into Act. *Indwelling Corruption*, that is usually rouzed up by Temptation, when it stirs in the Heart, and is ready to break forth in the Life; *habitual Grace*, though it looks on, yet is of it self so feeble, that it can make no Opposition till a kindly Influence from the Spirit of God calls out some particular Grace that is directly contrary to that Sin that stirs, and this resists and subdues it. This Method God used in keeping the Apostle from sinning, 2 *Cor.* 12. He was there under a sharp and pungent *Temptation*; that is therefore called a *Thorn in the Flesh*, v. 7. Satan buffets, and the Apostle prays, and God answers, *My Grace is sufficient for thee*; my Grace is sufficient, not thy Grace; that Grace that is in thee is but weak and helpless; yea, a very Nothing, if I withdraw my Influence from it; but that quickning Grace that flows from me, that alone is sufficient to remove the Temptation, and to prevent the Sin. Why, now while God's *exciting Grace* work'd upon the *Apostle's* *in-*

herent Grace, this Temptation, this *Thorn* in the Fleſh only made him more watchful, and more induſtrious againſt it: But if God ſhould have ſuſpended this his Influence, this *Thorn* in the Fleſh would immediately, notwithſtanding all his Grace, ſadly have wounded his Conſcience, by the Commiſſion of ſome great and foul Sin. Now, as all manner of Sin lies couch'd in that *Body of Sin* that we bear about with us; ſo all manner of Grace lies couch'd in that *Principle of Grace* that God implants in his own Children. Now when the Devil by his Temptations calls forth ſome particular Sin, God alſo at the ſame time by his exciting Grace calls forth a particular Grace, to hinder the Commiſſion of that Sin. Thus when they are tempted to Pride, God calls forth Humility, to prick that ſwelling, puffing Bladder; when they are tempted to Wrath and Paſſion, he ſtirs up Meekneſs; when to Murmuring and Repining againſt the Diſpenſations of God, he puts Patience upon its perfect Work. Briefly, there is no Sin whatever that the Devil can by his Temptation ſtir up in the Heart, but God alſo can ſtir up a contrary Grace to it, to quell and maſter it. This is the Method of God's *exciting Grace* in the preventing of Sin, that when the Devil calls forth a particular Corruption out of the Stock of Corruption, God calls forth a particular Grace, contrary to it, from the Stock of Grace: But yet there are ſome particular Graces that are more eſpecially employ'd about this Service, and which God doth moſt frequently exerciſe and ſet on work to keep his Children from the Commiſſion of Sin.

Firſt, *God hinders the Commiſſion of Sin, by keeping up the lively and vigorous Actings of Faith.* Indeed, if Faith fail, all other Graces muſt fail by conſequence. Faith is the Soul's Steward, that fetches in Supplies of Grace from Chriſt, in whom is the Treaſure of it; and diſtributes them to all the other Graces of the Soul: Therefore, when Chriſt tells St. *Peter, Satan had deſired to ſift him* by his Temptations, leſt he ſhould be thereby diſcouraged and dejected, preſently he adds, in *v.* 32. *But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not:* And wherefore his Faith, rather than any other Grace? But becauſe other Graces muſt take their Lot with Faith, and muſt be ſtrong or weak, victorious or languiſhing, as Faith is; and therefore it is called *the Shield of Faith*, Epheſ. 6. 6. Now the Office of a *Shield* is to defend not only the Body, but the reſt of the Armour alſo; and ſo doth *Faith*, when it is dexterouſly managed, it keeps both the Soul, and its Graces alſo, from the Attempts of the Devil. I might be large here, in ſhewing you how Faith preſerves from Sin; as, by deriving Vertue and Strength from the Death and Blood of Chriſt, by pleading God's Engagements and Promiſes to *tread Satan under our feet*; by urging and importuning Chriſt to fulfil in us the End of his coming into the World, which was to deſtroy the Works of the Devil; and many ſuch Ways I might name, by which Faith prevents Sin, and deſtroys it; but waving them, I ſhall only mention two Particulars, wherein this Energy of Faith in keeping Men from Sin is the moſt conſpicuous.

Firſt, *Faith preſerves from Sin, by bringing in, and preſenting to the Soul eternal Rewards and Puniſhments*; and that's the peculiar Office of Faith. Theſe indeed are future unto Senſe, but they are preſent unto Faith; for *Faith is the ſubſtance of things not ſeen*, Heb. 11. 1. It gives them a Being before they are, and what we hope for, or fear, as to come, by Faith it is enjoy'd, or felt, as already preſent. Why now, what a mighty Advantage is this to preſerve Men from ſinning? Would Sinners treat with the Devil, or hearken to a Temptation, if they ſhould now ſee the whole World on flame, Angels haſtning them to Judgment, and Chriſt upon his Throne; here Heaven, to receive and crown them; there Hell, with all its Horrors, to torment them; Would any of you dare to ſin if all this were before your Eyes? Why, believe it, when Faith acts lively, all this is as truly preſent to the Soul, as it is certain it ſhall once be; and therefore no more than we would commit a Sin if Sentence were now paſſing upon us, either of Abſolution, or of eternal Damnation at the Judgment-Seat of God, no more ſhall we ſin while Faith ſets theſe things evidently before our Eyes, and makes them as real to us as they are ſure.

Secondly, *Faith preſerves from ſinning, by repreſenting that God, who muſt hereafter be our Judge, to be now our Spectator and Obſerver.* It is only an Eye of Faith that can diſcover things future as preſent, and things ſpiritual as real. Why now, God he is a ſpiritual Being, and therefore is inviſible to the dull

dull Eyes of Fleſh; but the quick Eye of Faith, that can *ſee him who is inviſible*, as it was ſaid of *Moſes*, *Heb.* 11. 27. it fixeth its Eye upon the all-ſeeing Eye of God, and fills the Soul with awful Thoughts of God's *Omnipreſence* and *Omniſciency*, that all things are naked and bare before him, in whoſe Company we are where-ever we are, and with whom we have to do whatever we are doing: Why now, conſider with your ſelves, Would I commit ſuch or ſuch a Sin, to which poſſibly you are tempted, if ſome grave Perſon were in the Room with you, whom you did much reſpect? And what, ſhall the Preſence of a *mortal Man* keep you from ſinning, and ſhall not the Preſence of the *Great God* much more? Shall we dare to ſin, when God's Eye is fixed upon us, when he views not only our outward Actions, but alſo our inward Thoughts, clearer than we can ſee the Faces one of another? It was the wiſe Counſel that the *Heathen-Man* gave to a *Scholar* of his, That if he would preſerve himſelf from doing any thing that was undecent, he ſhould ſuppoſe ſome Sober and Reverend Man preſent with him; and this would keep him from doing that which he ſhould be aſhamed to do before him. Truly, we need not make any ſuch Suppoſition; the Great and Holy God is preſent with us in reality, and the Eye of Faith diſcovers him ſo to be; he is always looking on us: Yea, always looking into us; and certainly this, to one that can exerciſe the diſcerning Eye of Faith, will be a more effectual Means to keep a Man from Sin, that if all the Eyes of Men and Angels were upon him.

Secondly, *As the Exerciſe of Faith, ſo the ſprightly and vigorous Exerciſe of Divine Love is an excellent Preſervative againſt Sin.* Love will not willingly do any thing that may offend and grieve the Object loved. *Love*, it is an aſſimilating Affection, it is the very Cement that joyns God and the Soul together in the ſame Spirit, and makes them to be of one Heart and of one Mind; it is the Load-ſtone of the Soul, that toucheth all other Affections, and makes them ſtand Heaven-ward: When once God hath wrought the Love of himſelf in our Hearts; this will conſtrain us to love what he loves, and to hate what he hates: Sin is the only thing that God hates, and thoſe that love him will not, cannot but hate Sin; their Love to God will conſtrain them to do it, *Pſal.* 97. 7. *Ye that love the Lord hate Evil:* And certainly the Hatred of Evil is the beſt Security againſt the committing of it: Will any one take a *Toad* or *Serpent* into his Boſom to lodge it there? Truly, as utterly impoſſible it is, while the *exciting Grace* of God, ſtirs up and quickens our *Love* to him, that we ſhould ever embrace a vile Luſt, and lodge it in our Hearts, ſince our Sight of the Beauty of Holineſs hath made it ugly, and our Love to God hath made it hateful.

Thirdly, To mention no more, *A holy Fear and Caution leſt we ſhould ſin, is a moſt exceelent Preſervative againſt Sin.* None are ſo ſafe as thoſe that are leaſt ſecure: Fear is the beſt Preſervative of Grace; whereas thoſe that are raſh, and venturous, and confident of their own Strength, run themſelves into many Temptations, and come off with wounded and ſmarting Conſciences: *Stand in awe*, ſays the *Pſalmiſt*, *and ſin not*, Pſal. 4. 4. The timorous and trembling Chriſtian ſtands firmeſt, becauſe ſuch a one is apt upon every Occaſion to ſuſpect his own Strength, and to call in God's. And indeed, when we conſider the Treachery of our own Hearts, and the Subtilty of the *Devil*, this *holy Fear* and *Jealouſie* is no more than is needful, and it is leſs than ſufficient. A Man that is to wade thorough a deep River, will firſt try his Footing, before he takes his Step: Why, we are to wade thorough the *Depths of Satan*, as the *Apoſtle* calls them; and, certainly it is but a requiſite Caution, firſt to try our Ground, before we venture upon it; to look and conſider, whether ſuch and ſuch an Action be grounded upon a *Command*, and ſecured to us by a *Promiſe*; whether if we do it we ſhall not lay our ſelves open to ſuch and ſuch Temptations; or, if we do lie open to them, whether or not we are in God's Way, and may expect his Protection and Preſervation? Truly ſuch Circumſpection as this is, will prove our beſt Security; and though we are not able by all our own Strength and Diligence to preſerve our ſelves, yet when God ſees us ſo induſtriouſly ſolicitous to avoid Sin, he will then come in by his Almighty Grace, that helps not the Slothful, but the Laborious, and he will keep us from thoſe Sins that we cannot keep our ſelves from.

Now for the *Application* of this; If it be ſo, that it is the Almighty Power of God only that can keep us from Sin; *This may then be convictive of that Error that*

now a-days is very rife in the World, that aſcribes our Preſervation in our Standing not ſo much to the Almighty Grace of God, as to the Liberty and Freedom of our own Wills. Truly this is an Opinion that proceeds much from the Pride and Stomach of ſuch who were loth to be too much beholden to the Grace of God for their Salvation. It is true, no Man Sins, nor no Man abſtains from Sin, but it is with his Will; but yet ſtill there is an Almighty Influence from God, an Influence of common Providence to the Wicked, without which they could not ſo much as Will, and an Influence of Special Grace to the Godly, without which they could not abſtain from Sin: *It is God,* ſaith the *Apoſtle, that works in us both to will and to do of his own good pleaſure*; It is not, whether or not the *Will* be free in abſtaining from Sin that is acknowledged, but whether the Motion of the Will be principally and primarily from God, or from it ſelf; and this the *Apoſtle* concludes to be from God: From him it is that we *both will and do*; He gives the firſt Beginning, he adds the Progreſs, and he concludes. He firſt begets the Grace, then he encreaſeth, and at laſt he crowns it: All is from God.

Secondly, *This may inſtruct us to whom we ought to aſcribe the Praiſe and the Glory of our Preſervation from thoſe foul and horrid Sins that we ſee others daily fall into.* Not unto us, O *Lord,* not unto us, but unto *thy Name* be *all the Praiſe and Glory.* We have Natures as ſinful as the worſt of Men ever had! and that ſuch ſinful Natures ſhould not produce as wicked Lives; whence proceeds this, but only from the *Miracle of God's Grace?* For it is a *Miracle,* that when the Fountain is as bitter, when our Hearts are as bad as the Hearts of others, yet the Streams ſhould not be ſo? Whence is it, ſince we have the ſame *corrupt Hearts* with *Cain* and *Judas,* and all the wicked Rabble in the World? Whence is it that we have not committed the ſame Impieties with them, or worſe than they have done? Why, God hath either *Reſtrained* or *Sanctified* us; but ſanctifying Grace is not enough; for whence is it that we have not been *Drunken* with *Noah, Adulterers* or *Murderers* with *David, Abjurers* of Chriſt with *Peter?* Are we more Holy than they? Or are we more Sanctified than they? No, it is only our gracious God's vouchſafing to us a conſtant Influence of *exciting Grace,* that hath thus kept us from thoſe Sins into which he ſuffers wicked Men to fall; and not only them, but ſometimes his own dear Children too: It is not a Difference in our Natures; it is not a Difference from inherent Grace within us, that makes this Difference in our Lives; but it is only a Difference from the unaccountable exciting influencing Grace of God; there lies the Difference. Well then, *let not the ſtrong Man glory in his Strength, but let him that glorieth, glory in the Lord,* for he is our Strength and our Deliverer. *What have we that we have not received? And if we have received, why do we boaſt as though we had not received?* It is not what we have of our ſelves, but itis what we have received from God, and what we do daily receive in a way of ſpecial Influence, that makes us to differ from the vileſt and moſt profligate Sinners in the World; and therefore let us aſcribe the Glory of all to the Almighty Powerful Grace of God.

Laſtly, To ſhut up all, *If our Preſervation from Sin be from God, beware then how you provoke him to withdraw and ſuſpend the Influence of his Grace, whereby you have been preſerved, and ſtill are:* Indeed if we belong to him, he will never ſo far depart from us, as utterly to forſake us; but yet he may ſo far depart from us, as that we may have no comfortable Senſe of his Preſence, nor no viſible Supports from his Grace; we may be left a naked and deſtitute Prey to every Temptation, and fall into the Commiſſion of thoſe Sins out of which we may never be able to recover our ſelves to our former Strength, Comfort, and Stability: We may fall to the Breaking of our Bones, and we may riſe again poſſibly, but it will be to the Breaking of our Hearts. So much for this Time, and for this Subject.

OF THE PARDON AND Forgiveneſs of Sins, &c.

SERMON X.

Isaiah xliii. 25.

I, even I am he that blotteth out thy Tranſgreſſions for my own ſake, and will not remember thy Sins.

In the foregoing *Verſes* we have a heavy Charge drawn up againſt the People of the *Jews*, in which they ſtand charged both with Sins of *Omiſſion* and of *Commiſſion*: By the one, they ſhewed themſelves weary of God; and by the other, God became weary of them. *Thou haſt not called upon me, nor brought me thy burnt-offerings, nor honoured me with thy ſacrifices, but thou haſt been weary of me, O Iſrael,* as it is in *Verſe* 22, 23. Thou thought'ſt my Commands grievous, and my Service burthenſome; and tho', as thou art my ſworn Servant, I might compel thee to work, yet I have born with thy Sloth, and ſuffered my Work to lie undone. *I have not cauſed thee to ſerve with offerings, nor wearied thee with incenſe,* at it is in the 24th Verſe: Nay, as if ſo be rejecting my Service, had not been Indignity enough, thou haſt even brought me into a kind of Servitude, even me, thy Lord and Maſter; thou haſt wearied my Patience, thou haſt loaded my Omnipotency; *Thou haſt made me ſerve with thy ſins, thou haſt wearied me with thine iniquities,* Ver. 24. And what could we now in reaſon expect ſhould be the Cloſe of ſo heavy an Accuſation, but only as heavy a Doom and Sentence? Thou haſt brought me no Sacrifices, therefore I will make thee a Sacrifice to my Wrath; thou haſt not called upon me, and when thou doſt call, I will not anſwer; thou haſt wearied me with thy Sins, and I will weary thee with my Plagues: But there is no ſuch expected Severity follows hereupon; but *I, even I am he that blotteth out thy tranſgreſſions for my own ſake, and will not remember thy ſins.* The like parallel place we have concerning *Ephraim*, Iſa. 51. 17, 18. *He went on frowardly in the way of his own heart.* Well, (ſays God) I have ſeen his Ways, and what, with the Froward ſhall I ſhew my ſelf froward? No, but *I have ſeen his ways, and I will heal him.* Here's the Prerogative of Free Grace, to infer Pardon there, where the Guilty themſelves can infer only their own Execution and Puniſhment. It is the Guiſe of Mercy, to make ſtrange and abrupt Inferences from Sin to Pardon. *Introduction.*

The Words are a gracious Proclamation of Forgiveneſs, or an Act of Pardon paſſed on the Sins of Men, and contain in them three things:

Firſt, *Here is the Perſon that gives out this Pardon, and that is God*; accented here by a vehement Ingemination, *I, even I am he.*

Secondly, *Here is the Pardon it ſelf*; which for the great Confirmation of our Faith and Hope, is redoubled: *I, even I am he that blotteth out thy tranſgreſſions, and will not remember thy ſins.*

Thirdly, *Here are the Motives, or impulſive Cauſe, that prevailed with God thus to proclaim Pardon unto guilty Malefactors,* and that is for his own ſake; *I am he that blotteth out thy Tranſgreſſions for my own ſake.*

1. As

1. As for the firſt Particular, *I, even I am he*; we may obſerve, that God ſeems more to triumph in the Glory of his pardoning Grace and Mercy, than he doth in any other of his Attributes: *I, even I am he:* Such a ſtately *Preface* muſt needs uſher in ſomewhat wherein God and his Honour is much advanc'd. It is therefore, *I am he that ſpread forth the Heavens, and martialled all their Hoſt; that hang up the Earth in the midſt of the Air; that breath'd forth all the Creatures upon the Face of it; that poured out the great Deeps, and meaſured them all in the Hollow of my Hand; that ride upon the Wings of the Wind, and make the Clouds the Duſt of my Feet.* This, though it might awe and amuſe the Hearts of Men, yet God counts it not his chiefeſt Glory; but, *I, even I am he, that blotteth out Tranſgreſſions, and forgive Iniquities.* So we find, when God condeſcended to ſhew *Moſes* his Glory, he proclaims, not the Lord Great and Terrible, that formed all things by the Word of his Mouth, and can deſtroy all things by the Breath of his Noſtrils: No, but he paſſeth before him with a ſtill Voice, and proclaims himſelf to be, *The Lord, the Lord God, gracious and merciful, long-ſuffering, and abundant in goodneſs and truth, forgiving iniquity, tranſgreſſion, and ſin.* So that when God would be ſeen in his chiefeſt State and Glory, he reveals himſelf to be a Sin-pardoning God; *I, even I am he, that blotteth out thy Tranſgreſſions, and will not remember thy Sins.*

Blotting out of Sin, implies two things. That Sin is written.

2. As for the Pardon it ſelf, that is expreſſed in two things, *I am he that blotteth out, and will not remember.* Blotting out implies,

Firſt, *That our Tranſgreſſions are written down*; and written they are in a two-fold Book; the one is in the *Book of God's Remembrance*, which he blots out when he juſtifies a Sinner: The other is the *Book of our own Conſciences*, which he blots out when he gives us Peace and Aſſurance; and oftentimes theſe follow one upon the other: When God blots his *Remembrance-Book* in Heaven, that Blot diffuſeth and ſpreads it ſelf even to the *Book of Conſcience*, and blots out all that is written there alſo. Man blots his Conſcience by committing Sin, but God blots it by pardoning it; He lays a Blot of Chriſt's Blood upon a Blot of our Guilt; and this is ſuch a Blot as leaves the Conſcience of a Sinner purer and cleaner than it found it.

Secondly, *Blotting out of Tranſgreſſions, implies a legal Diſcharge of the Debt.* A Book that is once blotted and croſſed, ſtands void in Law; whatever the Sum and Debts were before, yet the Croſſing of the Book ſignifies the Payment of the Debt. So is it here, *I will blot out thy Tranſgreſſions*; that is, I will acquit thee of all thy Debts, I will never charge them upon thee, I will daſh them all out, I will not leave ſo much as one *Item*, not one Sin legible againſt thee. This is the proper Meaning of this Expreſſion and Notion of blotting out of Tranſgreſſio and Sin. And this is one thing that Pardon of Sin it expreſſed by.

It follows in the next Words, *and I will not remember thy Sins.* Not that there is truly any Forgetfulneſs in God; no, his Memory retains every Sin we have committed, ſurer and firmer, than if all our Sins were written in Leaves of Braſs; but God ſpeaks here as he doth elſewhere frequently in *Scripture*, by a gracious Condeſcenſion, and after the manner of Men, and it is to be interpreted only by the Effects, *I will not remember their Sins*; that is, I will deal ſo mercifully with them, as if indeed I did not remember the leaſt of their Provocations, I will be to them as one that hath utterly forgotten all their Injuries. So that this, *not remembring of Sin*, denies not the eminent Act of God's Knowledge, but only the tranſient Act of his Juſtice, and is no more than his promiſing to puniſh Sin; as if God had ſaid, I will not be avenged on them, nor puniſh them for their Sins.

And here we may ſee what abundant Security God gives his People, that they ſhall never be impleaded for thoſe Sins which once they have attained the Pardon of; they are blotted out of his *Book of Remembrance*; and that they may not fear he will accuſe them without Book, he tells them, That they are utterly forgotten, and ſhall never be remember'd by him againſt them any more.

Thirdly, *Conſider the impulſive Cauſe, that moves God's Hand, as it were, to blot out our Tranſgreſſions*; and that is not any thing without himſelf, but (ſays God) *I will do it for my own ſake.* This admits of a twofold Sence, efficient and final.

First,

Firſt, *For my own ſake: That is, becauſe it is my Pleaſure:* I will do it, becauſe I will do it. And indeed this is the Royal Prerogative of God alone, to render his Will for his Reaſon; for becauſe his Will is altogether Sovereign, and Independant, that muſt needs be moſt reaſonable that he wills. If any ſhould queſtion, Why the Lord paſt by fallen Angels, and ſtoop'd ſo low as to take up fallen Man? And why among Men he hath rejected many Wiſe and Noble, and hath choſen thoſe that are Mean and Contemptible? Why he hath gathered up, and lodged in his own Boſom, thoſe that wallowed in the Filth and Defilement of the worſt Sins, when others are left to periſh under far leſs Guilt? The moſt reaſonable Anſwer that can be given of all, is this, I have done it for my own ſake; I have done it, becauſe it is my Will and Pleaſure to do it; even the ſame Reaſon that God gave unto *Moſes*; *I will be gracious, becauſe I will be gracious*; *and I will ſhew mercy, becauſe I will ſhew Mercy*, Exod. 33. 19. Which was the ſame Anſwer our Saviour gave to himſelf, *Luk.* 10. 21. *Even ſo, Father, becauſe ſo it ſeemed Good in thy ſight.*

Secondly, *For my own ſake, we may take it in a final Senſe*; That is, I will do it, becauſe of that great Honour and Glory that will accrue to my great *Name* by it. The ultimate and chief End of God in all his Actions, is his own Glory. God beſtows Pardon and Salvation upon us chiefly for the Manifeſtation of his own Glory, even the Glory of his Mercy and Free Grace. Our Salvation is therefore accompliſhed, that it might be a Means to declare to the World how merciful and gracious God is; not ſo much for our Good, as for his Glory; not for our ſa kes, but for his own ſake. Such a parallel Place we have in *Ezek.* 36. 12. *I do not this for your ſake, ſaith the Lord, but for my holy Name ſake, that you have prophaned among the Heathen*: I will ſhew Mercy unto you, not ſo much that you may be delivered, as that my Holy Name, that you have prophaned, may be redeemed from that Diſhonour that you have caſt upon it, and may be glorified among the Heathen.

And thus we have the full Interpretation of the Words, and from them I ſhall raiſe and proſecute this Obſervation.

Doctrine. *That the Grace of God, whereby he blots out and forgives Sin, is abſolutely free, and infinitely glorious.*

I, even I am he that blotteth out thy Tranſgreſſions for my own ſake, and will not remember thy Sins.

Now tho' this Doctrine of Free Grace hath deſerved well of all, as being the beſt Tenure of our preſent Enjoyment, and the beſt Prop for our future Hopes; yet hath it in all Ages found bitter Enemies, and of old, like the Procurer of it, been Crucified between two Thieves, the *Gnoſticks* and the *Pelagian Hereticks*: The *Pelagians* deprive it of its Freedom, and enſlave it to the Will of Man, affirming, That God therefore Pardons and ſaves ſome, becauſe they will, by the Power of their own Nature, work Faith in themſelves; whereas, the Truth is, therefore God works Faith in them, becauſe he will pardon and ſave them. Thus they make *Free Grace* a Handmaid to wait upon the Motions of *Free Will*. Now this is greatly derogatory to *Free Grace*, for Men to bottom their Faith and Pardon upon the Arbitrarineſs of *Free-Will*, and not upon the Almighty Sovereign *Grace* of God, that firſt moves the Will to believe, and then pardons it upon believing.

Now as theſe depreſs the *Free Grace* of *God*, ſo there are others that aſcribe too much unto it: Of old, *Iſlebius*, in *Luther*'s Time, who was the firſt Ringleader; Of latter Days, the *Antinomians*; and theſe think the Grace of God is ſo *free*, as to ſuperſede all Neceſſity of working for it, or with it; and that it is enough for us to ſit ſtill and admire it, and ſo to be hurried away to Heaven in a Dream: Nay, ſome, even in our Days, have upon this Principle arrived to that height of Blaſphemy, as to affirm, That we never ſo much glorifie *Free Grace*, as when we make Work for it by ſtout ſinning. Now therefore that we may avoid both theſe Extreams, it will be very neceſſary to ſtate aright, how the Grace of God is free, and how it is not free.

Now there are many ſorts of Freedoms; a Freedom from natural Neceſſity, a Freedom from violent Co-action, and from engaging Promiſes, and the like; but theſe are not pertinent to our preſent Buſineſs. When Grace therefore is ſaid to be free, it muſt be taken in a *twofold* Senſe.

Firſt,

First, *Free from any Procurement.*

Secondly, *Free from any limiting Conditions:* And accordingly I ſhall propound the Reſolution of two Queſtions.

Firſt, *Whether the Grace of God be ſo free, as to exclude all Merit and Deſert*; And then,

Secondly, *Whether it be ſo free, as to require no Conditions.*

First, *Whether the Grace of God be ſo free, as to exclude all Merit and Deſert.* Now in *Anſwer* unto this *Queſtion*, I ſhall lay down three Propoſitions.

God's Grace is not ſo free as to exclude the Merits of Chriſt.

First, *That the pardoning Grace of God is not ſo freely vouchſafed to Man, as to exclude all Merit and Deſert on Chriſt's part.* There is not the leaſt Sin pardoned unto any, but it firſt coſt the Price of Blood, even the precious Blood of the Son of God. It is this Blood that croſſeth God's Debt-Book, and blots out all thoſe *Items* that we ſtand indebted to him for. As Chriſt now ſues out our Pardon by his Interceſſion in Heaven, ſo he bought out our Pardon by his Sufferings on the Croſs; for, *without ſhedding of Blood, there is no Remiſſion.* Heb. 9. 22. *And this is my blood,* ſays our Saviour himſelf, *which is ſhed for the Remiſſion of Sins,* Matth. 26. 28. *And we are not our own, but we are bought with a price, even with the precious Blood of Jeſus Chriſt, as of a Lamb without blemiſh, and without ſpot,* as the two Great Apoſtles ſpeak, 1 *Cor.* 6. 14. 1 *Pet.* 1. 21. Some have made bold, and poſſibly with no bad Intention, to call Jeſus Chriſt the greateſt Sinner in the World, becauſe the Sins of all God's People meet in him, and were imputed to him. They were his by a voluntary Suſception and Undertaking: And if the foregoing Expreſſion may be allow'd, there is one in Heaven, the higheſt in Glory, whoſe Sins were never pardoned; for our Lord Chriſt paid down the utmoſt Farthing that either the *Law* or *Juſtice* of God could exact, as a Satisfaction for thoſe Sins that he voluntarily took upon himſelf: And therefore by *Law* and *Juſtice*, and not by *free Grace*, he hath taken Poſſeſſion of Heaven for himſelf, and is there preparing Manſions for us. In reſpect of Chriſt we receive nothing of *free Grace*, or of *free Gift*, but all is by Purchaſe. And as we our ſelves are bought with a Price, ſo is every thing we enjoy; even common and vulgar Mercies come flowing in upon us in Streams of Blood. Our Lives, and all the Comforts of them, much more our future Life, and all the Means tending to it, are paid for by the Blood of Chriſt: So that the Grace of God is not ſo *free*, as to exclude all Merit on Chriſt's Part, who hath purchaſed all we enjoy, or hope for, by paying a full and equitable Price to the Juſtice of God.

God's Grace in giving of Chriſt to us is free.

Secondly, *The infinite Grace of God in giving Chriſt to us, and his Blood for us, through which we have Pardon merited, is abſolutely free, and falls not under any Merit, either of ours, or of his.*

Firſt, It falls not under any Merit of ours; for, certainly, could we have merited Chriſt without Heaven, we might as well have merited Heaven without Chriſt. When God in his infinite Wiſdom foreſaw how we would reject and deſpiſe his Son; firſt ſpill his Blood, and then trample upon it; he did not account this Demeanor of ours to be meritorious of ſo great a Gift.

Secondly, Which is yet more to the Glory of God's free Grace, *He beſtowed Chriſt upon us, not only without any Merit of ours, but without any Merit of his alſo.* It is free Grace that pardons, that ſanctifies, that ſaves us; yet all this Chriſt purchaſed for us by a full Price. God will have a Price paid down for all other things of a leſs Value, that ſo he might hereby ſet forth his own Bounty in parting with his own Son for us without Price.

Pardoning Grace free in reſpect of us.

Thirdly, *Pardon and Grace obtained through the Blood of Chriſt, in reſpect of any Merit of ours, is altogether free and undeſerved.* We cannot of our ſelves ſcarce ſo much as ask Forgiveneſs, much leſs therefore can we do any thing that may deſerve it. All that we can do is either ſinful or holy; if what we do be ſinful, it only encreaſeth our Debts; if it be holy, it muſt proceed from God's *free Grace*, that enables us to do it; and certainly it is free Grace to pardon us upon the doing of that, which free Grace only enables us to do. Far be it from us to affirm, as the Papiſts do, that Good Works are meritorious of Pardon: What are our Prayers, our Sighs, our Tears? Yea, what are our Lives and our Blood it ſelf, ſhould we ſhed it for Chriſt? All this cannot make one

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Blot in God's Remembrance-Book: Yea, it were fitter and more becoming the Infinite Bounty of God, to give Pardon and Heaven freely, than to ſet them to ſale for ſuch inconſiderable things as theſe are.

Heaven needed not to have been ſo needleſly prodigal and laviſhing, as to have ſent the Lord Jeſus Chriſt into the World to lead a miſerable Life, and die a curſed Death, had it been poſſible for Man to have bought off his own Guilt, and to have quitted Scores with God, by a lower Price than what Chriſt himſelf could do, or ſuffer. And ſo much for the Reſolution of the *Firſt Queſtion*; God's pardoning Grace, though it be purchaſed in reſpect of Chriſt, yet is it abſolutely free in reſpect of any Merit of ours.

The *Second Queſtion* is, *Whether the Grace of God be ſo free, as to require no Conditions on our Part.* Of Gifts, ſome are beſtowed abſolutely, without any Terms of Agreement; and ſome are conditional, upon the Performance of ſuch Stipulations and Conditions, without which they ſhall not be beſtowed; of which ſort is this Grace of God.

Sanctifying Grace is given abſolutely.

I anſwer, Firſt, *The ſanctifying and regenerating Grace of God, whereby the great Change is wrought upon our Hearts, in our firſt Converſion and Turning unto God, is given abſolutely, and depends not upon the Performance of any Conditions.* Indeed, we are commanded to make uſe of Means for the getting true and ſaving Grace wrought in us: But theſe Means are not Conditions for the obtaining of that Grace; for the Nature of Conditions are ſuch, that the Benefits which depend upon them are never beſtow'd, but where the Conditions are firſt performed: And therefore we call Faith and Repentance Conditions of Eternal Life, becauſe Eternal Life is never conferr'd upon any who did not firſt believe and repent. But now certain it is, God hath converted ſome without the Uſe of ordinary Means, as St. *Paul*, and the *Thief on the Croſs*. Therefore, though we are commanded to uſe the Means, yet the Uſe of Means and Ordinances cannot be called Conditions of our Regeneration. And indeed, if any thing could be ſuppoſed a Condition of obtaining Grace, it muſt either be a Work of Nature, or a Work of Grace: Now a Work of Grace it cannot be, till Grace be wrought; and to go about to make a Work of Nature a Condition of Grace, it is to go about to revive that old Error of the *Pelagians*, for which they ſtand Anathematiz'd in *Count Paleſtine* many Years ſince. Sanctifying Grace is given freely, excepted from any Conditions, though not excepted from the Uſe of Means.

Secondly, *Juſtifying and pardoning Grace, though it be free, yet is it limited, the Performance of certain Conditions, without which God never beſtows it upon any; and they are two, Faith and Repentance:* And theſe Graces God beſtows upon whom he pleaſeth, without any foregoing Conditions. Faith in Chriſt, it is the freeſt Gift that ever God beſtow'd upon any, except that Chriſt on whom we believe. But Pardon of Sin is reſtrain'd to Faith and Repentance, as the Conditions of it; nor is it ever obtain'd without them. Theſe two things the Scripture doth abundantly confirm to us: *Whoever believeth on him, ſhall obtain remiſſion of ſins*, Acts 10. 43. *Repent, that your ſins may be blotted out*, Acts 3. 19. *Whoever believes on him*; there Faith is made the Condition of Pardon. *Repent, that your ſins may be blotted out*; there Repentance is made the Condition of Pardon. Theſe two Particulars correſpond with the twofold Covenant of Grace God made with Man; his abſolute Covenant, wherein he promiſeth the firſt converting Grace: This Covenant now is independent from any Conditions; a Copy of which we have in *Ezek.* 36. 26. *A new heart alſo will I give you, and a new ſpirit well I put within you, and I will cauſe you to walk in my ſtatutes, and you ſhall keep my judgments, and do them.* And then there is God's conditional Covenant of Grace, wherein he promiſeth Salvation only upon the foregoing Conditions of Faith and Repentance; this we have, *Mark* 16. 16. *He that believeth ſhall be ſaved.*

Thus I have ſtated the great Queſtion, concerning the free Grace of God. The firſt ſanctifying Grace of God is ſo free, as to exclude all Conditions; but the juſtifying and pardoning Grace of God is limited to the Conditions of Faith and Repentance; and both ſanctifying and juſtifying Grace are freely beſtow'd without any Merit of ours, but not without reſpect to the Merit of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who hath purchaſed them at the higheſt Rate, even with his own moſt precious Blood.

In the next Place I ſhall endeavour to ſet before you ſome Particulars, wherein the Glory of *God*'s free Grace in pardoning Sin may be more illuſtrated, that it may appear, *God* aſſumes to himſelf this as the greateſt Honour, to be a Sin-pardoning *God*. And,

First, *This highly commends the Freeneſs of pardoning Grace, in that God decreed to beſtow it without any Requeſt, or Entreaties of ours.* There was no *Rhetorick* mov'd him, beſides the Yearnings of his own Bowels. This was a Gracious Reſolution ſprung up ſpontaneouſly in the Heart of *God* from all Eternity. He ſaw thee *wallowing in thy Blood*, long before thou wert in thy Being: And this Time it was a Time of Love; even a Time before all Times: What Friend could'ſt thou then make in Heaven? What Interceſſor hadſt thou then, when there was nothing but God? When this Deſign of Love was laid, there was neither Prayers nor Tongues to utter them: Yea, Chriſt himſelf, tho' now he interceeds for the Application of Pardon, did not then interceed for the Decree of Pardon; he could not then urge his Blood and Merits as Motives for *God* to take up Thoughts of forgiving us; for had not *God* done ſo before, Chriſt had never ſhed his Blood, nor wrought out Salvation for us. What Arguments, what Advocates did then perſwade him? Truly, the only Argument was our Miſery; and the only Advocate was his own Mercy, and not Jeſus Chriſt.

God pardons Sin, when he is able to deſtroy Sinners.

Secondly, *God pardons Sin, when yet he is infinitely able to deſtroy the Sinner*; and this greatly advanceth the Riches and Freeneſs of his Grace. The ſame Breath that pronounceth a Sinner Abſolv'd, might have pronounc'd him Damned. The Angels that fell, could not ſtand before the Power and Force of his Wrath, but like a mighty Torrent, it ſwept them all into Perdition: How much leſs then could we ſtand before him? God could have blown away every Sinner in the World, as ſo much looſe Duſt into Hell. It had been eaſie for his Power and Juſtice, if he had ſo pleas'd, to have triumph'd in the Deſtruction of all Mankind, but only that he intended a higher and more noble Victory, even that his Mercy ſhould triumph and prevail over his Juſtice, in the pardoning and ſaving of Sinners.

God pardons Sin, though he might gain Renown, as on the Damned.

Thirdly, *God pardons Sin, tho' he might gain to himſelf a great Renown, as he hath on the Damned.* God might have written thy Name in Hell, as he hath written theirs, and might have ſet thee up a flaming Monument, and inſcrib'd on thee Victory and Conqueſt, to the Glory of his Everlaſting Vengeance. Both Books were open before him, both *the Book of Life and of Death*; and the Contents of both ſhall be rehearſed to his infinite Glory at the laſt Day: Now, what was it dictated thy Name to him, that guided his Hand to write thee down rather in the *Book of Life*, than in the *Book of Death*; that ſet thee down a Saint, and not a Sinner; Pardon'd, and not Condemn'd? What mov'd him to do all this for thee? Why truly, the only Anſwer that God gives, and which is the only Anſwer that can be given, is the ſame which *Pilate* gives concerning our Saviour, *What I have written, I have written.*

Fourthly, *Conſider the Paucity and Smallneſs of the Number of thoſe that are pardon'd.* Profeſſors of Chriſtianity are calculated by ſome, to poſſeſs not above the ſixth Part of the known World; and if among them we make a proportionable Abatement for thoſe that are *profeſs'd Idolaters*, for the *groſly Ignorant*, for the *Prophane*, for the *Hypocritical*: Certainly there will be but a ſmall Flock remaining unto Jeſus Chriſt; here and there one pick'd and cull'd out of the Multitudes of the World, like the *Olive-berries*, the Prophet *Jeremiah* ſpeaks of, left *on the Top of the uppermoſt Branches*, when the Devil hath ſhaken down all the reſt into Hell. Now is it not infinite Mercy, that thou ſhould'ſt be found among theſe Gleanings after Harveſt, that thou ſhould'ſt be one of theſe few? God might have left thee to periſh, upon the ſame Reaſon that he left others; but he gather'd thee out of all Nations, Kindreds, and Languages of the Earth, to make thee a *Veſſel of Mercy* for himſelf. Indeed thou canſt never enough admire the peculiar Love of God to thee herein, till the laſt Day; when thou ſhalt ſee the ſmall Number of thoſe that are ſav'd, ſtanding on the Right Hand of Chriſt, compar'd with the vaſt Number of thoſe that periſh, ſtanding at the Left Hand of Chriſt, and ſeeſt thy ſelf among the ſmall Number of thoſe that are ſav'd.

Fifthly,

Fifthly, *This alſo commends the Freeneſs of pardoning Grace, that whereas the fallen Angels themſelves were abſolutely excepted out of God's Act of Indemnity and Oblivion, yet fallen Man is again reſtor'd unto his Favour.* Them *God* hath reſerv'd in *Chains of Darkneſs unto the Judgment of the great Day*; Us he hath brought into glorious Light and Liberty: Our Sins are blotted out of the Book of *God*'s Remembrance; whereas their Names are blotted out of the Muſter-Roll of *God*'s Heavenly Hoſt. Now here there are four Things that do greatly advance the Glory of free Grace.

Firſt, *Their Natures were more excellent than Ours.*

Secondly, *Their Services would have been much more perfect than Ours.*

Thirdly, *Their Sins were fewer than Ours are.* And,

Fourthly, *Their Pardon might have been procur'd at as cheap a rate, and at as little Expence as Ours.* And yet not Them, but Us *God* hath choſen to be Veſſels of his Mercy.

Firſt, *Their Natures were more excellent than Ours.* They were Glorious Spirits, the Top and Cream of the Creation; we Clods of Earth, the Lees and Dregs of Nature, our Souls, the only Part by which we claim Kin to *Angels*, even they are of a younger Houſe, and of a more ignoble Extract; how are they debas'd by being confin'd to theſe Lumps of Fleſh, which, with much ado, they make a ſhift to drag with them up and down the Earth, rather as Fetters of their Bondage, than Inſtruments of their Service? Nay, ſo low ſunk are we in this Slime of Matter, that we have not Excellency enough, ſo much as to conceive what a pure Heavenly Orient Subſtance a Spirit is. And yet ſuch as we are, Duſt and Filth, hath *God* gather'd up into his own Boſom, tho' he hath disbanded whole Legions of *Angels*, and ſent them down into Hell.

In theſe Natures of ours hath the *Son of God* reveal'd, or rather hid himſelf: Even he who thought it no Robbery to be equal with *God*, thought it no ſcorn to become lower than *Angels*. *He took not on him the Nature of Angels, but the Seed of Abraham.*

Secondly, *Their Services would have been more perfect upon their Reſtoration, than Ours can be.* Indeed when we arrive at Heaven, our Services, our Love, our Joy, and our Praiſes, ſhall then attain to a Perfection excluſive of all ſinful Defects: But even then muſt we give Place to the *Angels*, as in our Beings, ſo in our Actings alſo. Had *God* reſtor'd them, and given them a Pardon, Heaven would more have reſounded with the Shouts and Hallelujahs of one fallen *Angel*, than it can now with a whole *Conſort of glorify'd Saints:* They would have burnt much more ardently in Love, who now muſt burn much more fiercely in Torments. They would much more mightily and ſweetly have ſung forth the Praiſes of *God* their Redeemer, who now curſe and blaſpheme him more bitterly: And as far have out-ſtript a Saint in the Work of Heaven, as they ſhall do a Sinner in the Puniſhment of Hell. And yet free Grace paſſeth by them, and elects and chuſeth narrower Hearts to conceive, and feebler Tongues to utter the Praiſes of their Redeemer; whoſe Praiſes ought therefore to be the more, becauſe he chuſeth not them that may give him the moſt.

Thirdly, *Conſider this, their Sins were fewer than Ours are.* We cannot exactly determine what their Sins were, only the *Apoſtle* gives us a Hint, that it was Pride gave them their Fall, 1 Tim. 3. 6. *Not a Novice, leſt being lifted up with Pride, he fall into the Condemnation of the Devil.* Whether it was Pride, in that they affected to be *God*, or in that they ſcorn'd to be Guardians and Miniſtring Spirits unto Man, or in that they refus'd to become ſubject unto the *Son of God*, who was ſhortly to become Man, the *Schools* boldly enough diſpute, but no Man can determine: But whatever it was, this is certain, *God* was ſpeedy in the Execution of Wrath upon them, tumbling them all down headlong into Hell upon their firſt Rebellion: The Time of their ſtanding in their Primitive State, is conceiv'd to be very ſhort; for their Creation (tho' the *Socinians* hold it was long before) muſt fall within the Compaſs of ſix Days, for in that Space the *Scripture* tells us, *God made Heaven and Earth, and all Things therein:* And therefore within the Space of ſix Days he created the *Angels* alſo. Some referr their Creation to the firſt Day's Work, others to the fourth Day: And it's probably thought, That *Adam*'s Continuance in Innocency was not much above one Day, and yet even then there were fallen *Angels* to tempt him: So that their Glorious and Bleſſed

State could not, according to this Computation, laſt above ſix or ſeven Days, ſuch a ſpeedy Iſſue did God make with them upon their very firſt Sin: But now how is his Patience and Forbearance extended towards ſinful Man? He drives *Adam* out of *Paradiſe*, but it was free Grace he did not drive him into *Hell*, where he had but a little before plunged far more excellent Creatures than *Adam* was; his Patience is prolong'd to impenitent unbelieving Sinners, he bears with their proud Affronts, waits their Returns, and with a Miracle of Mercy reprieves them for a much longer Date than he did the *Angels* themſelves. How much more then ought free Grace to be extoll'd by us, which did not ſo much as reprieve the *Angels* for one Sin, and yet every Moment grants out a free and abſolute Pardon to his Servants, not for one Sin, but for reiterated Provocations? They could not obtain Reſpite, and we obtain Pardon. How many Leaves in God's Remembrance-Book ſtand written thick with Multitudes of Sins? And yet no ſooner doth God write down, but he alſo wipes out: His *Pen* and his *Spunge* keep the ſame Meaſure; our Sins find conſtant Employment for the one, and God's free Grace and Mercy finds conſtant Employment for the other.

Fourthly, Add to this, what ſome with great Probability affirm, *the ſame Price that bought out our Pardon might have procur'd theirs alſo.* By which it plainly appears, that there is no other Reaſon, why our Eſtate differs from theirs, but only God's free Sovereign Grace. Upon the ſame Account God might have damned all Mankind, that he damn'd the *Angels* for; and at the ſame Coſt he might have ſaved all the fallen *Angels*, at which he ſav'd ſome of Mankind. The Merits of Chriſt are the Price of our Pardon and Redemption, and theſe have in them an Infinite Worth, and an All-ſufficient Expiation, not for our Sins only, but for the Sins of the whole World, both *Men* and *Devils*. The Streams of Chriſt's Blood ſhed on the Croſs for us, were ſufficient to quench the Flames of *Hell*, and utterly to have waſh'd away the Lake of Fire and Brimſtone. *Hell* might have been depopulated, and thoſe black Manſions left void without Inhabitants for ever, and the *Devils* and *Men* have been common Sharers in that ſame common Salvation: For Chriſt having an infinite Dignity in his Perſon, being *God* as well as *Man*; his Blood the Blood of *God*, his Sufferings the Sufferings and Humiliation of a *God*, inhanced his Merits to ſuch a Redundancy, as neither *fallen Angels*, nor *fallen Men*, were their Sins more, and their Miſeries greater, were ever able to drain out: Not a Drop more of Gall and Wormwood ſhould have been ſqueez'd into the Cup of Chriſt's Sufferings, tho' it had proved a Cup of Health and Salvation to them, as well as to us: And yet ſuch was God's dreadful Severity, that he excluded the *Angels* from the Benefits of Chriſt's Death, tho' he had been at no more Expences to ſave them; the Price of whoſe Pardon and Redemption would have been the ſame: And yet we, ſuch is the infinite Riches of his Grace and Mercy, are redeem'd by a Price that infinitely exceeds the Purchaſe. O the Freeneſs and Riches of God's Grace, that he ſhould thus paſs by the *Angels*, and pitch upon and chuſe ſuch vile wretched Creatures as we are!

Sixthly, Conſider, *Pardoning Grace is free, whether we conſider the Generality of its Deſignation, or the Speciality of its Application.*

Pardoning Grace is free in its Deſignation.

First, *It is free in its general Deſignation*, in that God hath deſign'd and purpoſed to forgive the Sins of all the World, if they will believe and repent. It is the Univerſality of Grace, that mightily exalts its Freeneſs; now what can be more univerſal, than that Proclamation of Pardon that God makes to poor Sinners, in *Acts* 10. 43. *Whoſoever believes in him, ſhall receive Remiſſion of Sins.* The whole World is under this conditional Promiſe, not one Soul of Man excepted: Be thy Sins more than the Sands, greater than Mountains, tho' the Cry of them reacheth up to Heaven, and the Guilt of them reacheth down to Hell; yet thou haſt no Reaſon, *O Sinner*, to exclude thy ſelf from Pardon, for God hath not; only believe and repent. But as general as this Pardon is, yet is there ſomewhat that is diſcriminating in it, that makes it more illuſtrious; for it is not tendred to *Devils* and *Damn'd Spirits*: Chriſt is not appointed to be a Saviour unto them, nor is his Blood a Propitiation for their Sins; they are not under any Covenant of Grace, nor have they any Promiſe of Mercy, no, not ſo much as Conditional: It is not ſaid unto them, Believe, and you ſhall be reſcued from the everlaſting Reſidue of your Torments; believe, and thoſe unquenchable Flames, you are now burning in, ſhall be put out: No, God requires no ſuch

Duty

Duty from them, neither hath he made any ſuch Promiſe to them; yea, ſhould it be ſuppos'd that they could believe, yet this their Faith would not at all avail them, becauſe God hath ordain'd no Ranſom for them, and reſolves to receive no other Satisfaction to his Juſtice, than their perſonal Puniſhment. But while we are alive, we are all the *Objects* of God's free pardoning Grace. And for any Man that hears the Sound of the *Goſpel*, and upon what Terms God hath proclaim'd Forgiveneſs of Sin; if any Man, notwithſtanding ſhall periſh in his Sins, it is not becauſe God hath excluded him from Pardon, which he doth ſeriouſly, and with vehement Importunity, offer and urge upon him; but becauſe he excludes himſelf, by his own Impenitency and Unbelief, in not accepting of it.

Pardoning Grace is free in its ſpecial Application.

Secondly, *Pardoning Grace is free in the ſpecial Application of it.* Now the Application of Pardon is not made unto any, till the Performance of thoſe Conditions upon which Pardon is tendred, and they are Faith and Repentance. Now herein is God's Grace infinitely free, who firſt fulfils theſe Conditions in his Children, that ſo he may fulfil his Gracious Promiſes unto them of Life and Pardon. The Conditional Covenant of Grace, promiſes Pardon and Remiſſion of Sins, unto all that ſhall believe and repent. But notwithſtanding all this, the whole World might periſh under a contracted Impotency, whereby they could not believe nor repent, did not the abſolute Covenant engage God's Truth to work Faith and Repentance in the Hearts of his People: So that one Covenant promiſeth Pardon, if we believe and repent; and the other Covenant beſtows this Faith and Repentance upon us. The Conditional Covenant promiſeth Pardon of Sin and Salvation, if we be believe and repent; and the abſolute Covenant promiſeth Faith and Repentance to us, to enable us to believe and repent. And what could God do more, that might farther expreſs the Freeneſs of his Grace to us, than to pardon upon Condition of Faith and Repentance? Which Faith and Repentance he works in us. This is to pardon us as freely, as if he had pardon'd us without any Faith and Repentance at all.

God pardons great Sinners, and paſſeth by thoſe that are guilty of leſs.

Seventhly, *God ſometimes ſelects out the greateſt and moſt notorious Sinners, to vouchſafe Grace and Pardon to them, when he ſuffers others eternally to periſh under far leſs Guilt.* He makes a Difference in his Proceedings, quite contrary to the Difference he finds in Mens Demerits. And wherefore is this, but only to ſhew forth the abſolute Freeneſs of his Grace? Greater Debts are blotted out, when ſmaller ſtand ſtill upon the Account, only that it may be known, that God is free to do what he will with his own, and that *he will ſhew mercy to whom he will ſhew mercy, and whom he will he pardons.* How many *Heathens*, Men of improv'd natural Endowments and proportionable Virtues; and yet not having Faith in, and Knowledge of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, are excluded from Pardon and Forgiveneſs, whoſe Sins rather ſhew them to be Men, than not to be Chriſtians? Whereas others, under the Noon-tide of the *Goſpel*, are guilty of ſuch flagitious Crimes, that ſhew them to be Monſters, rather than Men; and yet theſe upon their Faith and Repentance, obtain Pardon and Remiſſion, as if it were with *God*; as it is with *Men*, the more there is to be remembred, the ſooner he forgets. It is theſe Riches of pardoning *Grace* that St. *Paul* admires and adores, when he tells us concerning himſelf, *I was a Blaſphemer, and a Perſecutor, and Injurious, but I obtain'd mercy*, 1 Tim. 1. 13.

God pardons without Foreſight of Merit.

Eighthly, *God decrees to pardon without Fore-ſight of Merit, or Worth in us.* When we lay before him, as the *Objects* of his Mercy, what was our Poſture, but weltering in our Blood? And what promiſing Aſpect was ſuch a loathſome *Object* as this? Divine Love did not foreſee any attractive Comelineſs in us, but made it; when we were rolled up in our Filth, caſt forth to the loathing of our Fleſh; yet then it was a Time of Love; and even then, when we were in our Blood, *God* ſaid to us, *Live*; when we were full of Wounds, Bruiſes, and putrifying Sores, Divine Love condeſcended to bind them up and cure them; ſuch miſerable deform'd Creatures were we: And could there be any thing amiable in ſuch an *Object* as this? Only hereby *God* puts an Accent on the Riches of his Love, laying it out upon ſuch as were not worthy, with a Deſign to make them worthy.

Ninthly,

God pardons Sin, though he foreſees we will commit more Sin.

Ninthly, *Conſider this, God pardons, not only tho' he ſaw no Merit in us, but what is more to the Glory of his free Grace, tho' he foreſaw many future Wrongs and Injuries would be added to thoſe we had already done.* He foreſaw all our Provocations and Rebellions; how we would abuſe his Grace, and turn it into Wantonneſs. He ſaw the Rebellions of our Unregeneracy, the Infirmities of our Converted State; yet tho' he foreſaw all before they were, yet he reſolv'd not to ſee them when they are, Numb. 23. 21. *He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, nor perverſeneſs in Iſrael.* And this, tho' it ought not to encourage us in Sin, yet it may be a Support and Comfort to us, when through Weakneſs and Infirmity we have ſinned; that *God*, who loved us, and decreed to pardon us, when he foreſaw how ſinful we would be, will not certainly now ceaſe to love us, and pardon us, when we are as vile and ſinful as he foreſaw we would be.

Chriſt, by whom alone we are pardon'd, is the Gift of God.

Tenthly, *The Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom alone we are pardon'd, is freely given to us by the Father.* What Price could we have offer'd to have brought down the Son of his Eternal Love from his Embraces? What was there in us to draw a Saviour out of Heaven? Were we ſo amiable as to move him to diveſt himſelf of his Glory, and to eclipſe his Deity in our mortal Bodies, only that he might become like ſuch poor Worms as we are, and take us unto himſelf? Ask no more, but admire, *God ſo loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him might not periſh, but have everlaſting Life.* Here's a Myſtery, that the whole *College of Angels* can never comprehend! What, *God* condemn his *Son*, that he might pardon Rebels! The *Son of God* blot his Deity in our Fleſh, only that he might blot out our Trangreſſions with his Blood! This is ſuch tranſcendent free Grace and Love, that in this we have an Advantage above the *Angels* themſelves, ſtanding higher in the Favour of *God*, upon this Account, than they do.

Now compact all theſe Ten Particulars in your Thoughts together, wherein the Freeneſs of pardoning Grace moſt illuſtriouſly appears, and you will find, there is good Reaſon for *God* in the Text, triumphantly to aſcribe to himſelf, *I, even I am he that blotteth out your Tranſgreſſions.*

The Application I ſhall make of this Truth, I ſhall only briefly mention.

USE. We muſt not ſin, becauſe of pardoning Grace.

Firſt, *Is the pardoning Grace of God thus free? Take heed then that you do not abuſe, or turn it into Wantonneſs.* Shall we continue in Sin, becauſe *God* ſo freely pardons Sin? *God* forbid. Who would ever make ſuch a curſed Inference as this, that ever had the leaſt Senſe or Touch of Divine Love upon his Heart? Every one loves to have his Ears tickled with this ſoft, ſweet, downy Doctrine of *God*'s free Grace and Love; and when they hear it, they ſtretch themſelves upon it, and lull themſelves faſt aſleep in Sin. But what ſays the wiſe Man? Prov. 25. 27. *It is not good to eat much honey.* No, there is is no ſuch dangerous Surfeit, as upon the ſweet and luſcious Truths of the *Goſpel* This Honey leaves a deadly Sting in Men that abuſe it, to encourage themſelves in Sin. It is ſuch Diſingenuity to argue from Freeneſs of Pardon, to Fredom in Sinning, that I dare ſay, That no Heart that ever had a Pardon ſeal'd to it by the Witneſs of the Spirit of *God*, but utterly abhors it. What therefore to provoke *God*, becauſe he is ready to forgive? What to multiply Sin, becauſe *God* is ready to pardon? What is this, but to ſpurn at thoſe Bowels of Mercy that yearn towards us, and even to ſtrike at *God* with that Golden Scepter that he holds out to us, as a Token of Love and Peace? Certainly they, who thus argue, and who thus act, never knew, what a ſweet and powerful Attractiveneſs there is in the Senſe of pardoning Grace and Love, to win over the Heart, from the Practice of thoſe Sins that *God* hath forgot to puniſh.

Pardoning Grace engageth to love God.

Secondly, *This ſhould engage us to love that God who ſo loved us, as freely for his own ſake to forgive us ſuch vaſt Debts, and ſuch multiply'd Sins.* This is the Import of that Speech of our *Saviour, he loveth moſt, to whom moſt is forgiven him.* And hence it is, and you may commonly obſerve it, That none are ſuch great Lovers and Admirers of free Grace, as thoſe who before Converſion were the vileſt and moſt flagitious Sinners.

Pardoning Grace ſhould teach us to forgive others.

Thirdly, *Since God doth ſo freely pardon us, let this teach us, and prevail with us to pardon and forgive the Offence of others.* This is that the Scripture doth urge, as the moſt natural Inference of this Doctrine of *God*'s pardoning Grace. Thus the *Apoſtle*, Epheſ. 4. 32. *Be ye kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another,*

as God, for Christ's Sake, hath forgiven you. And say not as ignorant People are wont to do, *I will forgive, but I will never forget*; for *God* doth forgive and forget too. *I will blot out your transgressions, and I will remember your sins no more.* Your Sins against *God* are *Talents*, other Offences against you are but *Pence*; and if for every trivial Provocation you are ready to take your Brother by the Throat, and wreak your Wrath and Revenge upon him, may you not fear, lest your Lord and Master, to whom you stand deeply indebted, should also deal so with you for far greater Crimes, than others can be guilty of against you, and cast you into Prison, until you have paid the utmost Farthing; especially, considering that you pray for the Forgiveness of your own Sins, as you do proportionably forgive the Sins of others. *Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us?*

And thus I have open'd and demonstrated unto you the former Part of the *Doctrine*, That the Grace of *God*, whereby he blots out and forgives Sin, is absolutely free. I am now in the next Place to prove, that it is infinitely *glorious*.

Now this I shall endeavour to do by considering Pardon of Sin it the Nature of it, in the Concomitants of it, and in the Effects and Consequences of it: From all which it will appear, both how great a Mercy it is to us, and how great a Glory it is to *God*, that he blots out and forgives sin. And,

First, *Let us consider the Nature of Pardon of Sin, what it is.* And this we cannot better discover than by looking into the Nature of Sin. Sin therefore, as the *Apostle* describes it, *it is a Trangression of the Law.* Now to the Validity of any Law, there are Penalties literally express'd, or tacitly imply'd, which are altogether necessary. The Guilt contracted by the transgressing of the Law, is nothing but our Liableness to undergo the Penalty threatned in the Law, and this Guilt it is twofold; the one is intrinsical and necessary, and that is the Desert of Punishment, which Sin carries always in it; the other is extrinsical and adventitious, by which Sin is ordain'd to be punish'd. These two Things are in every Sin. Every Sin deserves Death, and *God* hath in his Law ordain'd and threatned to inflict Death for it.

Question. Now it being clear, That *Pardon and Remission of Sin*, is nothing but the Removal of the Guilt of Sin; the *Question* is, *Whether it removes that Guilt that consists in the Desert of Punishment, or that which consists in the voluntary Appointment of it unto Punishment, or both?*

Answer. To this I answer, *Pardon of Sin* doth not remove the intrinsical Desert of Punishment, but only the adventitious Appointment and Ordination of it unto Punishment, flowing from the Will of *God*, who hath in his own *Law* threatned to punish Sin. *Remission* doth not make, that the Sins, even of Believers themselves, should not deserve Death; for a Liableness to the Penalty of the Law, in this Sense, is a necessary Consequent upon the Transgression of the Law: But because *God*, in the Covenant of Grace, hath promised not to reward his Penitent Servants according to the Evil of their Doings; therefore *Pardoning Grace* removes this Guilt of Sin arising from *God*'s Ordination of it unto Punishment. As now suppose a *Traytor* should accept of the Proffer of a Pardon, the Guilt of his Treason ceaseth not in the inward Nature of it, but still he deserves to be punish'd: But this Obnoxiousness of his, thro' the Prince's Favour and Appointment is taken away, and so that Guilt ceaseth. So the Repenting Sinner, every Sin he commits, deserves Death; but upon his believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, this Liableness unto Death ceaseth, being graciously remitted to them by God.

Now the *Scripture* sets forth this *Pardon of Sin*, in very sweet and full Expressions. It is call'd a Covering of Sin, *Psal.* 32. 1. *Blessed is the Man, whose transgression is forgiven, and whose sin is covered.* Tho' our Covering of our Sins is no Security from the Inspection of God's Eye, who clearly beholds the most hidden and secret Things of Darkness; yet certainly those Sins that *God* himself hath cover'd from himself, he will never again look into, so as to punish for them. Nay, yet farther, as a Ground of Comfort, *Pardon of Sin* is not only call'd a Covering of our Sins from God's Sight, but a Covering of God's Face and Sight from them; so we have it, *Psal.* 51. 9. *Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out mine iniquities.* It is a casting of our Sins behind *God*'s Back, as a Thing that shall never more be regarded or look'd upon: So it is express'd to us, *Isaiah* 38. 17.

Thou haſt in love to my Soul (ſays good *Hezekiah*, when a Meſſage of Death was brought to him by the Prophet) *caſt all my ſins behind thy back:* It is a caſting of them into the Depth of the Sea, from whence they ſhall never more ariſe, either in this World, to terrifie our Conſciences, or in the World to come, to condemn our Souls: So we have in *Micah* 1. 19. *I will caſt all their Iniquities*, ſays God, *into the depth of the ſea.* It is a ſcattering of them as a thick Cloud; ſo it is called, *Eſay* 44. 22. *I will ſcatter their ſins as a cloud, and their iniquities as a thick cloud:* And in the Text it is called a blotting out, and a forgetting of Sin: *I, even I am he, that blotteth out thy tranſgreſſions for my own ſake, and will not remember thy ſins:* A blotting out, to ſhew, that God will never read his Debt-Book againſt us; and a forgetting it, that we may not fear that God will accuſe us without-Book.

Now theſe, and ſuch like Expreſſions, with which the Scripture doth abound, do very much illuſtrate the Mercy of God, in pardoning of Sin; and I ſhall unfold it in theſe following Particulars.

Pardon of Sin an Act of God's only.

First, *Pardon and Remiſſion of Sin is no Act of ours, but an Act of God's only.* It is nothing done by us, or in us, but an Act of God's free Grace, meerly without us; and therefore God aſcribes it wholly to himſelf; *I, even I am he.* And when our Saviour cured the *Paralytick*, the *Scribes* ſtorm at him as a Blaſphemer; *thou blaſphemeſt*, ſay they to him, not knowing him to be God; *For who*, ſay they, *can forgive ſins but God only?*

But be it an Act of God's only, and not ours, and an Act wholly without us, what comfort is there in this? Yes, much, and that upon theſe Grounds; becauſe God's Acts within us, are always imperfect in this Life, but God's Acts without us, are always perfect and conſummate. Sanctification is a Work of God's Grace within us: Now this, becauſe it meets with much oppoſition in every Faculty, from inherent Sin, which ſpreads it ſelf over the whole Soul; therefore this Work is always in this Life kept low and weak: But Pardon of Sin is an Act without us, in the Breaſt of God himſelf, where it meets with no Oppoſition nor Allay; nor doth it increaſe by ſmall Degrees, but is at once as perfect and entire as ever it ſhall be. I do not mean, as ſome have thought and taught, that God at once pardons all the Sins of true Believers, as well thoſe they do, or ſhall commit, as thoſe that they have already committed; but only, that what Sins God pardons, he doth not pardon them gradually. There is nothing left of Guilt upon the Soul when God pardons it; but there is ſomething left of Filth upon the Soul when God ſanctifies it. And therefore, as it is the Grief of God's Children, that their inherent Holineſs is ſo imperfect here, that they are ſo aſſaulted with Temptations, ſo dogg'd by Corruption, ſo oppreſs'd and almoſt ſtifled to Death by a Body of Sin that lies heavy upon them; yet this, on the other ſide, may be for their Comfort and Encouragement, that God's pardoning Grace is not as his ſanctifying Grace is, nor is it granted to them by the ſame Stint and Meaſure. A Sin truly repented of, is not pardoned to us by halves, half the Guilt remitted, and half retained, as the Papiſts fancy to eſtabliſh their Doctrine of *Purgatory*; but it is as fully pardon'd, as it ſhall be in Heaven it ſelf. And hence it follows,

Firſt, Though the Guilt of Sin be removed, yet it is not our Repentance that removes it; for then, as no Man's Repentance is abſolutely perfect, ſo no Man's Sins ſhould be fully pardon'd, but ſtill there would be Remainders of Guilt left upon the Conſcience; as there is ſtill a Mixture of Impenitency in the beſt Chriſtians: But Pardon and Remiſſion is not mingled with Guilt, as Grace is with Sin; becauſe it is an Act of Mercy wrought, not in our Breaſt, but ariſing in God's only, where it meets with nothing to allay or abate it, and it is infinitely more perfect than our Repentance can be.

Pardon of Sin more ſure than our Aſſurance of it can be.

Secondly, *Hence we may infer, That our Pardon is infinitely more ſure, than our Aſſurance of it in our own Conſciences can be ſatisfactory*; for the Senſe of Pardon is a Work of God's Spirit within us, which commonly is mixed with ſome Heſitations, Miſgivings, Doubts, and Fears; and therefore, tho' our Comforts be never ſo ſtrong, tho' it be Spring-Tide with us, yet our Ground for Comfort is ſtill much more. Oh! what rich and abundant Grace is this in God towards us, that exceeds both our Grace and our Comfort. And

And therefore, though, O Chriſtian, thy Sanctification be the beſt Evidence of thy Juſtification and Pardon, yet is it not the beſt Meaſure of it; for thou art juſtified, and thou art pardoned much more than thou art ſanctified: Sanctifying Grace in thee indeed is in its firſt Rudiments and Inchoation; but pardoning Grace in thy God is conſummate and perfect; and that is the firſt thing.

Secondly, Remiſſion of Sin, makes Sin to be as if it had never been committed. Things that are forgotten, are no more to us, than if they had never had a Being. Now God tells us, he forgets our Sins, *their Sins and their Iniquities will I remember no more*: Nor is there any long Tract of Time requir'd to wear the Idea of them out of his Memory, as is neceſſary among Men, to make them forget the Wrongs and Injuries done to them by their fellow Creatures; for God forgets the Sins of his Children, as ſoon as they are repented of; yea, ſometimes ſooner than our Conſciences do: For many times a Chriſtian, after a heart-breaking Repentance for ſome great Sin, lies under the Upbraidings of Conſcience, when God hath forgiven it, yea, and forgotten it alſo. God's Officer is not ſo ready to acquit them, as God himſelf is: He forgets, as though no Provocation or Offence had ever been committed; *He retains not his anger for ever*, ſays the Prophet *Micah* 7. 14. Not for ever; but ſo ſoon as ever we grow diſpleaſed with our ſelves, he begins to be well-pleaſed with us; no ſooner doth Sorrow and Grief overſpread our Faces, but Favours and Smiles clear up his Face to us. See this gracious Diſpoſition of God, in *Jerem.* 31. 20. *Ephraim* is there brought in bewailing his Sin: *Surely*, ſays he, *after I was turned, I repented; after I was inſtructed, I ſmote upon my thigh; I was aſhamed, yea, even confounded, becauſe I did bear the reproach of my youth.* Now, what doth God but preſently embrace him, with moſt tender and moſt melting Expreſſions of Love, as if he had never been angry, nor had any Cauſe for it: *Is Ephraim my dear Son? Is he a pleaſant Child? Since I paſs againſt him, I do earneſtly remember him ſtill; my bowels are troubled for him; I will ſurely have mercy upon him, ſaith the Lord:* And therefore, O Chriſtian; thou, who now perhaps crieſt out in the Bitterneſs of thy Soul, Oh! that I had never committed this or that Sin againſt God! Oh! that I had never offended him in this or that manner! Why, thou haſt thy Wiſh, O Sinner, herein; for God when he pardons Sin, makes it as if it had never been committed againſt him.

Thirdly, Hence it follows, *That upon Remiſſion of Sin, God no longer accounts of us as Sinners, but as Juſt and Righteous.* It is true, after a Pardon is receiv'd, we ſtill retain ſinful Natures; ſtill Original Corruption is in us, and will never totally be diſlodged out of us in this Life: But when God pardons us, he looks not upon us as Sinners, but as Juſt and Righteous. A Malefactor, that is diſcharged, by ſatisfying the Law, or by the Prince's Favour to him, is no more look'd upon as a Malefactor, but as Juſt and Righteous, as if he had never offended the Law at all: So is it here, we are both ways diſcharged from our Guilt, by Satisfaction unto the Penalty of the Law in Chriſt our Surety, and by the free Grace and Mercy of God, who hath made and ſealed to us a gracious Act of Pardon in Chriſt's Blood; and therefore we ſtand upright in Law, and are as Juſt and Righteous in God's ſight, as if we had never ſinned againſt him. O how great Conſolation is here unto the Children of God! They account themſelves great Sinners, yea, the greateſt and worſt of Sinners; but God accounts them Juſt and Righteous: They keep their Sins in remembrance, as *David* ſpeaks, *My ſin is ever before me*; when God hath not only forgiven, but forgotten them; they write and ſpeak bitter things againſt themſelves, when God is writing out their Pardon, and ſetting his Seal unto it.

Remiſſion of Sin, makes God account of us as juſt and righteous.

Fourthly, Pardoning Grace can as eaſily triumph in the remitting of great and many Sins, as of few and ſmall Sins. What a great Blot upon the Heavens is a thick Cloud, and yet the Beams of the Sun can pierce thorow that, and ſcatter it eaſily? Why now, God will blot out our Tranſgreſſions as a thick Cloud; ſo himſelf tells us by the Prophet, *Iſa.* 44. 12. *I will blot out thy tranſgreſſions as a cloud, and thine iniquitties as a thick cloud.* A great Debt may as eaſily be blotted out, as a ſmall one. Ten thouſand Talents is a great Sum, yet

God's Grace as eaſily pardons great as ſmall Sins.

it is as eaſily and freely forgiven by the Great God, as a few Pence. God proclaims himſelf to be a God pardoning Iniquity, Tranſgreſſion, and Sin; that is, Sins of all ſorts and ſizes. The greateſt Sins repented of, are no more without the Extent of Divine Grace and Mercy, than the leaſt Sins unrepented of, are without the Cognizance of Divine Juſtice. *Eſay* 1. 18. *Though your Sins be as ſcarlet, yet ſhall they become as white as ſnow; though they be red as crimſon, yet they ſhall be as wool.* And can there then be found a *deſpairing Soul* in the World, when the Great God hath thus magnified his Grace and Mercy above all his Works, yea, and above all ours alſo? Say not then, *O Sinner, My Sins are greater than can be forgiven*; this is to ſtint and limit the Grace of God, which he hath made boundleſs and infinite: And thou mayeſt with as much Truth and Reaſon ſay, thou art greater than God, as that thy Sins are greater than his Mercy. Of all things in the World take heed that you be not injurious to rich Grace, and to this free Love and Mercy, that pardons thee even for his own ſake. God pardons thee for himſelf, for his own ſake, and doſt thou fear, O penitent and believing Soul, that ever he will condemn thee for thy Sins? No, but as much as God and his Mercy is greater than our Sins, ſo much more reaſon will he find in himſelf to pardon the repenting believing Sinner, than he can find Reaſon in his Sins to condemn him.

Thus we ſee what cauſe of Comfort there is in this pardoning Grace of God. And thus alſo we have conſidered Pardon of Sin in its own Nature.

Of the Concomitants of Pardon of Sin.

Secondly, *We ſhall now conſider Pardon of Sin in its Concomitants and Adjuncts*, and ſo we ſhall take a view of thoſe things which do inſeparably accompany it; and thereby alſo we may ſee, how great and unſpeakable a Mercy it is: It is a Mercy that is never beſtow'd upon the Soul ſingly and alone, but evermore comes environed with whole Troops and Aſſociate-Bleſſings; As,

Pardon of Sin and Acceptation go together.

Firſt, *Pardon of Sin is always conjoyned with the Acceptation of our Perſons.* Indeed theſe two are the twin Parts of our Juſtification; and therefore we have them coupled together, *Epheſ.* 1. 6, 7. *He hath made us accepted in the beloved, in whom we have redemption thorough his Blood, even the forgiveneſs of Sin.* The whole Myſtery of our Juſtification ſtands in theſe two things, Remiſſion and Acceptation. Remiſſion takes away our Liableneſs unto Death, and Acceptation gives us a Right and Title unto Life: For to be accepted of God in Chriſt, is no other, than for God, through the Righteouſneſs and Obedience of Chriſt imputed to us, to own and acknowledge us, as having a Right and Title unto Heaven: And therefore we have mention made of Pardon and an Inheritance together, as the full Sum of our Juſtification. *Acts* 11. 18. *That they may receive forgiveneſs of Sin, and an inheritance among thoſe that are ſanctified.* It is not therefore, *O Soul*, a bare negative Mercy that God intends thee in the Pardon of thy Sins: It is not meerly the removing of the Curſe and the Wrath that thy Sins have deſerved, though that alone can never be ſufficiently admired; but the ſame Hand that plucks thee out of Hell, by pardoning Grace and Mercy, lifts thee up to Heaven, by what it gives thee together with thy Pardon, even a Right and Title to the glorious Inheritance of the Saints above.

Pardoning and ſanctifying Grace go together.

Secondly, *Another Concomitant is this, Whoever God pardons, he doth alſo in ſome meaſure ſanctifie.* He ſubdues our Sins, as well as blots them out; he abates their Power, as well as removes their Guilt. And indeed it were no better than loſt Labour, for God to pardon Sin, if he did not purifie the Sinner alſo; For, were but the leaſt Sin and Corruption left to rule and reign in us, we ſhould preſently run our ſelves as far into Debt and Arrears, as ever we were. Indeed, the beſt Chriſtian, in whom Grace is moſt prevailing, and Corruption weakeſt, yet even he ſtands daily and hourly in need of pardoning Mercy; but yet withal, his Sins are not of ſo high a Nature, nor ſo deep a Stain, as uſually the Sins of wicked Men are. His Sins uſually are ſuch, rather for the Manner of them, than for the Matter of them. God by his pardoning Grace forgives Infirmities, Failings, and Defects; and by his ſanctifying Grace, ordinarily keeps him from the Commiſſion of more groſs and ſcandalous Sins. And how then can we enough admire the rich Grace of God, that not only forgives us our Debts, but withal beſtows a new Stock upon us,

to

to keep us from running into Debt again, in any great and deſperate Summs.

Thirdly, *Pardon of Sin is always conjoyn'd with our Adoption into the Family of Heaven.* Herein is the Love of God greatly ſeen, not only to pardon *Rebels*, but to make them his Children: Not only to forgive Debtors, but to make them Heirs of his own Eſtate. The ſame precious Blood that blots out our Sins, writes us down Heirs of Glory, and Co-heirs with Jeſus Chriſt Himſelf. O infinite and unſpeakable Mercy of God, thus richly and bountiful to give, as well as freely to forgive! That he ſhould thus inſtate us at preſent, in his Love and Favour, and hereafter inſtate us in his Glory! This is not the Manner of Men, O *Lord*; but, *as far as the Heavens are above the Earth, ſo far are the Thoughts of God above our Thoughts, and his Ways above our Ways:* And therefore, *as far as the Eaſt is from the Weſt, ſo far hath he removed our Sins from us:* And why ſo far; but only that he might make Room for theſe great and unſpeakable Mercies of Juſtification, Sanctification, and Adoption, to intervene?

Pardon of Sin and Adoption are inſeparable.

And ſo much for the *ſecond* Thing propos'd, Namely, the *Concomitants* and *Adjuncts* of Pardon of Sin.

Thirdly, Let us now conſider, *Pardon of Sin, in the Effects and Conſequences of it*, and from hence alſo it will appear, how tranſcendant a Mercy is is, and how juſt a Title God hath to glory in it, when he ſaith, *I, even I am he that blottteth out thy tranſgreſſions.* Mercies Temporal and Spiritual, the Bleſſings of this Life, and the Glory of a Future; whatever indeed can be call'd a Mercy or good Thing, doth acknowledge it ſelf a Retainer to this Primitive and Fountain-Mercy of *Pardon of Sin.* Now in ſuch a Heap of them, I ſhall only cull out ſome few that are moſt conſpicuous.

Of the Effects and Conſequences of Pardon of Sin.

Now Remiſſion of Sin may be conſider'd, either as it lies in *God's Eternal Intention*, or in the *Spirit's Temporal Application* of it.

The one is God's Purpoſe before all Time, to forgive us; the other is the Execution of that Purpoſe in Time. If we conſider *Pardon of Sin* in God's Eternal Purpoſe and Intendment, ſo there are two bleſſed Effects flowing from it; and they are theſe.

Firſt, *The ſending of Jeſus Chriſt into the World.*

Secondly, *The great Gift of Faith.*

Firſt, *The ſending of Jeſus Chriſt into the World, who is the Cauſe of all Happineſs unto ſinful Man, was it ſelf the Effect of this Purpoſe of God, to pardon and forgive Sinners.* It is very difficult to trace out the Order of the Divine Decrees concerning the Salvation of Mankind, and to paſs from one of them to another, as they lie ranked and methodiz'd in God's Breaſt: And divers that have attempted to ſearch out theſe *Arcana Dei*, this Art and Myſtery of Juſtice and Mercy, have trodden in Paths different from one another, and doubtleſs many of them differing from the Truth alſo. I ſhall not ſtand to draw a Scheme of theſe Decrees of God; let it now ſuffice us to know, that God, from all Eternity, foreſeeing the Sin and Miſery, which Man would by his Permiſſion, and his own Sin, involve himſelf in, did, for the Manifeſtation of the Riches, both of his Mercy and Juſtice, enter into Counſel, how to pardon and ſave him. This was the End of God's Deſign, even to reſtore again to Happineſs ſome of Mankind; even as many as he ſhould ſelect out of the Maſs and common Rubbiſh of Sin and Miſery, and ſet apart for himſelf. Well, but how ſhall this End be accompliſh'd and brought about? *Juſtice* brandiſheth its Sword in the Face of Sinners, and demands as great a Share of Glory in Puniſhment, as *Mercy* doth in Pardoning; and God is reſolv'd to glorifie both of theſe Attributes of his in their ſeveral Demands: This now put him upon ranſacking of the deepeſt Counſel that ever lodged in his Heart, even of an ador'd *Mediator*, in whom Juſtice receives full Satisfaction, and Mercy triumphs in a full Pardon, and both are infinitely Glorious. For this End, God ſent down his Son from Heaven to Earth, to become a Propitiation for us, and ſo through the Shedding of his Blood, to obtain Remiſſion and Forgiveneſs of Sins for us. God's Mercy and his Beloved Son could not reſt together in his Boſom, and therefore his Purpoſe of pardoning Sin was ſo efficacious, that to make Room for the diſplaying of his Mercy, he ſends his own Son out of Heaven, never to enter

The ſending Chriſt into the World, the Effect of God's purpoſe to pardon Sin.

again there, till by his Merits and Sufferings he had procur'd Remiſſion of Sins for all thoſe that believe in him. Hence the *Apoſtle*, Rom. 3. 26. tells us, That *God ſent forth Chriſt to be a Propitiation through Faith in his Blood, to declare his Righteouſneſs for the Remiſſion of Sins that are paſt, through God's Forbearance, that he might be Juſt, and the Juſtifier of them that believe in Jeſus.* As if the *Apoſtle* had ſaid, God could not be Juſt, if he ſhould juſtifie Sinners that deſerve his Wrath, unleſs he had ſent forth Jeſus Chriſt into the World, to become a Propitiation and Sacrifice to his Juſtice for their Sins: For having threatned in his unalterable Word to inflict Vengeance upon all that are Guilty, his Truth oblig'd him to this dreadful Severity upon all, ſince all are Guilty. But that Chriſt taking on him the Guilt of Sinners, by his own Undergoing the Wrath of God, and the Curſe of the Law, hath ſo fully appeaſed Divine Juſtice, that now God, though he doth not puniſh Sinners in themſelves, can yet be Juſt, and the Juſtifier of Sinners; therefore he ſent forth Chriſt to be a Propitiation. God's Eternal Purpoſe to glorifie his Juſtice in the puniſhing Sin, and yet to glorifie his Grace and Mercy in pardoning Sinners, wrought this great Effect of ſending Chriſt into the World, whereby two ſuch different Ends might with infinite Wiſdom be accompliſh'd. So that Chriſt, who is the Cauſe of all our Happineſs and Mercy, is yet himſelf the Effect of God's Purpoſe and Intent to pardon Sin. And what can be ſaid more to advance the Greataeſs of this Mercy? A Mercy ſo great, that one of the Fathers, St. *Gregory* by Name, doubted whether it were more Miſery or Happineſs that *Adam* fell, ſince his Sin and Fall occaſion'd ſuch a wonderful Redeemer, and ſuch a Glorious Salvation; *Fœlix culpa*, ſays he, O Happy fall, that obtain'd ſuch a Redeemer.

Faith the Effect of pardoning Mercy.

Secondly, *Another Bleſſed Effect of God's Purpoſe in pardoning Sin, is the great Gift of Faith.* Indeed to give Jeſus Chriſt, were utterly in vain, did not God withal give Faith to accept him. To tender Chriſt to an Unbeliever, is to offer a Gift, where there is no Hand to receive it. Hence that God's Purpoſe of giving Pardon might ſtand valid, that the Death of Chriſt might not be fruitleſs, and that his Blood might not be like Water ſpilt on the Ground, that cannot be gather'd up again; God decreed to beſtow Faith upon them that believe, that may convey to them the Benefits of Chriſt's Merits in their Pardon and Remiſſion. Theſe two bleſſed Effects now follow in God's Purpoſe and Intention of pardoning Sin; even the Gift of Chriſt to procure, and the Gift of Faith to apply Pardon unto the Soul.

Secondly, And more eſpecially, *Let us conſider Pardon of Sin in its temporal and real Application*: And tho' the happy Effects of it are manifold, I ſhall only inſtance in ſome at preſent.

Pardon of Sin gives Security againſt Gods Juſtice.

Firſt, *Pardon of Sin gives an inviolable Security againſt the Purſuits of avenging Juſtice.* This is its formal and moſt immediate Effect. Juſtice follows guilty Sinners cloſe at the Heels, and ſhakes its flaming Sword over their Heads: Every Threatning contain'd in this Book of *God*, ſtands ready charg'd againſt them, and their Sins make them ſo fair a Mark, that they cannot be miſſed. Hence is that ſad Complaint of *Job*, *Why haſt thou ſet me up as a Mark?* Into which he emptied his Arrows as into his Reins, *Job.* 7. 20. Now while Juſtice is driving the Sinner before him from Plague to Plague, reſolving never to ſtop, till he hath driven him into Hell, the great Aſſembly and Meeting of all Plagues, Mercy interpoſeth and lays its Arreſt upon it; and this gracious *Act of Pardon* reſcues us, though under the Hands of the Executioner, and we ready to be turn'd into Hell. Here the Challenge that Juſtice makes to us ceaſeth, and we are left to walk ſafely under the Protection of Mercy. For when *God* iſſues out a Pardon, he calls off Juſtice from its Purſuit. Thus you have the *Pſalmiſt* thankfully acknowledging, *Pſalm* 85. 2. *Thou haſt forgiven our Iniquities*; and what follows now? *Thou haſt taken away all thy Wrath, thou haſt turned thy ſelf from the Fierceneſs of thine Anger.* Nor is it to be fear'd, O Soul, that thou ſhalt evermore be queſtion'd for thoſe Sins that are once forgiven thee. *God's Act of Oblivion* can never be repeal'd: No, *God* ſets an everlaſting Sanction upon them, and Juſtice ſhall never again moleſt thee, *Jer.* 34. *I will forgive their iniquities, and will remember their Sins no more.* And indeed, well may Divine Juſtice ceaſe its Purſuit of the guilty Sinner, for always when *God* pardons

pardons a Sinner, he turns his Purſuit againſt Chriſt, and ſatisfies all his juſt Demands upon him: For tho' we are the Principals in the Debt, yet our Surety, who ſtands bound for us in the Covenant of Redemption, is far the more able and abſolving Perſon.

Now is not this an unſpeakable Mercy, that Juſtice and Vengeance, the heavy Stroaks of which many thouſand Wretches lie under, and which thy Sins have provoked and arm'd againſt thy own Soul, that might, every Sin thou committeſt, that is, every Moment of thy Life, ſtrike thee Dead in the Place? In the Dread of which, if thou haſt any Tenderneſs of Conſcience left in thee, thou muſt needs live in continual fearful Expectations of this Wrath of *God*, to deſtroy thee as his Enemy. Is it not now infinite Mercy, that *God* ſhould call in the Commiſſion given to his Juſtice, that Mercy might ſecure thee from it? What is this but the Effect of pardoning Grace, that gives this Deſtroyer Charge to paſs over all thoſe, upon whoſe Conſciences the Blood of Chriſt is ſprinkled for the Removal of their Guilt?

Peace and Reconciliation an Effect of Pardon of Sin.

Secondly, *Another Bleſſed Effect of Pardon of Sin, is Peace and Reconciliation with God.* And what Happineſs can there be greater, than when the Quarrel betwixt Heaven and Earth, betwixt *God* and the Sinner, is taken up and compounded? Open Wars have been long proclaim'd, and maintain'd on either Part; ever ſince the firſt great Rebellion, Man hath ſtood in Defiance with, and exercis'd great Hoſtility againſt his Creator; and *God* on the other hand, hath thundred out whole Peals of Curſes againſt theſe Rebels, and hath ſlain whole Generations of them eternally Dead upon the Place. *God* hath ſtill maintain'd his Cauſe with Victoty, and Man with his Obſtinacy; and this War would never ceaſe, did not *God* proclaim Pardon and Forgiveneſs to all that will lay down their Arms, and ſubmit. Now hereupon Peace is concluded fully: For, Firſt, *God*'s pardoning Sinners, manifeſts himſelf to be fully reconciled to them; ſo the *Apoſtle* tells us, *Rom.* 5. 1. *Being juſtify'd by Faith, we have Peace with God through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* *God* is a ſworn Enemy to all guilty Sinners. Himſelf hath affix'd this Title to the reſt of his Name, *That he will by no means clear the Guilty.* Guilt hath a malign Influence, not only on our Conſciences, to diſcompoſe them with Terrors and Affrightments, but on *God*'s Countenance alſo, to ruffle it into Frowns and Diſpleaſure. Now when *God* pardons Sin, he wipes away this over-caſting Cloud; and the Cauſe of Enmity being remov'd, his Face and Favour clears up to us. And then,

Secondly, *Pardon of Sin is a ſtrong Inducement to us to lay down the Weapons of our Warfare, and be at Peace with God.* What Argument can be more prevailing, where there is any Principle of Ingenuity? When *God* thus proclaims Peace, ſhall I continue War? He pardons, and ſhall I rebel? He is reconciled, and ſhall I be implacable? Shall I perſiſt in thoſe Sins which he forgives? No, far be it from me: I ſubmit to that *God*, whoſe rich Grace conquers by condeſcending, as well as his Power by cruſhing. And thus the Soul lays down its Weapons at the Feet of *God*, and humbly embraceth the Terms of Agreement propounded by him in the Goſpel.

Pardon of Sin lays a good Foundation for Acquaintance and Comunion with God.

Thirdly, *Pardon of Sin lays a good Foundation for the Souls near Acquaintance and Communion with God.* Guilt is the only Thing that breeds Alienation. *Your Iniquities*, ſays the Prophet, *have ſeparated betwixt you and your God*, Iſa. 59. 2. Nor indeed is it poſſible, that a guilty Sinner ſhould any more delight in Converſing with *God*, than a guilty Malefactor delights in the Preſence of his *Judge*. And therefore we ſee, when *Adam* had contracted Guilt upon himſelf by eating the Fobidden Fruit, how childiſhly and fooliſhly doth he behave himſelf? *God* calls him, and he runs behind a Tree to hide himſelf; what a ſuddain Change was here? *Adam*, who but a little before was his Creator's Familiar, now dreads and ſhuns him; his Guilt makes him apprehend *God*'s Call to be no other than a Summons to the Bar. Nor indeed can it be otherwiſe, but that Guilt ſhould produce Alienation betwixt *God* and the Soul; for look how Diſtance grows between two familiar Friends, ſo doth it here: If a Man be conſcious to himſelf, that he hath done his Friend an Injury, what Influence hath this upon him? Why, preſently it makes him more ſhy and reſerv'd, to him than before. So is it here, Conſciouſneſs of Guilt fills us with a troubleſome ill-

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THE *Nature* and *Neceſſity* of REGENERATION: OR, The NEW-BIRTH.

SERMON XI.

JOHN iii. 5.

Jeſus anſwered, Verily, verily I ſay unto thee, except a Man be born of Water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.

THE former Part of this Chapter, in which Diviſion theſe Words fall, reports the Conference that paſſed betwixt *Chriſt* and *Nicodemus*: Their Diſcourſe is concerning the great Myſtery of the *New-Birth*, of which this Night-Diſciple had but a dark and midnight Conception. In the third *Verſe* our *Saviour* ſtartles him, and aſſerts, as he doth again in the *Text*, the abſolute Neceſſity of this great Change, *Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.* In the Verſe following *Nicodemus* objects againſt it, and thinks to refute the *ſecond Birth* by ſuch pitiful doting *Arguments* as might alone prove him twice a Child; *Can a man*, ſays he, *be born when he is old? Can he enter the ſecond time into his mother's womb and be born?* No doubt but this Learned *Rabbi* thought he brought a gravelling Inſtance againſt this new Doctrine of the *New-Birth*: Such ignorant Pieces are the moſt wiſe and learned, when they attempt by Reaſon to ſearch out thoſe myſterious Effects of God's Spirit, which cannot be known otherwiſe than by *Illumination* and *Experience*: Our *Saviour* therefore, in the words of the *Text*, takes off this groſs and ill-conceited *Objection*, and tells him, that he ſpeaks not of a carnal, but of a ſpiritual *Regeneration* and *Birth*; whereby we are begotten again to a lively Hope, and are made the Children of God, and ſo ſilenceth thoſe impertinent Impoſſibilities on which *Nicodemus* inſiſted, *Except a man be born of Water, and of the Spirit, he can in no wiſe enter into the kingdom of God.*

Theſe Words are a Deſcription of a *Chriſtian's New-Birth*, which is here ſet forth both by the *efficient Cauſe* of it, *Water* and the *Spirit*; and alſo by the abſolute *Neceſſity* of it unto *eternal Life*, without this no Man can enter into the Kingdom of God, that is, into Heaven, the place where the Throne of God's Kingdom is eſtabliſh'd.

Why now, to be born of Water and of the Spirit may admit of a double Interpretation; for either,

I. *What is meant by Water.*

Firſt, By Water is meant Baptiſm, the Element being put for the Ordinance, which is the Sacrament of our *Regeneration*: And thus you have it in *Eph.* 5 26. where the *Church* is ſaid to be *ſanctified and cleanſed, through the waſhing of water.* There is indeed a baptiſmal Regeneration, whereby all that are made Partakers of that Ordinance are, according to *Scripture Language*, ſanctified, renewed, and made

made the Children of God, and brought within the Bond of the Covenant; but all this is but after an external manner, as being in this *Ordinance* entred Members of the visible Church: Now this external *Regeneration* by Water, entitles none to eternal Life; but as the Spirit moves upon the Face of these Waters, and doth sometimes secretly convey quickning Vertue thorough them.

Why now, if you take this being born of Water to signifie external Regeneration in the Ordinance of *Baptism*, the Question will be, How it can be verified, that without this none can *enter into the kingdom of God?* It was a Mistake of some of the Fathers, and among them St. *Austin*, who excluded all, both Infants and Adult, out of Heaven, that died without *Baptism*, altho' by no Default of their own, but by an insuperable Necessity, unless they were such as died *Martyrs*, their being baptiz'd with their own Blood, as St. *Austin* speaks, serving them instead of *Baptism* by Water; but this Opinion is unwarrantable, and contrary to the most received Judgment of the *Church* in the *Primitive Times*, who if they had thought this *Baptismal Regeneration* was indispensibly necessary to Salvation, would not certainly have stinted and confined the Administration of it only to two times of the Year, *Easter* and *Pentecost*, thereby to bring upon themselves the Blood of their Souls, that should in that Interim have died without *Baptism*; therefore that *Opinion* was rather private, than the publick Judgment of the *Church*, though learned Men were of it.

What is meant by being Born of Water.

Therefore, if you will understand *Baptism* by being born of Water, if it be true that none are saved that are not born of Water; we must distinguish of being unavoidably and inevitably depriv'd of the Opportunity of *Baptism*, and a wilful Contempt of it; and in this latter Sense must our Saviour's Assertion be understood, He that contemns being born by *Baptism*, and out of that Contempt finally neglects being baptized, he shall never enter into the Kingdom of God; but for others, whom not Contempt, but Necessity, deprives of this Ordinance, the Want of it shall not in the least prejudice their Salvation.

Secondly, To be born of Water and the Spirit, may denote to us the manner of the Spirit's proceeding in the Work of *Regeneration*; *Except a Man be born of Water and of the Spirit*; that is, except he be renew'd by the *Holy Ghost* working as Water, leaving the same Effect upon the Soul, in cleansing and purifying of it from sinful Defilements; as Water doth upon the Body in washing off contracted Dirt and Filth: Nor indeed is this manner of Expression strange to the *Holy Scripture*; for *John Baptist*, St. *Matt.* 3. 11. speaking of *Christ*, tells them, That *he should baptize them with the Holy Ghost and with Fire*; that is, he should baptize them with the *Holy Ghost* working as Fire; for, as Fire eats out and consumes the Rust and Dross of Metals, so those that are baptized with the Spirit, are as it were plung'd into that *heavenly Flame*, whose searching *Energy* devours all their Dross, Tin, and base Alloy. So then here also to be *born of Water, and of the Spirit*; may be no more than to be born of the Spirit, purifying the Soul, even as Water purifies the Body; so variously is the Efficiency of the *Holy Ghost* in the Work of *Regeneration* expres'd in *Scripture* Language, it consumes our Dross as Fire, and washeth off our Filth as Water.

These two Interpretations may be given of the *Text*, *Except a Man be born of Water, and of the Spirit*; that is, except he be externally regenerated by *Baptism*, when he hath such an Opportunity to receive that Ordinance, that nothing but his own wilful Contempt of it can hinder it, and be also internally regenerated by the Spirit of God, working a mighty thorough Change upon his *Heart*, he shall never be saved. Or again, it may be understood thus, Except a Man be renew'd by the Efficacy of the *Holy Ghost* cleansing the inward Man from Sin, as Water cleanseth the outward Man from Filth, he shall never enter into Heaven: In either of which Senses you take it, the Words will well bear it.

Thus having given you this *Explication* of the Words, for the more full and clear Prosecution of this Doctrine of *Regeneration*, it will be expedient to shew you,

First, *What this New Birth or Regeneration is*, and that I shall do both negatively and positively.

First, *Negatively*, and here to be *born again, or new born.*

1. *What the New-birth is not.*

First, *It is not to have any essential Change to pass upon the essential Parts of human Nature*; the Essential Parts of Human Nature, I call the Soul and Body, which remain the same for Substance after Regeneration, as they were before.

1. *It is not any Eſſential Change on the Eſſential Parts of Human Nature.*

Indeed *Flagicius Illiricus*, that held Original Sin to be of the Subſtance of the Soul, was driven by Force of Conſequence alſo to affirm, that Regeneration made a Change in the Subſtance and Eſſential of the Soul. And the *Famaliſts* of late have entertain'd ſtrange and blaſphemous Conceits concerning Regeneration, as if it were a *Metamorphoſis* of the Creature into the very Being and Nature of God, making that Change that is wrought, thereby to be not ſo much a new Creature, as a Deity. But theſe are wild and uncooth Fancies; for if Regeneration wrought any ſuch Change upon Man, as that he is not now the ſame Perſon regenerated, as he was unregenerated; how doth the *Apoſtle* ſay, 1 *Tim.* 1. 13. *I was before a blaſphemer, a perſecutor, and injurious.* Then alſo Grace, inſtead of converting, deſtroy'd the Sinner, and conſequently no Sinner yet was or ſhall be ſav'd; but enough of this: Grace therefore makes no ſuch Phyſical Change upon the natural Being or Eſſence of Man, but the Underſtanding, Will and Affections are the ſame for Nature and Eſſence in the Regenetate as in the Unregenerate, but only they are rectify'd and endow'd with infuſed Habits.

2. *It is not a Converſion from an Erroneous Way of Worſhip to the Profeſſion of the true Faith.*

Secondly, *Regeneration is not a Converſion from an idolatrous and an erroneous Way of Worſhip, to the Profeſſion and Acknowledgment of the true Faith*; much leſs then is it not a Converſion from one Sect and Party of Chriſtians to another, as many ignorant Perſons ſuppoſe, that when they are won over from one Truth, it may be to an Error, preſently they think they are converted by it, becauſe they joyn in with another Party of Chriſtians. But there may be *Proſelytes* gain'd over to the Church, either from *Heatheniſm*, or from *Popiſh Idolatry*, whoſe Souls notwithſtanding may never be gain'd over unto Chriſt. As Travellers that come into a Foreign Land ſtill remain Subjects to their Natural Lord, ſo theſe may come in to the Church, which is the Kingdom of Chriſt upon Earth, and yet ſtill remain Slaves to their Natural Lord the *Devil*. Indeed I find in *Scripture*, that when *Chriſt* and his *Apoſtles* labour'd to convert the *Jews* or others unto the Profeſſion and Acknowledgment of Chriſt, and to bring them to a thorough Work of Regeneration, the chiefeſt Thing that they inſiſted on, was to perſwade them to believe, that Jeſus Chriſt is the Son of God, the Saviour of the World: Why, now tho' this *Dogmatical Faith* is not Regeneration, yet it was then almoſt an infallible Teſt of it; and to perſwade them to believe, that Jeſus was the Chriſt, was to prevail upon them to be truly and really converted; it was ſeldom ſeen among thoſe Primitive Chriſtians, where there was no Carnal Reſpects, or outward Advantage that could commend the Goſpel to the ſecular Intereſts of Men; when the only Reward of profeſſing of Chriſt, was *Reproaches*, *Perſecution*, and *Martyrdom*: Seldom was it ſeen, that any were won over from *Heatheniſm* or *Judaiſm*, to make Profeſſion of the deſpiſed Name of Chriſt, but ſuch who were inwardly renewed by that Almighty Grace, that can conquer all the Deſpites and Affronts of the World: Few were ſo fooliſh as to profeſs Chriſt in Hypocriſie, when that Hypocriſie would endanger their own Lives; and yet becauſe it was but in Hypocriſie, it could gain them no Benefit by his Death. Therefore it is that the *Scripture* ſpeaks of thoſe that made a Profeſſion of the Name of Chriſt, as if they were regenerated, becauſe it was then almoſt an infallible Mark of it. Thus you have it in 1 *John* 4. 15. *Whoſoever ſhall confeſs that Jeſus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God*: So again in *Chap* 5. *He that believeth that Jeſus is the Chriſt is born of God.* But now when the very Name of a Chriſtian is become a Title of Honour, and the ſame Puniſhments do now attend the denying of Chriſt, that then attended the Acknowledgment of him; Men may indeed be call'd by his Name, that never were effectually called by his Grace, and may make a Profeſſion of the true Faith, and yet remain Chriſtian Infidels.

3. *It is not the Reformation of a diſſolute and debauched Life; for that maybe from two Cauſes.*

Thirdly, *The Reformation of a diſſolute and debauched Life, falls ſhort of this ſpiritual New-Birth.* This is that with which many do ſooth up themſelves, when they reflect back upon the wild Extravagancies of their former Times; how outragiouſly wicked they were, Drunkards, Unclean, Riotous, Blaſphemers, Swearers, and the very worſt of Sinners, and now they find themſelves deaded to theſe Things, and they are grown Men of ſtay'd and ſober Lives and Converſations, ſtrait they conclude, that certainly ſuch a great Change as this is could never be made on them, otherwiſe than by a renewing Work of the Spirit; and yet this Amendment there may be, where there is no Regeneration.

Men

Men may gather up their looſe and diſſolute Lives within the compaſs of Civility and moral Honeſty, and yet they may be utter Strangers to a Work of true and ſaving Grace; and this may be aſcribed to two Grounds, partly to the Convictions of God's Spirit, awakening natural Conſcience to ſee the Horror, and to forefee the Danger that is in ſuch infamous Sins; and partly to Prudence, that they have gain'd from the frequent Experiences that they have had of the manifold Inconveniencies that they have brought upon themſelves by ſuch Sins formerly. Theſe two may make a great Amendment in Mens Lives and Converſations; and yet both theſe *Convictions* and *Prudence* fall far ſhort of true Regenerating Grace: All the ſeeming Amendment of ſuch Mens Lives may be effected two ways, either by changing their Sins, or by tiring out of the Sinner.

1. *When Men change one Sin only for another.*

Firſt, *The Life may ſeem to be reformed, when Men only change their rude and boiſterous Sins, for ſuch as are demure and ſober.* When Men from riotous grow worldly; from prophane and irreligious they grow ſuperſtitious and hypocritical; from *Atheiſts* to be *Hereticks*; when Men make this Change of boiſterous and roaring Sins for thoſe that are more demure and ſober, they are apt to think that this Change muſt be a Change of their Natures, whereas indeed it is but only a changing and bartering of their Sins; and uſually it is ſuch a Change too, that tho' it render the Life more inoffenſive, yet it makes the Soul more incurable. St. *Auſtin* long ſince hath told us, *That Vices may give place, when yet no Vertue takes it*, but one Vice gives place to another.

2. *When Men are tired out with Sin, or have outgrown their Sins.*

Secondly, *The Life may ſeem to be reform'd, when as Men are only tired out with their Sins, or when Men have out-grown their Sins.* There are Sins that are proper and peculiar to ſuch a State and Seaſon of a Man's Life, upon the altering of which they vaniſh and diſappear: The Sins of Youth drop off in declining Age, being then incongruous. This is that which deceives many, when they look back upon theſe numberleſs Vanities that they have forſaken and ſhaken off, and find how deaden'd their Hearts are to thoſe ſinful Ways, which before they delighted in; they conclude, that certainly this great Change muſt needs proceed from true Grace, whereas indeed they do not leave their Sins, but their Sins leave them, and drop off from them as rotten Fruit from a Tree: The Faculties of their Souls, and the Members of their Bodies, that before were Inſtruments of Sin unto Righteouſneſs, are, it may be, blunted and become unſerviceable; this Maim of Nature is far from regenerating Grace, that doth not diſable a Man from the Service of Sin; but only ſets him free from it.

4. *It is not to be endow'd with eminent Gifts and with the common Graces of the Spirit.*

Fourthly, *To be endowed with eminent Gifts, and with the common Graces of the Spirit, is not to be regenerated.* Theſe may be beſtow'd upon the worſt of Men. There is Grace that renders a Man lovely in God's Eyes, and there is Grace that renders a Man lovely only in Mens Eyes, of both theſe one and the ſame Spirit is the Author: In ſome the Spirit ſanctifies the Heart, and in others it only illuminates the Head. *Balaam* was irradiated with the ſupernatural Light of Prophecy. *Judas* was dignified with the extraordinary Office of the Apoſtleſhip, and ſent out to work *Miracles*, together with the reſt of the Apoſtles: Yea, ſo much are the Gifts of the Spirit, the Operations of the Spirit, that they are in a peculiar manner called the *Holy Ghoſt* himſelf: See this in *Acts* 1. 4. Acts 1. 4. Chriſt commands his Diſciples there to *wait at Jeruſalem for the Promiſe of the Father*; that is, for the Gifts of the Spirit, for that was the Promiſe of the Father; and he tells them in the 8th Verſe, *That they ſhould receive power after that the Holy Ghoſt was come upon them*: Ver. 8. Certain it is, that they had already received the *Holy Ghoſt* in the ſanctifying Graces of it; we cannot think that they were in an unregenerate, unconverted Eſtate after Chriſt's Death; but they had not as yet received the plentiful Effuſion of the extraordinary Gifts of the *Holy Ghoſt*, of ſpeaking with Tongues, of a bold and ready Utterance, of working of Miracles, and the like, which were then neceſſary to qualifie them for the ſucceſsful ſpreading of a new Doctrine: And this is more clear in *Acts* 8. Acts 8. 12. when *Philip* had preach'd at *Samaria*, it is ſaid he converted many, in Ver. 12. ſo that doubtleſs many of them had received the Spirit already in its ſaving Graces; and yet it is ſaid in Ver. 15. that the *Holy Ghoſt was not yet fallen upon* Ver. 15. *any of them*; that is, though they were converted, yet they were not endowed with thoſe wonderful Gifts of the Spirit before-mention'd, which afterwards they received. Now had he been among them, and heard them ſpeak of

Chriſt and Goſpel-Myſteries with Affections and Convictions beyond natural Capacities; had we heard them ſpeak unſtudied Languages, and ſeen them working Miracles, healing the Sick, raiſing the Dead, could we a thought that it was poſſible for any of thoſe, who were ſo favoured and filled by the *Holy Ghoſt*, to be yet in an unregenerate State, in a State of Wrath and Damnation? Yet that there might ſome of them be ſo, is clear, for the *Apoſtle* ſpeaks of the like, ſuch who had *taſted the heavenly Gift were made partakers of the Holy*
Heb. 6. 4. *Ghoſt, and yet they might fall away*, Heb. 6. 4. That is, there were them in thoſe Primitive Times that had an Effuſion of the extraordinary Gifts of the *Holy Ghoſt* poured out upon them; of ſpeaking with Tongues, of a bold and ready Utterance, of working of Miracles, and the like; and yet ſuch as theſe, that had taſted of theſe heavenly Gifts, and were made Partakers of the *Holy Ghoſt*, fell away; that is, they were never truly regenerate. And certainly, if theſe extraordinary Gifts might be found ſeparate from true Grace, much more may thoſe inferior Gifts that the Spirit now diſpenceth among *Chriſtians* be without true regenerating Grace. A Man may diſcourſe of *Spiritual Myſteries* copiouſly and clearly; he may have Gifts of Knowledge and Utterance; he may preach with Evidence and Demonſtration, and pray with Enlargement and Affection, and yet notwithſtanding all this, be an utter Stranger to ſaving Work of *Grace*. Gifts prove nothing; theſe Gifts may be but the Gilding of a rotten Poſt, the Varniſh of a corrupt Heart. As it was a Cuſtom of old to crown thoſe Beaſts Heads with Garlands of Flowers, that were ordain'd to be a Sacrifice: So *God* may ſometimes crown the Heads of wicked Men with flowry Parts and Gifts, whom yet he intends to make a Sacrifice of to his Wrath and Juſtice.

5. *A Civil and Harmleſs Demeanour is not Regeneration.*

Fifthly and laſtly, *A civil and harmleſs Demeanour is not this State of Regeneration.* There are many that are of a good Nature, that live blameleſly as to the World, and that nearly reſemble *Grace*; ſuch as St. *Paul* was, who ſpeaking of himſelf ſaith, *Touching the Law he was blameleſs.* And ſuch was the young Man in the *Goſpel*, that came to Chriſt, and demanded what further Leſſon he ſhould take out, having obey'd all the Commands, as he thought; and yet this alſo is ſhort of the *Regenerating Grace* of the Spirit, and argues only a ſweet Diſpoſition, not a gracious Heart.

And thus you ſee how eaſily Men may miſtake themſelves in the great Work of *Regeneration*, upon which depends their Eternal Happineſs; for *except a Man be born again he ſhall never ſee the kingdom of God*; and yet it is too too much to be feared, that many, yea, very many reſt upon theſe things, and think the great determining Change is certainly wrought upon them only, becauſe they are morally honeſt, or eminently gifted, or much reform'd, or gain'd over to the Profeſſion of the Truth with ſuch a *Sect* or *Party* of Profeſſors; whereas indeed the *New-Birth* conſiſts in none of all theſe things.

What Regeneration is.

Briefly therefore to inform you what it is; you may take it thus: *Regeneration is a Change of the whole Man in every Part and Faculty thereof, from a State of ſinful Nature, to a State of ſupernatural Grace, whereby the Image of God, that we defaced and loſt by our firſt Tranſgreſſion, is again in ſome good meaſure reſtored.* Now as every Science hath its proper Terms, that are as ſo many Keys to unlock the Myſteries contain'd in it; ſo eſpecially *Divinity* abounds with Terms that are peculiar to its own Doctrine, and in no one Point more than in this, of the great Change that a Sinner undergoes, when he is tranſlated from a State of Nature to a State of Grace. That Grace that concurs now unto this great Change, it is of two ſorts:

Either ſuch as alters the Relations wherein we ſtand unto *God*, or ſuch as alters the Diſpoſitions and Habits of our Souls. Of the former ſort are *Election*, which is antecedent to our *Faith*, and *Reconciliation*, *Juſtification*, *Adoption*, and *Myſtical Union*, which are Conſequents unto it; of theſe *Graces* it is not my Buſineſs now to treat, becauſe they lodge only in the Breaſt of *God*, and their *formal Effect* is not a *ſupernatural Infuſion* of any new Habits or Principles, but only of new Relations: When we ſpeak of a Perſon juſtified and adopted, the true *adequate Notions* of theſe Terms do not declare how his Heart is changed towards *God*; but, if I may ſo ſpeak, how *God*'s Heart is changed towards him; not that he ſtands otherwiſe affected unto *God*, but otherwiſe related

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to God than formerly : Of a guilty Malefactor he becomes acquitted and accepted by the *Grace* of *Juſtification*, and of an Alien he becomes a Son and Heir by the *Grace* of *Adoption*. But then there are other Graces that are inherent in us, and work a mighty Change in our moral habitual Principles, and whereby we alſo, tho' not ſo properly, are denominated gracious. God is denominated gracious by the Grace of *Juſtification*, *Adoption*, *Myſtical Union*, and *Election* ; and we are denominated gracious by the habitual Graces that this Spirit infuſeth into us, and works in us ; and theſe are every-where beſparkled up and down in the *Scripture*, where it ſpeaks of *Faith*, *Love*, *Patience*, *Self-denial*, *Meekneſs*, *Knowledge*, *Temperance*, and the reſt of them : Theſe, as ſo many Stars, ought continually to ſhine forth in a *Chriſtian's Life* ; and tho' they may appear very differently, ſome obſcure and cloudy, and others bright and glittering ; ſome at one Seaſon ſetting, and others at another Seaſon riſing ; yet they all make up but one Conſtellation, whereby we are tranſlated, as the *Scripture* ſpeaks, *out of darkneſs into marvellous light*. Now the framing of this Complexion or Body of Grace in the Heart, is that which we call *Regeneration*, it being a fixed Conſtellation of all the ſeveral Graces of the *Spirit* in the *Heart*. The Scripture gives it divers other Appellations ; it is call'd the *new Man* in *Eph.* 4. 24. The *new Creature*, Gal. 6. 15. A *transformation into the image of God*, 2 Cor. 12. 3, 8, 18. A *participation of the Divine nature*, 2 Pet. 1. 4. and in other places, too long to be inſiſted on now, it is called *Converſion*, *effectual Calling*, *Sanctification*, and *Renovation* ; and ſometimes too it is term'd by the name of two principal Graces, the two greateſt Limbs of the *new Man*, and they are *Faith* and *Repentance*, that are often put for the whole Work of *Regeneration*. All theſe Expreſſions ſet forth the ſame Work of Grace upon the Heart, though they may be underſtood under different Notions : The *new Man*, that denotes the Greatneſs and Entireneſs of the Change : The *new Creature*, that denotes that Almighty Power whereby that entire Change is wrought. The Image of God and the Divine Nature denote that Conformity that is thereby made in us to to the Holy will and Nature of God. Effectual Calling and Converſion denote our returning to God after our wandring and ſtraying from him. Sanctification denotes that Influence that this great Change hath to ſet us apart for God from common Uſes ; for Sanctification doth, in ſtrictneſs of Speech, ſignifie a *Separation* of a Perſon or Thing from prophane and ordinary Uſes to the Service and Glory of God. Indeed, Sanctification doth, in ſtrictneſs of Speech, differ from Regeneration, though commonly we uſe them promiſcuouſly ; for Regeneration is the implanting of the Habits and Principles of Grace, but Sanctification is properly the ſtrengthning and encreaſing of them ; it is the Progreſs that a holy Soul makes, when it paſſeth on from one degree of Grace to another. *Regeneration* is in Nature before *Juſtification*, but *Sanctification* follows it : And hence we may obſerve the Order in which the Apoſtle rangeth them in that famous place, that Climax in *Rom.* 8. 29, 30. where every Grace is a Round of the *Scala Cœli*, that *Jacob's Ladder*, whereby we aſcend into Heaven ; it is a place, if any in the Book of God, that deſerves our moſt ſerious Thoughts, ſays the Apoſtle, *Whom he did foreknow, them alſo he did predeſtinate*. If you ask wherein God's Preſcience and Fore-knowledge differ from Predeſtination, a Queſtion that hath cauſed much Strife, I anſwer, Preſcience here reſpects the End, Predeſtination reſpects the Means how to obtain it ; ſo that the Senſe is this, Whom God fore-knew that he would ſave, them he did predeſtinate to the Means of Salvation ; *He hath predeſtinated us*, ſays the *Apoſtle*, *that we might be conformed to the image of his Son* ; that is, he predeſtinated them to Grace, that is, the Way and Means to Glory : So then where it is ſaid, whom God foreknew, that ſignifies God's Purpoſe and Intention of ſaving ſome ; where it is ſaid, thoſe he did predeſtinate, that ſignifies God's Purpoſe of calling thoſe whom he did intend to ſave, unto the Knowledge of his Son, and to the Means whereby he might ſave them. It follows, *whom he predeſtinated, them he alſo called* ; that is, with an effectual Call, which is the ſame with Regeneration, whom he predeſtinated, them he regenerated ; and whom he thus called or regenerated, *them he juſtified*. Here you ſee Juſtification is put after Regeneration, tho' indeed in order of Nature it follows Regeneration, for we are juſtified by Faith : Now Faith is part of that new Nature that is beſtow'd upon us in Regeneration ; we are juſtified by Faith, where-

Rom. 8. 29, 30. opened.

fore

fore Faith is before Juſtification, and is part of our Regeneration. The Apoſtle now proceeds to the laſt Link of this Golden Chain, *Whom he juſtifies, them he alſo glorifies*; where we may obſerve that it is at leaſt probable, that the Glorification that the Apoſtle here ſpeaks of, may not be the Glory of Heaven, becauſe he ſpeaks of it as a thing already paſt and done, whom he hath juſtified he hath glorified: We may, without offering Violence to the Words, interpret it of *Sanctification*; whom he hath juſtified, them he hath glorified, that is ſanctified; ſo that Glorification here is no more than Sanctification, for Sanctification is alſo called Glory in 2 *Cor.* 3. 18. *We alſo beholding the Glory of the Lord, are changed into the ſame image from glory unto glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord*; from Glory to Glory, that is, from one Degree of Sanctification to another; for indeed Holineſs, that is, our Sanctification, and the Glory of Heaven, are but one and the ſame thing for Subſtance, differing in Degrees and Circumſtances. So much now for the Names, whereby this great Change is called; let us now proceed to conſider the Nature of it, which, becauſe it is a *Mutation* of the whole Man, we cannot better do it, than by conſidering the Terms both from which, and to which this *Mutation* or *Change* paſſeth. Let us therefore firſt take a view what Man is in his unregenerate State, and then behold him as he is new, and as he bears the glorious Lineaments of God's Image upon his Soul.

In his unregenerate State, *Firſt*, I ſhall not conſider him as he is obnoxious to *Divine Wrath* and *Vengeance*, for ſo he is a Child of *Wrath*, and *Heir* of *Hell* and *Perdition*: But I ſhall conſider him as he ſtands alienated from the *Divine Holineſs* and *Purity*, and as he is deſpoiled of all thoſe choice Perfections wherewith his *Nature* was at firſt endow'd. And here give me leave to repreſent to your Eyes, a wretched and ſad *Spectacle*, whoſe Bowels cannot but yearn to read that Deſcription which the Prophet makes, *Ezek* 16. 15, 16. of a poor forſaken Infant, ſwathed in its own clotted Blood, all raw and ulcerated, caſt out into the open Field, helpleſs for its *Weakneſs*, and loathſome for its *Deformity*, whoſe Cries were choak'd by the Filth in which it wallow'd. This is the very Emblem of what we our ſelves are in our *Unregeneracy*, caſt out to the loathing of our Perſons, rowling our ſelves in our own Filth, impotent that we cannot help our ſelves, and ſo choak'd up with our own Blood, that we cannot ask it of God. A leprous Perſon, that ſucks his own Sores, and hath nothing to feed on but the Corruption that iſſues from thence, is not a more loathſome Spectacle, than Man in his State of *Unregeneracy*, whoſe Soul is all puſtulent, full of Wounds, Bruiſes, and putrified Sores; whoſe Food is nothing elſe but the Stench and Purulency that breaks out from thence: But I ſhall not ſtand to repreſent it to you in Generals; to come therefore to Particulars, I ſhall give you theſe following Poſitions, which may clear up both, wherein conſiſts the State of *Unregeneracy*, and alſo the Miſery of ſuch a State.

Wherein the Corruption of an unregenerate State, and Condition doth conſiſt.

I. *In the blotting and defacing of God's Image on the Soul.*

First, *The Corruption of an unregenerate State conſiſts in blotting out the Divine Image, that Reſemblance of God which was ſtampt upon our Souls in our firſt Creation.* What the Image of God is, I ſhall more clearly ſhew you afterwards, and how it is again reſtored to us in *Regeneration*; in the mean time it may ſuffice, that by the *Image* of God, I mean thoſe *ſpiritual Habits* of Knowledge and Holineſs that were conferr'd on *Adam* in his firſt *Creation*, and on us in him: Theſe Habits were natural to him, and concreated with him, whereby his Underſtanding was raiſed to a clear and ſatisfying Knowledge of *Divine Truths*, and his Will inclined to a free and unforced Performance of *Divine* and *Spiritual Actions*; in this conſiſted a great Part of the Image of God: It conſiſted alſo in the harmonious Subordination of the inferior Faculties to the ſuperior, the Will being ſubject to the Dictates of the *Underſtanding*, and the *Affections* ſubject to the Commands and Soveraignty of the Will. But now all this is loſt, in our unregenerate State we are depriv'd of it, and there is nothing but Ruin and an undigeſted *Chaos*, left in an unregenerate Soul: Darkneſs covers the Face of the *Underſtanding*, that great Deep, and Diſorders and Tumults ſway his Affections contrary to the Guidance of his Will, and theſe ſway his Will contrary to the Dictates of Reaſon; ſo that it is in a State of meer Confuſion, Diſorder and Rebellion, as of Man againſt God, ſo alſo of Man againſt himſelf: It is a State of utter Blindneſs and Impotency, *When we were weak, then God ſent his Son in the likeneſs*

neſs of fleſh. Yea, it is not only a State of Weakneſs, but it is alſo a State of Spiritual Death, *You he hath quickned who were dead with treſpaſſes and ſins,* Eph. 2. 1.

Secondly, *The Corruption of an unregenerate State, conſiſts in our Averſion from God, and in our inordinate Converſion to the Creature*; and this neceſſarily follows upon the Loſs of God's Image. The Soul of Man is ſtill an active, buſie Creature, and muſt ſtill be putting it ſelf forth in Actions ſuitable to its own Nature; why now while it did enjoy God's Image, it had Power to point every Motion of the Soul to God, and to fix upon God both as the Object and End of all its Actions, and that made them all to be Holy and Divine; but being now depriv'd of the Image of God, the Soul grubbles here below, and inſtead of aſpiring unto God, pitcheth its Affections and Thoughts only upon the Creature, and this becomes Sin and Miſery to it; not becauſe it affects the Creature ſimply, but becauſe it affects the Creature in an inordinate Manner, that is, without affecting God the Creator. Briefly and plainly, the Soul muſt have an Inclination and Propenſion one way or other, to incline to the obeying and loving of God, it cannot now without the Image of God, that ſhould raiſe up the Affections of the Soul to a Spiritual Pitch; now this Image of God we are depriv'd of, and that juſtly too, by our Fall; and therefore now the whole Bent and Inclination of the Soul, that ought to be carry'd out to God, but cannot, pitcheth upon what it can, and that is upon the Creature; thoſe Things that pleaſeth the Carnal Senſual Appetite, and that in an inordinate Manner, to the Neglect and Slighting, yea, to the Contempt and Hating of God. And this is the State of the Soul in its Unregeneracy.

2. *In our Averſion from God, and in our inordinate Converſion to the Creature.*

Thirdly, *This Corruption of an unregenerate State is ſpread over every Power and Faculty of the Soul, not one eſcaping the Contagion of it.* But yet as the Sea is called by divers Names, according to the divers Countries and Shores that it flows along by; ſo alſo this Corruption of our Nature is termed diverſly, according to the divers Faculties and Powers of the Soul that it hath depraved: In the Underſtanding it is call'd Blindneſs and Darkneſs; in the Will Stubborneſs and Perverſeneſs; in the Affections it is call'd Diſorder, Senſuality and Irregularity, and yet ſtill it is the ſame Corruption of Unregeneracy in every one of them, the ſame Body of Sin and Death, tho' ſtiled thus diverſly, according to the divers Faculties that it doth infect.

3. *This Corruption hath ſpread it ſelf over every Power and Faculty of the Soul.*

Fourthly, *This Corruption of an unregenerate State, is unweariedly working out it ſelf in every Act and Motion of our Souls*; not ſo much as one good Thought could ever yet eſcape to Heaven free from it: It is as a corrupt Fountain continually ſending forth corrupt and bitter Streams; and tho' theſe Streams take ſeveral Courſes, and wander ſeverally into ſeveral Ways and Channels, yet they all taſte of the ſame Brackiſhneſs. So tho' the Soul is various in its Actions, yet all its Actions have a Taint and Reliſh from the ſame Corruption, that Corruption that hath tainted the Fountain.

4. *This Corruption is unweariedly working out it ſelf in every Act and Motion of our Souls.*

Fifthly, *Hence it follows, that whatſoever an unregenerate Man doth, it becomes Sin to him.* And that whether you conſider his Religious, or his Civil and Ordinary Actions. If you take the moſt ſplendid and gorgeous Duty of an unregenerate Man, when it is perform'd with the moſt Pomp, when his Affections are moſt upon the Wing, when he is in the higheſt Elevation of Soul; yet this glittering Duty is nothing elſe but the Steem and Reaking of Corruption, and ſo becomes offenſive unto God, there being nothing of Grace in it to perfume it. Hence the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks in *Pſal.* 109. 7. *Let his Prayer become ſin.* And ſays the *Wiſe Man, The Prayers of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord.* The beſt Duties of unregenerate Men are no better in God's Account and Acceptance than Abomination, *the cutting off a Dog's Neck, or as the offering up of Swines Blood,* or whatever elſe the Soul of God doth moſt abhor; and how then might ſuch unregenerate Men wiſh themſelves rather Stocks or Stones, ſenſeleſs and unacted Things, than ſuch as they are, Men of vigorous and active Principles, ſince every Imagination of their Hearts, and every Motion of their Souls, is only evil before God? There is nothing that ſuch Men do in the whole Courſe of their Lives, but at the laſt Day it will be found in God's Regiſter-Book among the Catalogue of their Sins, yea, even their commendable and neceſſary Actions. *The plowing of the wicked,* ſays the wiſe Man, *is an abomination to the Lord.* This Man eats and drinks, plows and ſleeps, and hath done ſo many thouſands of ſuch and ſuch

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ſuch natural Actions; but he hath done them in a State of *Unregeneracy*, and therefore they ſtand all upon the Account for ſo many thouſand Sins: Nay, he hath pray'd ſo often, and heard ſo often, made ſo many Prayers, and heard ſo many Sermons, and done many good Works, but yet all this while he was in an unconverted Eſtate; theſe are therefore ſet down in God's Day-Book in black, and they are regiſtred among thoſe Sins that he muſt give an Account for; not for the Subſtance of the Actions themſelves, but becauſe they come from rotten Principles, that defile the beſt Actions he can perform. His Eating, as well as his Gluttony, his Drinking, as well as his Drunkenneſs, his Converſe, Negotiation, and Trafficking, as well as his Covetouſneſs, and inordinate Love of the World, are all ſet down, and reckon'd by God for Sins, and ſuch Sins as he muſt reckon for with God.

Now I ſpeak not theſe things to diſcourage any, that may ſuſpect themſelves to be in an unconverted Eſtate, from the Performance either of the Duties of Religion, or the neceſſary and civil Affairs of this Life; you cannot poſſibly ſit ſtill and do nothing, your Thoughts will be working; or if you do ſit ſtill and do nothing, yet your Idleneſs will be a Sin: But I ſpeak this only to ſhew the abſolute Neceſſity of *Regeneration*; for without this inward Principle of *Grace*, no Action, how moral, how ſpecious, how religious or neceſſary ſoever, but will be catalogued down in God's Day-Book among the Number of Men's Sins

The Image of God taken in two Senſes in Scripture.

3. Having now conſider'd the *Terminum à quo*, from which we paſs to this great Change, let us now conſider what it is that we acquire by the Term to which we paſs; and that I told you when I gave you a Deſcription of *Regeneration*, is the *Image* of God: Of this I ſpake ſomewhat before, but ſhall now do it more fully. The *Image* of God now in Scripture is taken in two Senſes:

1. *For the eſſential Image of God, and ſo Chriſt is called the Image of God.*

Firſt, *For the eſſential and co-eternal Image of God the Father.* And ſo Chriſt is called the Image of God in *Col.* 1. 15. *He is the Image of the inviſible God*, ſays the Apoſtle there. So alſo *Heb.* 1. 3. *He is the Brightneſs of his Glory*, that is, of God's Glory, *and he is the expreſs Image of his Perſon.* Indeed, it is infinitely paſt our Reach to conceive what a wonderful Impreſſion that was that ſtampt the Image of the Father upon the Son in ſuch a ſort, as to be the ſame in Subſtance and Duration with the *Original* it ſelf.

2. *It is taken for that Reſemblance of God that is upon the Soul of Man.*

Secondly, Therefore to come nearer to our Purpoſe, *The Image of God is taken ſometimes* in Scripture, *for that Reſemblance of God that is upon the Soul of Man.* And ſo it is ſaid in *Gen.* 1. 27. *That God created Man in his own image.* Now to be this *Image*, implies two things; Firſt, *A Likeneſs and Similitude that Man bears unto God*: Secondly, *It implies that God made himſelf the Pattern and Examplar, when he drew this Likeneſs of himſelf upon Man.* Two things, or two Perſons, may be like each to other, which yet properly are not ſaid to be the one the Image of the other, unleſs the one be made purpoſely to reſemble and repreſent the other, as Milk is ſaid to be like Milk; but yet one part is not ſaid to be the Image of the other: So then when it is ſaid, God made Man after his own Image, it implies a Likeneſs in him unto God; and it implies alſo, that this Likeneſs is wrought in him by God, purpoſely to reſemble him. Now here to clear our Paſſage, I ſhall conſider three things.

Wherein the Image of God conſiſted, in which Man was in his Primitive State created.

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Secondly, *What Parts of that Image are loſt and defaced by the Fall, and what of it ſtill remains upon the Soul.* And,

Thirdly, *What of that Image is again renewed and reſtored in our Regeneration.*

Firſt, *What the primitive Image of God was in which he created Man.* I anſwer *Negatively and Poſitively.*

Not in any corporeal Reſemblance or Similitude

Firſt, *Negatively. The Image of God doth not conſiſt in any corporeal Reſemblance of him, or bodily Similitude to him.* For our Bodies, though they are of an admirable Compoſure, yet they carry in them no Reſemblance of God, who is a Spirit, and who is the God of the Spirits of all Fleſh. The Learned do well diſtinguiſh betwixt *Imago* and *Veſtigium Dei*; there are *quædam veſtigia Dei*, certain Footſteps of God printed upon every Creature, by the tracing of which Footſteps we may find out his infinite Power and Godhead, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks: Thus there is not the leaſt Spire of Graſs but points upwards to God, as its Wiſe

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and Powerful Maker; there is not the leaſt Leaf but hath written upon it the Wiſdom and Power of God; every Creature-brute and inanimate bears the print of God's footſteeps upon it and of this rank are our Bodies bearing upon them, *quædam veſtigia*, ſome Footſteps and Tracks of God; and by how much the more wonderfully they are framed and organized, in which reſpect the *Pſalmiſt* ſaith, *I am wonderfully and fearfully made*, by ſo much the more diſcernable are the Footſteps of God ſeen in our Bodies, than in the Bodies of other Creatures; but yet this is not ſufficient to make them *Images* of God, for they have not in themſelves any reſemblance of the Divine Nature; neither are they Spirits nor Intellectual Subſtances as God is; and therefore tho' they are ſaid to bear the print of God's Footſteps, yet they are not ſaid to bear God's Image. Indeed there were ſome that were called *Anthropomorphites* that fancied God to be Corporeal, and that aſcribed to him all Members in propriety, that the *Scripture* aſcribed to him in condeſcention, as Hands, Head, Eyes, and Feet, and the like, and conſequently thought that God framed Man's Body according to the Image of his own; but this is a ſtupid Error; and a *Heathen Orator* had more true information in this point, when he tells us, *That the Virtues of Man make him to be more like to God than his Shape doth*; ſo then it is not the Body of Man that is the Image of God.

Secondly, *Poſitively.* And ſo we may take notice that the *Image* of God conſiſts.

But it conſiſted,

1. *First, In thoſe Spiritual Perfections that were neceſſary to Man as Man; as the Soul with all thoſe Powers and Faculties that were ſeated in it.*

First, *In ſuch perfections as are ſpiritual*, I ſay, *in ſuch ſpiritual perfections as are eſſential and neceſſary to Man as Man*; ſuch as the rational Soul it ſelf, together with thoſe Powers and Faculties that are neceſſarily ſubjected and ſeated in it, as the Underſtanding, Will and Affections; for by theſe Man may be ſaid to bear the *Image* of God, becauſe theſe have in them ſome faint glimpſes and ſhadows of the Divine Eſſence. The Soul is a Spirit, and ſo is God; the Soul is an intellectual and free Agent, and ſo is God; indeed the reſemblance betwixt God and us, even in this very thing in which we bear ſome reſemblance of God, is infinitely unſearchable and great. Mark that place for the confirmation of this in *Gen.* 9. 6. *He that ſheddeth Man's blood, by Man ſhall his blood be ſhed, for in the image of God made he Man.* Why wherein lies the force of this Reaſon? Do not all affirm that Man loſt the *Image* of God by his ſin and fall; Or did God hereby intend to ſecure the Lives of the Regenerate that have this Image again reſtored to them? No, but the weight of the reaſon lies in this, that every Man whether Regenerate or Wicked, ſtill bears the Image of God even in this, that he hath a ſpiritual Soul, and that he hath an intellectual Mind, that he hath a free and ſelf-determining Will; and therefore whoſoever Murders Man deſerves Death, becauſe he Murders God in *Effigies*, he Murders the *Image* of God. This now is one part of the *Image* of God, the ſpiritual Soul, and the rational Powers and Faculties of it.

2. *In all thoſe habitual perfections of Man's Nature that were not Eſſential, but rather Ornamentive unto him.*

Secondly, *Another part of God's Image conſiſts in thoſe habitual perfections of Man's humane nature that were not Eſſential to him, but rather Ornamentive and Neceſſary, not ſimply to his Being, but rather to his Well-being.* To make Man a rational Creature, it was ſimply neceſſary to breathe into him a rational Soul, and it was alſo neceſſary that that rational Soul ſhould be endowed with Faculties, with Underſtanding, Will and Affections: But now over and above theſe neceſſary things, God gave him righteous habits that might rectifie thoſe Faculties, and theſe are three.

1. *He had a clear and exact knowledge both of Natural and Divine Things.*

First, *God darted into his Underſtanding a clear and exact Knowledge, not only of thoſe things that are Natural, but of thoſe things that are Divine alſo:* Of his Knowledge in things that are natural, we have a clear inſtance, when as all Creatures paſſed before *Adam* as Servants to do homage to their Lord, he was able by a tranſient view and intuition of them to give them all Names according to their ſeveral Natures. And of his knowledge of the Divine Nature appeared hence, becauſe his Love of him was perfect; and how could he love God, if he had not known him? Now in this particular of Knowledge, Man nearly reſembled God in his firſt Eſtate; for God's infinite delight is in the Knowledge and Contemplations of himſelf, and of his Works, and ſo alſo was Man's; but yet this *Knowledge* was not Omniſciency; for there were many things doubtleſs that Man was then ignorant of; but he knew whatever was neceſſary and expedient for him to know, and that was ſufficient for the happineſs of his Eſtate, and for the end for which he was Created.

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Secondly, *Another part of God's Image conſiſts in thoſe habitual perfections of Man's humane nature that were not Eſſential to him, but rather Ornamentive and Neceſſary, not ſimply to his Being, but rather to his Well-being.* To make Man a rational Creature, it was ſimply neceſſary to breathe into him a rational Soul, and it was alſo neceſſary that that rational Soul ſhould be endowed with Faculties, with Underſtanding, Will and Affections: But now over and above theſe neceſſary things, God gave him righteous habits that might rectifie thoſe Faculties, and theſe are three.

2.

In all thoſe habitual perfections of Man's Nature that were not Eſſential, but rather Ornamentive unto him.

First, *God darted into his Underſtanding a clear and exact Knowledge, not only of thoſe things that are Natural, but of thoſe things that are Divine alſo:* Of his Knowledge in things that are natural, we have a clear inſtance, when as all Creatures paſſed before *Adam* as Servants to do homage to their Lord, he was able by a tranſient view and intuition of them to give them all Names according to their ſeveral Natures. And of his knowledge of the Divine Nature appeared hence, becauſe his Love of him was perfect; and how could he love God, if he had not known him? Now in this particular of Knowledge, Man nearly reſembled God in his firſt Eſtate; for God's infinite delight is in the Knowledge and Contemplations of himſelf, and of his Works, and ſo alſo was Man's; but yet this *Knowledge* was not Omniſciency; for there were many things doubtleſs that Man was then ignorant of; but he knew whatever was neceſſary and expedient for him to know, and that was ſufficient for the happineſs of his Eſtate, and for the end for which he was Created.

1.

He had a clear and exact knowledge both of Natural and Divine Things.

2. *His Will was endowed with an inclination unto all Good.*

Secondly, *Man's Will was endowed with an habitual proneneſs and inclination to all good*; there was then no ſuch bandowings in his Will, as now the holieſt Saints complain of, but the Will claſpt about every good and holy Object that was preſented to its choice, and that it did freely and fully with entireneſs and delight.

3. *His Affections were all Holy, and ſubject to his Holy Will. And that both,*

Thirdly, *His Affections alſo were all holy, and all of them ſubject to his holy Will.* Now the beſt complain, it is ſeldom that they Will what is good; and when they have a Will to it, yet they cannot do what they would; the good which they would do they cannot do; but in our firſt bleſſed Eſtate, there was an harmonious obedience in all the Paſſions, and in all the Faculties of the Soul, unto the command of the Will, without the leaſt tumult or diſorder; there were indeed motions of the Affections and Paſſions in *Adam*, as of Love, Hope, Joy, and the like; but it was, as ſome *Divines* expreſs it, as the bubbling of clean Water in a clear *Cryſtal Vial* that raiſed no defilement; whereas now it is in us like the working of the *Sea* that caſteth out mire and filth. Now theſe Affections were under the command of the Will then, and that both unto the continuance, and unto the degrees of them.

1. *To the continuance of them; and alſo,*

Firſt, *As to the continuance of them:* The Will might command them on and off at its pleaſure; they fixed upon nothing but what Holineſs directed them to, and they made their ſtay no longer than the ſame Holineſs commanded; like the *Centurion Servants*, they went and came at the word of their *Superior*.

2. *To the degrees of them.*

Secondly, *As to the degrees of them.* Now we find it a hard task to ſet bounds to our Love, Fear, Joy, and the like; we cannot give way to them without running into ſtrange Exceſſes and Intemperance: Our Love is become Fondneſs, our Joy is become Wantonneſs, our fear is turned into a chilling Ague, and our Anger into a burning Fevor. But in our firſt bleſſed Eſtate, all theſe Paſſions were guided by holy Reaſon, both for their *Objects* upon which they ought to fix, and alſo for their *Meaſures* how far they ought to let forth themſelves. And thus I have open'd the firſt Propoſal, delineating to you obſcurely the Divine *Image*; for the beſt and moſt comprehenſive Notions and Words of Men can but obſcurely trace out the tracks, lines, and figures of the glorious *Image* of God, which the Creating Finger of the Almighty at firſt drew upon the Soul of Man, which when we compare with the ruins and rubbiſh of our preſent ſtate of Miſery, may adminiſter juſt cauſe of ſhame, grief, and ſorrow.

2. *What parts of the Image of God is loſt by the fall, and what of it ſtill remains in all Men.*

Secondly, *Let us now conſider what parts of this Image is loſt and defaced by our fall, and what of it ſtill remains in every Man, as well unregenerate as regenerate.* And here,

1. *That part of it that conſiſts in thoſe things that are eſſential to Man are not loſt.*

Firſt, It is that; *That part of the Image of God that conſiſted in thoſe things that are Eſſential to Man is not loſt*; as the Soul, and its Faculties of Underſtanding, Will and Affections, theſe ſtill remain the ſame for ſubſtance as they did before.

2. *Some unregenerate Men retain many rare natural perfections.*

Secondly, *Some unregenerate Men retain many rare natural perfections of theſe Faculties*; ſome of them grow up in all ornamentive, excellent Parts, ſearching Judgments, deep Knowledge, when others are born *Fools* and *Idiots*, and are deprived of the uſe of common Reaſon. Now, tho' Reaſon and Knowledge, even in natural things, be ſome part of *God's Image*, that all Men have equally forfeited, yet God is pleaſed to reſtore this in a great meaſure ſometimes, to ſome unregenerate Men, when he denied it to others; yea, it may be his own Children do not enjoy it in the ſame degree; this part of *God's Image* is diſpenced in common both to good and bad; and many times the wicked have a greater ſhare in it than the holy: Theſe Gifts, tho' they bear ſome weak and obſcure reſemblance of God, he keeps in the hands of his common Providence, and ſcatters them upon the generality of Men in ſome meaſure; unto theſe we have all loſt a Right and Title, but we have not all loſt the actual poſſeſſion of them, but God reſtores them to unregenerate Men as he pleaſeth.

2. *As for that part of the Image of God that conſiſts in holy habits, in ſpiritual Knowledge and righteouſneſs, theſe are utterly loſt and defaced.*

Secondly, *As for that part of the Image of God that conſiſts in holy habits, in ſpiritual Knowledge and Righteouſneſs, theſe we have utterly loſt and defaced.* The Mind is become palpable dark, muffled up in Error and Ignorance, the Will and Affections are violently and unweariedly bent upon the purſuit only of what is evil, and this is the miſery of our fall, thus is our glory ſtained, and our Silver is become Droſs.

3. *What of the Image of God is reſtored in Regeneration?*

Thirdly, *Let us now conſider what of the Image of God is again reſtored to us in our Regeneration?*

To

To this I anſwer briefly, *Regeneration reſtores to us that part of God's Image that conſiſts in holy and ſpiritual habits, that rectifie the operations of our natural Faculties and Powers.* The Mind is illuminated with true Knowledge, the Will is made compliant to God's Will, and the Affections are called off from the purſuit of Vanity, and ſet upon ſpiritual and heavenly Objects, and this is that Image of God that is drawn upon our Souls in our Regeneration, whereby we are made like to God, yea, ſo like to him, that the *Apoſtle* in 1 *Pet.* 2. 4. calls it, *a participation of the Divine Nature.* There are indeed ſome ſtrictures and beams of the Holineſs of God himſelf ſhining in a Regenerate Soul, tho' infinitely more weak and wateriſh than thoſe in God's infinitely holy Eſſence. And here obſerve two things.

Anſwer, Regeneration reſtores that part of God's Image that conſiſts in holy habits that rectifie the operations of our natural Faculties and Powers.

First, *That in that very inſtant of our Regeneration, all the Graces of the Holy Spirit are implanted in us at once, for they are all linked together, and whoever receives any one Grace receives them all.* There's Faith and Love, and the Fear of God, and Patience, and Humility, and Self-denial, and the reſt of the train of glorious Graces, for each of theſe is a Lineament and Feature of the *Divine Image*, without which it were not compleat. And therefore that Chriſtian that can but find any one Grace wrought and acted in him by the Spirit of God, may comfortably conclude that he hath all other Graces at leaſt in the Habits and Principles of them; they may all be weak indeed, but yet not any one of them is wanting. And it may alſo ſerve to ſtir us up, ſince we have Graces of all ſorts, that lie latent within us, not to yeild to any Corruption or Temptation, as ſuch with which we cannot grapple ſo as to come off with Victory and Conqueſt; for our Regeneration furniſhes us with all Grace, and there is no particular Sin, but we may within our ſelves find a particular Grace oppoſite to it, if we would but ſtir up and rouze it.

In Regeneration all the Graces of the Spirit are implanted in us at once.

Secondly, Obſerve alſo, *That the Holy Ghoſt is in a peculiar way the Authority of this our Conformity and Similitude unto God*; for he it is that according to the *Oeconomy* and Diſpenſation of the *Bleſſed Trinity* that begets us after the Image and Likeneſs of God, and therefore the Text ſpeaks of being Born of the Spirit. And ſo in *Scripture* we have frequent mention made of the *Seal of the Spirit*, 2 *Cor.* 1. 22. and *Eph.* 1. 1, 13. Now a *Seal* doth two things, it not only confirms the Deed to which it is annexed, but it alſo conforms the Wax upon which the *Seal* is imprinted to receive its own ſtamp and image. Why ſo when the Spirit of God doth *incubare animæ*, when it reſts upon the Soul, it caſts and moulds it into its own image and ſhape, and of a fleſhly carnal Soul, it makes it become ſpiritual like to it ſelf; and therefore ſays our Saviour in *John* 3. 6. *That which is born of the Spirit is Spirit*, becauſe the Spirit of God begets in its own likeneſs. It is like the *Seal* on the Wax that leaves its ſtamp upon it; ſo the Soul being ſealed by the Spirit, it leaves its own ſtamp and impreſſion upon it.

2. *The Holy Ghoſt is the Author of our Conformity and Similitude unto God.*

But now betwixt that *Image of God* which the Spirit ſtamps upon us in our Regeration, and that *Image of God* in which we were Created, there is a twofold differrence obſervable.

Two differences betwixt the Image of God reſtored by Regeneration, and that in which we were Created.

First, That *Image of God* which is reſtored to us in our Regeneration, tho' it hath a perfection of Parts, yet it hath not a perfection of Degrees. The *Image of God* in which Man was at firſt Created had them both, it included all Graces, and it included them all in their height and in their glory. Now, tho' the Regenerate are as extenſive holy as *Adam* was, and have as many Graces, yea, more too, as ſome think, than ever *Adam* had, yet they are not intenſively ſo holy as he was, but their Graces are allayed with a mixture of Sin and Corruption; their Knowledge is not ſo comprehenſive, but it is ſubject to Ignorance and Errors; their Will is not ſo perfectly guided by the Will of God, but ſometimes it hath excentrical motions of their own; and their Affections are not ſo refined, but that ſometimes they are inordinate and earthly; yea, and every Faculty and every Action is interwoven and interchecker'd with Grace and Sin; ſo that at once the Soul, tho' it be Regenerate, yet it bears a double *Image*, God's, and *Satan*'s; it bears *God's Image* in its regenerate part, and the *Devil's* in its unregenerate part. The beſt Men are like your *pleated Pictures*, wherein if you look on one ſide you may ſee an *Angel*, and if you look on the other ſide of the Light you may ſee a *Devil*; ſo truly if you look upon the renewed and regenerate part of a Child of God that is *Angelical*, and bears ſome glimmerings and reſemblances of the Image of God upon it; but if you turn your Eyes on the corrupt and unregenerate part, what appears there but blackneſs and deformity that ſhadows out the very *Image of Satan?*

1. *The Image of God reſtored by Regeneration hath a perfection of Parts, but not of Degrees; but the Image of God in which we were Created had them both.*

2. *The Image of God reſtored to us by Regeneration ſhall never be totally loſt and defaced, as that in which we were Created was.*

Secondly, *The Image of God reſtored to us in our Regeneration, differs from that wherein we were firſt created in this, that it ſhall never be totally loſt and effaced as the other was, and herein it excels the other.* You ſee how ſoon *Adam* loſt his, one Sin brought ſuch a great blot upon it, that it was no longer diſcernable for the *Image of God*; but now tho' this *Image* ſhine not in ſuch bright and orient Colours as that did, yet are they more laſting and durable Colours than the former *Image* had: Yea, tho' the Regenerate commit many Sins that ſtain and ſully it, yet the Spirit of God ſtill refreſheth it by the continual influences of his Grace, and will preſerve it entire, that in that great Day when God ſhall come to examine every Soul whoſe *Image* and Superſcription do you bear, it may indeed be ſeen we bear the *Image* of God, and may be owned by him as his Children, and as thoſe that belong to him. The forming now of this *Image of God* on the Soul, is the product of the New Birth.

SERMON XII.

JOHN iii. 5.

Jeſus anſwered, verily, verily I ſay unto thee, except a Man be born of Water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.

Reſemblances betwixt a natural and this ſpiritual Birth.

NOW in that the Scripture calls the reſtoring of this Image of God, a New Birth; it will be expedient to conſider what this *Metaphor* to be born again doth import. And here I ſhall touch upon ſome remarkable reſemblances that are betwixt a natural and a ſpiritual Birth, between our firſt and our ſecond Birth.

1. *As no Man can beſtow a natural Being ſo no Man can beſtow a ſpiritual Being upon himſelf.*

Firſt, *Then to be born again implies, that as no Man can beſtow upon himſelf a natural Being, ſo much leſs can any Man beſtow upon himſelf a ſupernatural Being.* What! where were all of us an hundred years ſince? All in that vaſt wild Wilderneſs of nothing, all ſleeping in our own Cauſes, we our ſelves not having then ſo much Exiſtence as our very *Dreams* have now; and could we awake our ſelves out of that ſleep, could we procure our own Being, could we fetch from Heaven thoſe Sparks of Divine Fire, thoſe Souls of ours which are now kindled in our Breaſts, could we our ſelves tie that Vital Knot betwixt our Souls and Bodies? No more certainly can any carnal natural Man, that is as much nothing in Grace, as we before we were born were meer nothings in Nature, call down into his Soul from Heaven that living and active Principle of Grace, that ſhould make him a new Man and a new Creature. And therefore the *Scripture* chuſeth to expreſs this *New Birth* by ſuch terms as do import in us an utter impoſſibility and impotency to effect it by our own Power: It is called the *quickning of the dead* in *Eph.* 2. 1. *You hath he quickned*, ſays the *Apoſtle*, *who were dead in treſpaſſes and ſins.* Look how impoſſible it is for a dead Man that is ſhut down under the Barrs of the Grave, that is crumbled away into Duſt and Aſhes, to pick up again every ſcattered Duſt, and form them again into the ſame Members, and how impoſſible it is for him to breathe without a Soul, or to breathe that Soul into himſelf. Why a like impoſſible is it for a natural Man who hath lain many years ſtinking and rotting in the death of Sin, to ſhake off from himſelf that ſpiritual death, or breathe into himſelf that ſpiritual and heavenly Life that may make him a living Soul before God. Moreover the Grace of Regeneration is ſaid to be created in us. in *Eph.* 4. 24. *Put on the new man, which after God is created in righteouſneſs and true holineſs.* In Creation the Creature is formed out of nothing, and what can nothing contribute to Being? Why ſuch is every natural Man, he is meer nothing in reſpect of Grace, and therefore can work nothing of Grace in himſelf. Thus you ſee the *Scripture* carries it, that no more than a Child can beget it ſelf, or a dead Man quicken himſelf, or a non-entity create it ſelf; no more can any carnal Man regenerate himſelf, or work true ſaving Grace in his own Soul. Indeed there are a growing number of Men who think that *Regeneration* is the effect of Free-will, and

Eph. 4. 24.

that

that it is in our own power to convert and renew our ſelves, tho' it be abundant confutation of this ſpreading Error, that it is againſt the common ſenſe and experience of true Chriſtians, who as they ſadly complain of the averſeneſs of their Wills to what is good, even after *Regeneration*, ſo they have found, that before their *Regeneration* the greateſt Obſtacle to it was the ſtubbornneſs and refractorineſs of their own Wills, that would never be brought to any terms of compliance with Divine Grace, had not the Spirit of God by a ſweet and irreſiſtible Efficacy, at once both perſwaded and ſubdued them. Tho' this now were ſufficient, yet let me add one Argument which I think is unanſwerable. If an *Unregenerate* Man can by his own power regenerate himſelf, then one of theſe two abſurdities muſt neceſſarily follow, either that there are ſtill left ſome holy habits and principles in the Will that were never loſt by the Fall; or elſe that Man may make himſelf truly holy by a Will that is totally corrupt and ſinful; but it is very groſs to admit either of theſe.

Firſt, *There are no holy habits or principles left in a carnal man whereby he ſhould be able to convert and regenerate himſelf.* For what holy habits can there be in the Will of a corrupt Man, unleſs they are true Graces? And to affirm that Man in a ſtate of nature hath true Grace inherent in him, whereby he is able to convert and regenerate himſelf, is dull nonſenſe, and a flat contradiction, for it is to affirm that he hath Grace before he hath Grace.

Secondly, *A corrupt Will cannot make an holy Man*; if there be no ſuch habits and principles left in the Will ſince the Fall, then the Will muſt be totally corrupt, and a corrupt Will cannot make a holy Man, Grace is above and beyond its Sphere; yea, an unregenerate Will in all its Inclinations is utterly contrary unto Grace; there is not any one act of the Will but it is evil and ſinful; and it is ſtrange Divinity to affirm that gracious habits may be wrought in us by ſinful acts; as ſoon may a Man become juſt by Couzenage, and merciful by Oppreſſion, ſober by Drunkenneſs, and liberal by Griping, as any Man becomes holy by acts of his own Will, ſince every act of his Will is before Converſion ſinful and unholy: Beſides, the Will of Man by the Fall is become a fleſhly Will, but in Regeneration it is made a ſpiritual Will; now it is a moſt ſtrange kind of production that a fleſhly Will ſhould beget a ſpiritual Will; nor would that which our Saviour affirms, any longer hold true, in *John* 3. 6. *That which is born of the fleſh is fleſh*, if a fleſhly Will could beget a ſpiritual Will? So then you ſee by this, that no Man by the power and freedom of his own Will can regenerate himſelf. As for previous Diſpoſitions, and preparatory Works, I deny not but that an unregenerate Man may by the common aſſiſtance of the Spirit, and by the induſtrous and careful improvement of his own Power, proceed very far in them, ſo as not to be far off from the Kingdom of God; but ſtill the great change of Regeneration it ſelf is not wrought by our own Power, or by our own Will; ſo ſaith St. *John*, ſpeaking of Believers, and he affirms it in as expreſs terms as may be, in *John* 1. 13. *Which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the fleſh, nor of the will of man, but of God.* A plain and undeniable proof that our own Will is not the efficient cauſe of our New Birth.

Secondly, *In that it is called a being born again, it is implied, that there muſt be a Father of this Divine and Heavenly, as well as of the Natural Birth.* Now God himſelf is this Father, and hence is it the Saints are ſaid to be *born of God*, and to be the *Children of God*; this is their Parentage, their high Original and Extraction, in which, tho' they are poor, deſpiſed and diſtreſſed, they may more truly glory than the great Ones of the Earth in the paint and empty glittering of a Noble or Honourable Title. But concerning the Duty and Dignity of a Child under this conſideration of being Born again, I may have occaſion to ſpeak of when I come to the Application; and ſo I ſhall reſerve it till then; I am yet on the Doctrinal part. God is now under a different Notion a Father to his Children by Regeneration, and Adoption; by Adoption we receive the priviledges of Children, and are numbred among the Family of Heaven, made Heirs of Glory, and Coheirs with Jeſus Chriſt our Elder Brother: By Regeneration we receive the Divine Nature, are made partakers of it: And as natural Children often bear ſuch lively repreſentations and reſemblances of their Parents, that we may know by their very Countenances whoſe they are: So in the *New Birth* there is ſuch a reſemblance of God ſtamped upon the Soul, that by the conformity of our Wills and Affections to his, it may well be diſcerned that he is our Father; in *Regeneration* we receive his Nature in *Adoption*, we receive

2. *There is a Father of this ſpiritual Birth as well as of the natural, and that is God.*

receive the priviledges of his Children, we are made Sons by both. It is true, God is the Author of all other things, as well as of the Grace of Regeneration; by him doth the whole frame of Nature ſubſiſt, and all Men owe their Beings to his Power and Goodneſs, but yet the endearing and ſweet Name of Father he appropriates to himſelf; not becauſe he gives natural Beings to his Creatures, altho' in that reſpect too he is *parens rerum*, the Parent of all things, but becauſe alſo he gives ſupernatural Grace to his own Children, which indeed is a giving them of his own Nature: To give them natural Beings, is but to communicate to them the effects of his Power and Providence, but to give them ſupernatural Grace, is to communicate to them of his own Nature, and therefore more eſpecially is he called their Father, the Father of thoſe that he doth regenerate; the reſt of his works are but the effects of his common Goodneſs and Bounty, but this is the effect of his ſpecial Grace, wherein God doth more ſhew forth the effects of a Father than in the production of all the World.

3. *The Means by which this New Birth is effected is the Word of God.* Jam. 1. 18.

Thirdly, *The ſeminal Vertue or Means by which this New Birth is effected, is the Word of God.* So you have it expreſly in *James* 1. 18. *Of his own good will begat he us with the Word of Truth.* In *Ezek.* 37. you read there the *Prophet* is commanded to *propheſie over a heap of dry bones*; ſuch an Almighty Power was in his Words, that it is ſaid in Ver. 7, 8. *As he propheſied there was a great noiſe and ſhaking among the bones, and ſinews and fleſh came upon them.* An Almighty Power indeed that could ſpeak dry Bones into living Men. The ſame that the *Prophet* did only in a Viſion, the Word of God preached doth in a reality: We are all of us dry Bones till this Almighty Word breathe life and quickning into us. The preaching of the Word is the great means God hath appointed for Regeneration in *Rom.* 10. 17. *Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.* When God firſt Created Man, it is ſaid, that he breathed into his Noſtrils the breath of Life: But when God new Creates Man, he breathes into his Ears, this is that Word that raiſeth the dead, calling them out of the Grave, this is that Word that opens the Eyes of the Blind, that turns the Hearts of the Diſobedient and Rebellious: And tho' wicked and prophane Men ſcoff at Preaching, and count all Miniſters Words and God's Word too but ſo much Wind, yet they are ſuch Wind, believe it, as is able to tear Rocks, and to rend Mountains, ſuch Wind, as if ever they are ſaved, muſt ſhake and overturn the Foundations of all their carnal Confidences and Preſuptions. Be exhorted therefoee more to prize, and more to frequent the preaching of the Word: How knoweſt thou, *O ſinner*, but whilſt thou art ſlothfully abſenting thy ſelf from the publick Ordinances, that Word is then ſpoken that might a been thy Converſion? How knoweſt thou but that whilſt thou art ſleeping in the Congregation, that Word is then ſpoken that poſſibly if thou hadſt attended to, might have awakened thee from the dead ſleep of ſin and ſecurity; ſuch an energy is there in the Word of God, when the Spirit of God cloaths it with Power, that it breaks in upon the Conſcience, ruinates and demoliſheth the frame of ſinful Nature, and in an inſtant conveys ſpiritual Light, warmth and quickning into the Soul.

Rom. 10. 17.

4. *There are pangs and throws that accompany this New Birth as well as the natural Birth.*

Fourthly, *There are pangs and throws that do accompany this New Birth as well as the natural Birth*; and theſe are Convictions and Humiliations, when the Soul is bowed down under the inſupportable burthen of its own Guilt, and the ſenſe of God's Wrath, when it lies grubbling in Prayer, rending it ſelf, and Heaven too, with its cries; in the midſt of all theſe Agonies Chriſt Jeſus becomes formed in the Soul, and the work of Grace is accompliſhed, which is the true ground of Joy and Comfort for ever after. Indeed theſe travelling pangs are not alike ſtrong in all Men; in ſome they are diſtracting Terrors, Terrors that break their Bones, and drink up their Spirits, and ſuch uſually they are in old and cuſtomary Sinners, that will not be won by more gentle and mild courſes; with ſuch knotty pieces as theſe are, the Spirit of God deals terribly, and in their *New Birth* cuts them out of the Womb, and ſaves them after ſuch a manner, that to their preſent apprehenſions he could not deal more dreadfully with them if he had deſtroyed them: But thoſe that are Converted in their Youth, before cuſtomarineſs in Sin and hardneſs of Heart had made them impenetrable to the ordinary works of the Spirit of God, with theſe God deals more mildly, and melts them down by ſoft and ſweet relentings of Soul, and delivers them into the glorious liberty of the Children of God, without thoſe violent Pangs and Convulſions that others do undergo; yet in all that are ſanctified and regenerated, after they arrive at the uſe of Reaſon, it holds true in the New Birth as well as in the natural Birth, they do all of them bring forth in ſorrow.

Thus

Thus now you ſee what this work of Regeneration is, without which, our Saviour tells us, that no Man ſhall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; and to ſhew both the certainty and weight of this truth he doth twice aſſert it; once in the third Verſe, and then again in the *Text*, this is that very firſt Doctrine in which our Saviour inſtructs his *Novice*-diſciple; *Nicodemus* being convinced of Chriſt's extraordinary Miſſion by the Miracles that he wrought, courts him with terms full of humble reſpect, *Rabbi*, ſays he, *thou art a Teacher come from God, for no Man can do theſe Miracles that thou doſt, except God be with him*; to this our Saviour anſwers more pertinent to his Salvation than to his *Chareſis*, *Except a man be born again he cannot enter into the kingdom of God:* As if he ſhould ſay, The *Miracles* that I do prove my *Miſſion* that I am ſent of God, but I do greater *Miracles* than any thou haſt ſeen or heard of; thou haſt heard perhaps that I reſtore ſight to thoſe that are Blind, and life to thoſe that are Dead; but I am come to give Eyes to thoſe that do already ſee, and to give Life to thoſe that do already live; I am come to cauſe thoſe that are already Born to be Born again, and this is a Miracle that muſt be wrought upon thee, and upon all that ſhall be ſaved, to turn Fleſh into Spirit, to faſhion lumps of Clay into the glorious ſimilitude of the Image of God; this is the greateſt of all Miracles, and this great Miracle muſt be wrought upon all; for except this be done, ſays our Saviour, no Man can enter into Heaven.

The Words contain in them, firſt, A general Propoſition, *A man cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

Secondly, An exceptive limitation added to this general Propoſition, *Except a man be born again.* And both theſe do deliver to us this Propoſition, or Doctrinal Obſervation.

That Regeneration, or the New Birth, is of abſolute Neceſſity unto Eternal Life. Doctr.

There is no other change ſimply neceſſary but only this, if thou art Poor, thou maiſt ſo continue, and yet be ſaved; if thou art Deſpiſed, thou maiſt ſo continue, and yet be ſaved; if thou art Unlearned, thou maiſt continue ſo, and yet be ſaved; only one change is neceſſary, if thou art Wicked and Ungodly, and continueſt ſo, Chriſt who hath the Keys of Heaven, who ſhutteth and no Man openeth, hath himſelf doomed thee, that thou ſhalt in no wiſe enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. This is alſo definitively pronounced by the *Apoſtle*, *Heb.* 12. 14. *Without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord.*

In the proſecuting of this Doctrine, I ſhall firſt give you ſome Demonſtrations of it, and then apply it.

Very difficult it is to perſwade Men againſt the prejudices of their corrupt Hearts; this great change, ſay they, is more than needs: Regeneration begins now to be decried by as great Maſters in *Iſrael* as ever *Nicodemus* was; many underſtand not to what end the Fabrick of corrupt nature ſhould be demoliſhed, and Men as it were turned out of themſelves; they think, if they are but Baptized, whereby, as they ſuppoſe, the guilt of *Original Sin* is waſhed away, and that a ſober Religious Life, keeping from groſs Actual Sins, is ſufficient for the obtaining of Heaven, without thoſe hard and inexplicable Notions of *Regeneration*, and the *New Birth.* I ſhall therefore endeavour to convince you of the indiſpenſible neceſſity that there is of *being born again*, that ſo when you are perſwaded of it, you may give no reſt to your ſelves, nor unto God, till he cauſe his Spirit, which is that Wind that bloweth where it liſteſt, to breathe ſpiritual Life into you, without which it is impoſſible that you ſhould inherit Eternal Life.

Firſt, Therefore conſider, *There is an identity or ſameneſs betwixt Grace and Glory, and therefore it is that Regeneration is ſo neceſſary unto Salvation.* What is that illuſtrious thing that we call the Glory of Heaven? Is it that we ſhall outſhine the brightneſs of the Sun? Or that we ſhall tread on a Pavement of Stars? Is it a freedom from Diſeaſes, Pains, and Death? Is it that we ſhall hear the Melody and Songs of Saints and *Angels?* Theſe things indeed, and whatever the Heart of Men can deſire or imagine to be excellent, do fill up this bleſſed Eſtate; but yet that which chiefly conſtitutes Heaven is holineſs, that very holineſs that wicked Men, who yet preſumptuouſly hope to inherit Heaven, do yet deſpiſe and hate on Earth. We ſhall there be united to God by Love, depend on him by Faith, obey him with Delight, and that with the very ſame Love, Faith, and Delight, as we do here on Earth, only

Reaſons why Regeneration is neceſſary unto Salvation.

1. *Becauſe Grace and Glory are the ſame.*

ly theſe Graces ſhall then be exalted above all imperfections and frailties, this is the Glory of Heaven. The Glory of God himſelf conſiſts eſpecially in his infinite holineſs, and therefore in that moſt triumphant Song of *Moſes* in *Exod.* 15. 11. God is ſtiled *glorious in holineſs, fearful in praiſes*; but *glorious in holineſs*, why now the glory of the Saints in Heaven is but a reflection caſt upon them from the glory of God, and therefore as he is eſpecially glorious in his holineſs, ſo are they alſo glorious in their holineſs. Why now if Grace and Glory be the very ſame thing, canſt thou, *O Sinner*, ever hope for Glory without Grace? Or is not this the Heaven that thou doſt deſire and hope for? Is it a place of Eaſe and Pleaſure only that thou wiſheſt, where thou maieſt be free from Cares and Fears, from Sorrows and ſad Hours? Why this is impoſſible; ſuch a Heaven God never made, nor canſt thou in reaſon expect; for God hath ſo linked Sin and the Curſe together, that Heaven it ſelf would be no Sanctuary to thee from the regrets and ſtingings of Conſcience, nor from the horor and ghaſtly fear of Wrath, if Sin and Guilt ſhould enter there with thee.

Exod. 15. 11.

2. *Becauſe unregenerate Men are unſuitable to Heaven.*

Secondly, *Unregenerate Men are utterly unſuitable to this ſtate of glory, and therefore there muſt neceſſarily intervene this great change of Regeneration.* All true pleaſure and delight ſprings from the ſuitableneſs of the *Object* to the power or faculty that receives it. Thus *Solomon* tell us, *It is a pleaſant thing for the eye to behold the Sun or the Light*; it is pleaſant alſo for the Ear to hear Melody, becauſe theſe *Objects* are attempered and proportioned to the Sences; why now as *Light* brings no pleaſure to a Blind Man, nor *Muſick* to a Deaf Man; why ſo there would be nothing pleaſing in Heaven to us, but that God doth beforehand by his Grace temper and proportion our Souls to that Glory that he will then reveal upon us. Hence it is that the *Apoſtle* in *Col.* 1. 12. *Gives thanks unto God that hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light.* But now wicked unregenerate Men are altogether unſuitable both to the Work, and alſo to the Reward of Heaven.

1. *Unregenerate Men are unſuitable to the Work of Heaven.*

Firſt, *They are unſuitable to the work of Heaven.* And what is the work of Heaven, but the adoring, admiring, bleſſing, praiſing, loving, and ſerving of God for ever and ever? This is that work wherein *Saints* and *Angels* ſpend an Eternity; and doſt thou, *O prophane Wretch*, think to croud in among that bleſſed Company, and join with them in this bleſſed Work? What muſt that Heart of that which here on Earth was uſed only as the *Devil's* Pot to ſeeth and ſtew wicked thoughts in, be now on a ſudden filled with the ſpiritual praiſes of the great God, is this thinkeſt thou fit or likely? Is it fit that that Tongue of thine which hath even been bliſtered again with horrid Oaths, curſed Revilings, and Reproaches of God and Godlineſs, ſhould firſt in Heaven begin to ſet forth the high Praiſes of God? There are none admitted to be free *Citizens* of the *New Jeruſalem*, but only ſuch who have firſt ſerved out their time of holineſs, ſome more, ſome fewer years here on Earth; the work of Heaven muſt be learned in the time of our *Apprenticeſhip* on Earth. And tell me now what delight do you take in Holineſs? Is it not a task and burden to you (I will not ſay always to keep alive in your thoughts conſtant Meditations of holy Things, and vigorous Affections towards them) but is it not a task and burden to you to be ſometimes drawn to the external performance of holy Duties? Why elſe do you engage ſo ſeldom, and ſo ſlightly in them? What makes it thus your task, but an unholy and an unchanged Heart? And what think you would it be, a Heaven, or a Hell, a Happineſs, or a Torment to you, to ſpend an Eternity in the moſt fixed Contemplations, and in a moſt ardent Love of God? You who cannot bear the imperfect Holineſs of God's Children, but rail at it as unneceſſary, and a puniſh preciſeneſs, how will you be able to bear the moſt conſummate Holineſs of Heaven? Now wicked Men, tho' they vex at the Purity of the Saints, and laugh at it at once, yet is it to ſome; tho' it is a deviliſh contentment to them, that they can reproach their defects; ſhould theſe Men enter into Heaven with unchanged Hearts, Heaven would be a place of exact Torture to them, to find nothing there but that Purity which they hate, and that perfect Purity which hath no defects for them to abuſe. Behold then the certain and unavoidable Miſery of unregenerate Men, that even Heaven it ſelf cannot make them happy, nor is it ſcarce in the power of the Almighty to bleſs them: Tell me, thou that in holy Duties grudgeſt at ever Word that is ſpoken, and at every Sand that runs, that thinkeſt every Summons to the Publick Worſhip as unpleaſant as the ſound of thy *Paſſing-Bell*, that ſay'ſt when will the *Sabbath* be gone, and the Ordinances be over, what wilt thou do in Heaven? What ſhall ſuch an unholy Heart do there, where a *Sabbath* ſhall be as long as Eternity

nity it ſelf, where there ſhall be nothing but holy Duties, and where there ſhall not be a ſpare Minute ſo much as for a vain Thought or an idle Word? What wilt thou do in Heaven, where whatſoever thou ſhalt hear, ſee, or converſe with, is all Holy? And by how much more perfect the Holineſs of Heaven is than that of the Saints on Earth, by ſo much the more irkſome and intolerable would it be to wicked Men; for if they cannot endure the weak light of a *Star*, how will they be able to bear the dazling light of the *Sun* it ſelf. I ſpeak all this to convince wicked Men how weak, vain, and fooliſh a thing it is for them to hope for Happineſs without endeavouring after this great change? Miſery perſues them even to Heaven it ſelf, and they would not be happy even there. Certain it is God never beſtows Heaven upon any, but beforehand he makes them agreeable to its Holineſs by their own: As for Swines and Dogs, filthy and impure Sinners, God will never puniſh them with the Purity of Heaven, no, he hath provided another place for their Torment, where they ſhall eternally and unceſſantly Hate and Blaſpheme God, as the Saints in Glory Love and Praiſe God. It is therefore neceſſary, that as *Muſicians* tune their Inſtruments before they enter into the preſence of any; ſo our Hearts ſhould be tuned to the Songs and Praiſes of Heaven, before we enter into the glorious preſence of God, to be made his Muſick for ever.

2. *Unregenerate Men are unſuitable to the Reward of Heaven, which conſiſts in the Viſion of God, and in Communion with him; both which a wicked Man cannot bear.*

Secondly, *Unregenerate Men are unſuitable to the Reward of Heaven.* As the work there is ſpiritual Work, ſo the reward is a ſpiritual Reward; and it conſiſts eſpecially in two things, both of them unſuitable to a carnal Heart. In a clear Viſion of God, and an unimaginable entireneſs of Communion with him in Heaven; and theſe two things of all things unholy Perſons cannot bear.

1. *The Sight of God to a Sinner is full of dread and terror.*

Firſt, *The ſight of God to a ſinner is infinitely full of dread and terror.* You read in *Scripture* what dreadful apprehenſions even God's own Children have had after ſome, tho' but reſtrained and reſerved diſcoveries of himſelf to them, and that becauſe they had ſtill ſome remainders of Corruption in them that Grace in this Life could not deſtroy; thus the *Prophet Eſay* cries out, *Woe is me for I am undone, becauſe I am a Man of unclean lips, and mine eyes have ſeen the King, the Lord of Hoſt.* And ſo when Chriſt put forth his Divine Power in working of a *Miracle*, the Glory of it was ſo terrible, and ſo unſupportable, even to holy *Peter*, that he cries out, St. *Luke* 6. *Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a ſinful Man.* And if theſe faint diſcoveries of God, even to holy Men themſelves, were ſo aſtoniſhing and unſupportable, what a confounding ſight then will it be to have all the glorious Attributes of God break forth in a full flaſh upon the Faces of wicked Men, when among the reſt of thoſe Attributes they ſhall behold the Dread, Wrath and ſevere Juſtice of God to be ſworn and armed againſt Sin and Sinners? Is this a ſight that will make Heaven deſirable to a wicked Man? How doſt thou think to endure the Rays of that excellent Glory and Majeſty, which makes even the Eyes of the *Angels* themſelves to twinkle with the dazling brightneſs of it.

2. *Wicked Men hate Communion with God.*

Secondly, *As for that near Boſom Communion with God, wherein ſtands another part of the Reward of Heaven; this is that which wicked Men hate, yea, they hate that any ſhould pretend to it.* Thoſe ſweet endearing intercourſes that paſs betwixt God and the Soul in ways of Worſhip, of Love for Love, and of Obedience for Mercies received, they never knew them on Earth, and how then ſhall they be fit for them in Heaven? Certainly to be for ever tyed up to ſuch Spiritualities as theſe, will make Heaven but an uncomfortable place to an ungodly unchanged Heart.

Now tell me, after this repreſentation made unto you, both of the Work and of the Reward of Heaven, whether you are indeed willing to be in this Eternal ſtate or no? A ſtrange *Queſtion* you may think; what! To ask Men whether they are willing to go to Heaven, and to be poſſeſſed of Glory? But let me tell you, it is an impoſſible thing for an unſanctified Heart really to wiſh to be in Heaven, conſidering it under that perfect Purity and Notion of true Holineſs, which hath now been laid before you; do you wiſh to be for ever employed in the Loving, Praiſing, Serving, and Enjoying of God, without interruption or ceſſation, why then do you not endeavour to fit your ſelves for it againſt the time of your Appearing in Glory? Why do you not labour after true Grace that alone can fit you for that holy and bleſſed Work? That Idea and Notion that wicked Men frame to themſelves of Heaven only as a place of Eaſe, Reſt, and all Bleſſedneſs, makes them to believe that they do really wiſh themſelves poſſeſſed of it; but yet if it could be ſuppoſed that ſuch a Perſon were taken up into Heaven, he would find it a place ſo contrary to his

Fancy and corrupt Inclinations, that he would ſoon wiſh rather to be on Earth again in the purſuit of his more ſenſible and ſuitable Pleaſures. I have the longer inſiſted on this particular Demonſtration, becauſe I look upon this as a moſt convincing *Argument* to make every wicked Man ſee how unfit he is in a ſtate of unregeneracy for the ſtate of Glory. Well therefore, as ever you hope for Heaven; and I dare aſſure my ſelf that this is the hope of all of you, make ſure then to your ſelves this great change; it is no Notion that I have now preached unto you; your Natures and your Lives muſt be changed, or believe it, you will be found at the laſt Day under the Wrath of God, for God will not change or alter the Word that is gone out of his Mouth; he hath ſaid it, Chriſt who is the Truth and Word of God hath pronounced it, that without this New Birth or Regeneration, no Man ſhall inherit the Kingdom of God.

3. *Whatever it is that Men do in a ſtate of Unregeneracy is Sin.*

Thirdly, *Whatſoever a Man doth in a ſtate of Unregeneracy is Sin, and therefore the change of Regeneration is abſolutely neceſſary unto Eternal Life.* Whatever ſuch a Man's whole Life is, it is nothing elſe but a continued courſe of ſin without either interruption or ceſſation; and in this one Particular lies a main difference betwixt a Regenerate and an Unregenerate Man; the Regenerate Man, thorough that Corruption that is remaining in him, ſins in every thing that he doth, but whatever an Unregenerate Man doth is ſin, there's the difference; the one doth as it were tread awry in a right path, and the other runs out into a crooked and perverſe one; and how then is it poſſible for ſuch Men ever to arrive at Heaven, ſince every ſtep they take leads down to the Chambers of Death and Deſtruction. I ſpake ſomewhat to this before, in opening to you the miſery of an unregenerate State and Condition, and ſhewed you then that the *Scripture* every where ſpeaks of the Civil Actions and the Religious Duties of wicked Men as ſins; their Plowing is ſin, and ſo alſo is their Praying; yea, whatever they do is ſin; they ſin in doing Evil, and they ſin in doing Good; but I ſhall paſs by that, and briefly enquire what it is that makes all the Actions, and all the Duties that wicked Men perform, to be thus ſinful, and this may be reduced to two Particulars; and that is the *Principle* from which, and the *End* to which his Actions are done.

Two things make all the Actions of Wicked Men ſinful.

1. *Want of Love unto God.*

First, *The Principles from whence all the Actions of an unregenerate Man flows is corrupt, and when the Fountain is corrupt, the Streams alſo that iſſue from thence muſt needs be tainted.* That Principle that is neceſſarily required to make our Actions to be truly good and holy is the ſincere and ſuperlative Love of God. What we do becomes then a good action when we do it from the commanding Motive of *Divine Love*; and therefore our Saviour ſaith in *John* 14. 24. *He that loveth me not keepeth not my ſayings.* Our whole Duty conſiſteth either in that which immediately reſpects God, or in that which immediately reſpects Man; and accordingly God hath comprized the whole Law in *Two Tables*, in the one he preſcribes the Services due to himſelf, and in the other he requires from us what is due to Men, and both theſe are fulfilled by Love; ſo ſaith the *Apoſtle*, Rom. 13. 10. *Love is the fulfilling of the Law*; and therefore our Saviour reduceth all the Ten Commandments into Two, in *Mat.* 23. 37, 38, 39. *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy might, this is the firſt Commandment, and the ſecond is like unto it, thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thy ſelf.* Our Saviour reduceth all into two, and theſe two ſpeak but one and the ſame thing Love, which is the fulfilling of the Commandment. Now this teacheth us, that whatever external conformity our actions may carry in them to the Letter of the Law, yet are they not true obedience to God's Commandments, if they flow not from a Principle of Love. Tho' you may perform each particular Duty required in each particular Command, yet this is not fulfilling but tranſgreſſing of the Law, if what we do is not done out of a Principle of Divine Love; this is that univerſal qualification that can alone make our Duties truly good and acceptable unto God; ſo that either to do contrary to the Law, or to do actions that the Law requires without Love to God, are both of them ſins, the one againſt the expreſs Letter, and the other againſt the true ſence of the Law. Now no unregenerate Man can act any thing from this *Divine Principle* of the Love of God, for this is implanted in us only by *Regeneration*, and therefore it is ſaid, 1 *John* 4. 7. *Every one that loveth is born of God.* The great moving Principle in a carnal Man, that ſets him on to work every thing that he doth, is Love indeed, but it is only ſelf-love, not love to God, but love to ſelf; a love that is enmity and hatred againſt God, and therefore whatever he doth is ſin.

Secondly,

Secondly, *As all unregenerate Men fail in the Principle, ſo they alſo fail in the End of all their Actions.* For ſuch as a Man's Principle is, ſuch alſo will be the End that he propounds. Water will naturally riſe no higher than the Spring-head from whence it flows; ſo neither can any Man's Principles carry him out to act above themſelves. Why now as the love of God is the moving Principle to a Regenerate Man, ſo the Glory of God in his determining End. And ſo on the contrary, ſelf-love being the only Principle of an Unregenerate Man's Actions, Self-preſervation muſt be his utmoſt End into which he reſolves all. And becauſe God hath in his Word of Truth threatned deſtruction to thoſe that perſevere in ſin, and promiſed an unconceiveable reward of Glory to Obedience; ſelf-love here interpoſeth, and excites to the external Duties of Religion, that thereby it may eſcape the one and obtain the other. Now herein ſelf-love is very kind, for by propounding himſelf as his end, he loſeth the reward ſought for, and all his ſervices become only ſins. I would not be thought to condemn this kind of ſelf-ſeeking in Religion, for I know 'tis one of the greateſt Incentives to Obedience. Moſes *had reſpect to the recompence of reward*, and encouraged himſelf by it; yea, *Chriſt*, a greater than *Moſes*, the *Apoſtle* ſaith, *He had an eye upon the glory ſet before him*, to encourage him to undergo thoſe Humiliations and Abaſements that he was ſent into the World for; only when a Man's ſelf-concernments ſtand ſo full in his Eye that he cannot look either beſides them, or above them, then doth ſuch ſelf-ends become ſinful in themſelves, and turn alſo every action that is directed by them into ſin. Now here then let every carnal unchanged ſinner ſee the ſad and deplorable condition he is in, what little ground he hath to hope for Heaven and Salvation: Alas, ſinners, how do you hope to be ſaved? The only way that leads to Heaven and Happineſs is Faith and good Works; not ſuch equivocal good Works as moſt Men rely upon, but ſuch genuine ones as have the love of God for their Principle, and the glory of God for their End; and ſuch no unregenerate Man can produce, all the reſt are but traſh and lumber, and ſuch as will rather burthen than crown your Souls at the laſt Day. Think of it ſeriouſly, unleſs the Foundation be laid in a real change of Grace wrought upon your Souls, all that afterwards you build is but Hay and Stubble, ſuch as will only add Fuel to your unquenchable Fire; think not therefore as many ignorant, ſottiſh People do, of ballancing your evil Deeds by your good; for if you are in an unregenerate, in a natural ſtate and condition, if the ſame that you came into the World, there is nothing but what is evil and ſinful. And it is very ſad to conſider, that when God and your own Conſciences ſhall come at the laſt Day to take a review of our Lives; thoſe Lives that have been full of Actions, perhaps for Forty, Fifty, or Threeſcore Years together, and they ſhall be found to be but one continued Series of wickedneſs, one ſin ſucceeding another without the leaſt gap made in it by one good and holy Work. This is the condition of every unregenerate Sinner; and therefore if ever you hope for Heaven endeavour for Regeneration, for this change is abſolutely neceſſary for the raiſing of any of your Actions from being ſinful to be holy.

2. *An aiming at themſelves in all that they do.*

Fourthly, *Heaven in Scripture is promiſed to be given by way of Inheritance, and no otherwiſe:* So you have it in *Acts* 20. 32. and in *Acts* 26. 18. and in many other places. Now an Inheritance denotes Sonſhip; God will not give that Inheritance unto any but to thoſe that are his own Children. We are all of us naturally Strangers to God, and before we can become his Children we muſt be *New Born*, and by this *New Birth* it is that we are made Heirs of Glory, and Coheirs with Jeſus Chriſt our Elder Brother, and therefore Regeneration is abſolutely neceſſary unto Eternal Salvation.

4. *Heaven is promiſed only by way of Inheritance.*

Fifthly, *It is not for the honour of God to beſtow Heaven and Happineſs upon ſinful Men without they are changed.* The Glory of God is chiefly manifeſted in our Regeneration: Should he admit Sinners into Heaven, many of his Attributes would ſuffer thereby; his Truth would ſuffer in ſaving thoſe whom in his Word he had doomed to Damnation: His Juſtice would ſuffer; for if he ſhould ſave all wicked Men, and leave none as Veſſels of Wrath, what would become of the Glory of his Juſtice and Severity? If he ſhould ſave ſome, and not all, this would be partiality, ſeeing all according to the terms of the Goſpel are equally liable to Damnation. His Holineſs would ſuffer alſo, in the admitting of unholy and impure Men to inhabit for ever before him, who is of purer Eyes than to behold ſin on Earth with approbation, and therefore certainly will not behold ſin in Heaven with countenance.

5. *It is not for the Honour of God to beſtow Heaven upon Men without a change.*

6. *The Perſons and the Performances of unregenerate Men are diſpleaſing unto God while they are ſuch.*

Sixthly and laſtly, *Both the Perſons and the Performances of Unregenerate Men, while they are ſuch, are diſpleaſing unto God, and therefore this change is neceſſary in order unto Salvation.* Certainly if God neither love what they are, nor what they do, it will be impoſſible for them to enter into Heaven, while God keeps it Garriſon'd againſt them, unleſs they can break down the Eternal Fence, and take it by another force, than ever *John Baptiſt*'s Hearers did. Now that God neither loves unregenerate Mens Perſons nor Performances, neither what they are nor what they do, is clear.

1. *God loves their Perſons.*

Firſt, *He loves not what they are, their Perſons are diſpleaſing to him:* Neither is this diſpleaſure founded upon a ſmall diſlike, but upon that moſt bitter and implacable Paſſion of Hatred in *Pſal.* 5. 5. *Thou hateſt all workers of iniquity.* And this hatred is reciprocal, for as wicked Men are hated by God, ſo they are haters of God, *Rom.* 1. 23. *Haters of God.* Hence the *Apoſtle* tells us expreſly, *they that are in the fleſh*, that is, in their unregenerate ſtate, *cannot pleaſe God*, in *Rom.* 8. 8. and he gives the reaſon of it in Verſe 8. *Becauſe*, ſays he, *the carnal mind is enmity againſt God.* Thus you ſee the oppoſition is mutual, and amounts to no leſs than a hatred on both parts, both on God's and on the Sinners. Why now, though Anger be for the preſent a ſharp and eager Paſſion, yet is it ſoon pacified by a retribution of wrong for wrong, but Hatred is irreconcileable, and reſts ſatisfied in nothing leſs than in the utter deſtruction of its Object. And thus wicked Men hate God, and wiſh at leaſt there were none, and do what they can to dethrone him: And God again ſo hates them that he reſolves he will have no peace with them, *There is no peace, ſaith my God, to the wicked*, but will purſue them to deſtruction. Why now let Sinners ſeriouſly conſider that they are mortally hated by that God who is of Infinite Power, and can when he pleaſeth bring upon them the dreadful effects of his hatred. And is it like that ſuch Men ſhall ever enter into Heaven, where there is ſuch an hatred armed with power to their juſt and eternal perdition? Are you ſtronger than God, or are you more mighty than the Almighty? Can you reverſe his Decree, whereby he hath doomed all the wicked unto Hell? Or can you compel him to make other terms with you than he hath already propounded in his unalterable Word? Can you diſtreſs him to ſurrender Heaven to you? Or can you break down the Walls and Ramparts of Heaven, and burſt open thoſe Everlaſting Gates that he hath ſhut and ſealed againſt you? Alas! Then what are all your hopes? Whereto is it that you truſt? Do you think at laſt to enter Heaven as Friends, who now daily aſſault the God of Heaven as Enemies? Aſſure your ſelves, as long as God is able to hold it out againſt you, not one wicked Wretch ſhall ever enter there. When the *Angels* rebelled God chaſed whole Millions of them out of Heaven, and do you think that ever he will admit rebellious Men into Heaven? No, doubtleſs the ſame hatred that caſt them out headlong, and purſues them down to the Pit of Hell, will alſo purſue all the wicked of the World thither, who are as well Enemies to God as to the *Devils* themſelves. Let all unrenewed Sinners therefore ſadly and ſeriouſly conſider with themſelves what hopes they have of Heaven, ſince God counts them for Enemies, and profeſſeth that he hates them, nay, not only hates them, but hates the very places where they are for their ſakes; ſo you have it in *Amos* 6. 8. *The Lord hath ſworn by himſelf, I abhor the excellency of* Jacob, *and I hate his Palaces.* And ſhould wicked Men come into Heaven, Heaven would become a hateful Seat unto God.

2. *God hates the Performances of wicked Men.*

Secondly, *As their Perſons are hateful, ſo alſo all their Performances are diſpleaſing unto God.* This follows upon the former, for where the Perſons is not accepted the Services cannot, and therefore it is ſaid, *Gen.* 4. 4. *The Lord had reſpect to* Abel, *and to his Offering*; firſt to his Perſon, and then to his Service; if your Perſons be hateful to God, never expect that your Performances ſhould be acceptable; and the reaſon is clear, becauſe there is but one way of acceptance for our Selves, and for our Duties, and that is thorough Chriſt. As the beſt are not in this Life free from the remainders of Sin, ſo neither are their beſt Duties free from the mixtures of Sin; now theſe ſinful mixtures are ſo manifeſt unto God, that he muſt needs reject and abominate them, were it not that Chriſt, into whoſe Hands they are firſt delivered, ſeparates thoſe mixtures, and fills up all their defects by the redundancy of his own Merits. But the Duties of wicked men are not ſo accepted in Chriſt; audacious and bold are they as to come before God without a Mediator to preſent them; and that God who is pleaſed with nothing but what is abſolutely perfect, if not ſo in it ſelf, yet at leaſt in the Mediation of his Son, ſeeing ſo many faults and flaws in the ſervices

vices of Wicked Men, cannot but caſt them back as dung and filth in their Faces; for God accepting of nothing but what is perfect, and the ſervices of wicked Men wanting the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt, they come up before God as unſavoury ſtenches inſtead of ſweet ſmells. This is the fruitleſs iſſue of all wicked Mens Duties, and therefore the *Apoſtle* tells us in *Heb.* 11. *That without Faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God*, becauſe Faith is that Grace that unites and makes us one with Chriſt, and gives us an Intereſt in thoſe Merits that alone can procure acceptance for our ſelves, and for our ſervices; but now wicked ond unregenerate Men have not this Faith, and therefore nothing that they do is well pleaſing unto God; they may for the good works that they do be rewarded poſſibly with Temporal Bleſſings, and certainly with the mitigation of future Puniſhment, but the Reward of Eternal Life belongs to none but to thoſe whoſe ſervices are accepted thorough him to whom their Perſons are united. See here then the miſerable Shipwrack of all the hopes of carnal Men, who regard not what they are, but look only, and that too with a too favourable Eye upon what they do, and with the boaſting *Phariſee* make large Inventories of their good Works; they *Faſt* twice a Week, and *give Alms* often, they are frequent in Prayer, and conſtant at the Ordinances, and therefore they think certainly they ſhall enter into Heaven with the forwardeſt; but alas, what is all this? God reſpects what thou art as well as what thou doſt; and if all your Duties proceed from an unchanged unrenewed Heart, he neither accepts them, nor regards them: Thou perhaps thinkeſt thou haſt laid up a great Maſs of Treaſure for thy Soul againſt the time to come, whereas at the laſt day it will be found to be but great heaps of dung and filth; nay, let me tell you, ſhould you pray till your Knees took root in the Earth, could you nail your Eyes to Heaven, could you melt your Hearts into Tears, and vaniſh away into ſight, yea, and ſpend every moment of your Lives far better than ever you ſpent the beſt, and yet ſhould you remain unſanctified and unchanged, all this would be of no account with God, but inſtead of an *Euge, Well done good and faithful Servant*, you would meet with that unexpected demand, *Who hath required theſe things at your hands?* Conſider ſeriouſly and ſadly of this, you who think that you have many Duties upon the File in Heaven, as ſo many Evidences of your Right and Title unto Heaven; why now as you would not have all theſe to be loſt, and utterly in vain, ſo look to it that they proceed from Hearts that are truly ſanctified and renewed, without which they will be of no avail at all in God's eſteem. And ſo much for the Demonſtrations of this Point.

SERMON XIII.

JOHN iii. 5.

Jeſus anſwered, verily, verily I ſay unto thee, except a Man be born of Water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.

I Come now to make ſome Uſe and Application of what hath been ſpoken concerning this great and neceſſary Doctrine of Regeneration; it is not a particular Doctrine that concerns ſome Perſons, and not others; upon this lies the Eternal Salvation of the whole World.

And therefore in the firſt place, *Seeing it is impoſſible ever to obtain Life Eternal without Regeneration, or the New-birth, let us then by this try our Title to Heaven.* Put it ſeriouſly to the *queſtion*, Are we indeed Born again? Are we become the Children of God, ſuch as have a Right and Title to the purchaſed Inheritance? The *queſtion* is of vaſt concernment, and a miſtake in this, either hazards our Souls by preſumptuous Conceits that we are the Children of God, when yet we are Strangers and Enemies to him, or deſtroys our Comfort by ſiniſter Apprehenſions that we are Aliens and Outcaſts, when yet we are begotten again by his Spirit, at leaſt to the grounds of a lively hope. I ſhall endeavour to manage this uſe of Trial;

1. *Uſe is for Examination.*

First,

First, *By laying down ſome particular Attainments of Carnal Men that poſſibly they may miſtake for Evidence of their Regeneration.*

Secondly, *By laying down ſome Particulars that the Scripture hath made infallible Marks and Teſts of a Regenerate Perſon.*

As to the firſt of theſe, the uſual miſtakes of ſuch whoſe Convictions ever awakened them to a Self-examination, are in that they rely upon works preparatory to Regeneration for the work of Regeneration it ſelf; for as in natural Generation there is ſome previous diſpoſition of Matter before there is the Exiſtence of a Form; ſo in Regeneration, commonly, though not always, there are ſome preparations of Soul by the common works of the Spirit before the New Creature is formed in it. Why now by Regeneration there is a Fivefold Change wrought.

Miſtakes about Regeneration diſcovered.

1. First, *Upon the Underſtanding or Judgment, by Enlightning of it.*
2. Secondly, *Upon the Conſcience, by Awakening and Paciſying it.*
3. Thirdly, *Upon the Affections, by Spiritualizing them.*
4. Fourthly, *Upon the Will, by Converting it.*
5. Laſtly, *Upon the Life and Converſatiou, by Reforming of it.*

Why now from each of theſe Particulars carnal Men may collect miſtaking Evidences for their Regeneration; and theſe I ſhall endeavour to diſcover to you.

1. First, *Touching the Mind or Underſtanding that may be greatly irradiated with a clear and ſparkling knowledge of Spiritual Objects, when yet the Soul is not truly Regenerated.* It is true, as in the Creation of the World, light was numbred amongſt the firſt of God's Works; ſo in this New Creation, the firſt work of the Spirit of God is to ſhed abroad a heavenly light into the Underſtanding. And therefore we have this firſt in order in the Commiſſion that Chriſt gives unto St. *Paul*, *Acts* 26. 18. *I ſend thee to the Gentiles to open their Eyes, and to turn them from darkneſs to light, and* then it follows, *from the power of Satan unto God.* But yet notwithſtanding there is an illumination about ſpiritual things that may gild and beautifie the Underſtandings of unregenerate Men, who like the *Toad* may be full of Poyſon, though ſhe hath a precious Stone in her Head. The *Apoſtle* lays down this as one of the firſt Attainments that unregenerate Men may have, and yet be Apoſtates. *Heb.* 6. 4. *For it is impoſſible for thoſe who were once enlightned, if they fall away to renew them again by Repentance.* They may not only have a deep knowledge of Goſpel Myſteries, ſo as to ſee the whole Compages and Concatenation of the Doctrine of Chriſt, and be able to unfold them alſo unto others; but alſo have particular Diſcoveries of the glory and beauty that is in thoſe things. See it in *Balaam*'s Extaſie, *Numb.* 24. 6. *How amiable are thy Tents, O* Jacob, *and thy Tabernacles, O* Iſrael! Where beſides that *Prophetical Illumination* which was darted into him immediately by the Spirit of God, he had alſo a glorious diſcovery made to him of the beauty and excellency of the ſpiritual ſtate of the *Church*; it was not only a view of the Order and Diſcipline of the *Iſraelitiſh* Camp, that made him break forth into high Admirations, but alſo a ſeeing them ranged under Jeſus Chriſt the Captain of their Salvation, which was an extraordinary Illumination to ſuch an unregenerate wretched Man as *Balaam* was. Such diſcoveries of the moſt ſpiritual Objects carnal Hearts may have made unto them; they may ſee their loſt Eſtate by Nature, the way of Recovery by Grace, the Suitableneſs of Chriſt to their Souls, the Riches of his Grace, the Freeneſs of his Love, the Readineſs of his Heart to ſave them, the Deſireableneſs of Happineſs, and the Beauties of Holineſs; and yet for all this remain ſtill in a carnal and unregenerate ſtate. Now ſuch Illumination of carnal Men falls ſhort of being a good evidence of Regeneration in two Particulars.

In the Underſtanding, which may be enlightened in wicked and carnal Men.

Acts 26. 18.

Heb. 6. 4.

Num 24. 6.

The Illumination of carnal Man is not Regeneration.

1. First, *Becauſe it is a barren light.* That Illumination that is ſaving is not only light but influence alſo. As the light of the Sun doth not only ſerve to paint the World, and varniſh over the variety and beauty of the ſeveral Creatures that are in it, but by the graceful heat that its influences inſinuates and ſoaks into them doth alſo refreſh them; and as its light diſcovers their Beauty, ſo its influences encreaſeth them. So ſaving Illumination not only illuſtrates the Soul by its light, but by its congealing influences nouriſheth it, draws Sap into it, and Fruit from it; but the illumination of wicked Men is but a barren light, and hath no influences in it to make the Soul to grow and bring forth the Fruits of Holineſs.

Becauſe it is a barren light.

Secondly,

Secondly, *It is an ineffectual idle light.* The Illumination that is saving is also Transforming, in 2 *Cor.* 3. 18. *We all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory.* If that a Beam of the *Sun* fall upon a *Looking-glass*, it not only makes the Glass have a greater and a more glorious light, but it represents the image of the *Sun* in it; but let it beat never so clearly against a Mud-wall, though it doth enlighten it, yet it leaves no *Image* upon it: So truly the Illumination that is saving, not only irradiates but transforms. If you look upon the *Sun* when it is in its full strength, the light thereof will imprint the shape and image on the Eye, so that look where you will still the appearance of the *Sun* is visibly before you; so every sight that a true Christian hath of the *Sun of Righteousness* makes a parallel, another *Sun* in his Soul. But the Illumination of wicked Men only enlightens, but doth not change them; their understandings may be irradiated with glorious discoveries of God, and Christ, and the Things of another World, but this doth not transform them into the *Image* and Likeness of these Things. The Illumination of a Regenerate Person is like light that breaks thorough the Air in an instant, and turns all the vast Body thoroughout into light: But in a carnal Heart it is but like light falling upon *Jet* or *Ebony*, that makes it shining, but changeth not its hue and blackness; yea, it is with them as it is with Men that lie long tanning in the *Sun*, who though they are enlightned by the *Sun*, yet they are also made black and swarthy by it; why so, though Men may have the light of the knowledge of Jesus Christ shining strongly upon them, yet that very light tanns their Souls, makes them more black and deformed, and aggravates their sins: So then thou mayest have as much notional knowledge of God, and of the Mysteries of the Gospel, as any Regenerate Person whatever, yea, and much more; and yet for all this have no good Evidence of thy Regeneration; for this knowledge is not therefore saving because it is clear, but because it is influential and transforming, and that is the *first* thing which many mistake for Regeneration, because they are enlightned.

2. *Because it is an ineffectual idle light.*

Secondly, *As to the Conscience, neither the Peace, nor yet the trouble of Conscience, are good evidences of a Man's Regeneration.* 2.

First, *Not the Peace of Conscience:* For though where this peace is true, it is always an effect of Grace, and therefore we have them so often coupled together, as *Rom.* 1. 3. and 1 *Cor.* 1. 3. *Grace be to you, and peace from God the Father.* Yet there is that which looks very like *Peace of Conscience*, though it is not so in reality, and that is a supine presumption, a carnal stupidity and obstinacy of Conscience in Men that never had been troubled with the sight of sin, or the sence of wrath, nor ever had any serious thoughts of their vileness by it, but it is with them as it was with those presumptuous sinners in *Deut.* 29. 19. *Bless themselves in their hearts, saying, they shall have peace, though they walk on in the imaginations of their hearts, adding drunkenness unto thirst.* Now this Peace is founded only upon a bold and confident perswasion without any Examination of their interest in God, and of his love and favour to them: God is infinitely Merciful and Gracious, and he will exalt his Mercy above all his Name; and therefore as he hath exalted his power in creating and sustaining of us, will he not also much more exalt his Mercy in saving of us? Thus as Madmen often fancy themselves to be *Kings*, or some great Persons, when indeed they are wretched and miserable Spectacles; so do these spiritually Mad-men, they not only with the *Devil* look upon the glory of this World, and say, *All is mine*, but they look upon the glory of Heaven it self, and say presumptuously, all this is theirs; this is a spiritual Frenzy that makes them speak great matters, of which they have no interest in at all; yea, this presumption is often accompanied with a fiducial, or rather a confidential Application to themselves in particular of the Love of God, and of the Merit of Jesus Christ, so as to appropriate them unto themselves as their own: Why now this is the highest act of Faith when it flowers up into Assurance, to say with St. *Thomas*, *My Lord and my God*, yet through a meer wretchless security Sinners take it for granted that God is theirs, though they never examined their Evidences, and scarce know upon what terms God hath promised to become ours; to such I may say as our *Saviour* doth, *God is not the God of the dead, but of the living*; he is not the Father of such who live in and love their wickedness; it were a dishonour to him to be a Father to such Children. As we must not discourage the broken and contrite Spirit, but embolden him to appropriate Chirist to himself in particular; so we must let wicked Men know withal, that they call God their God and Father

1. *Peace of Conscience is no good Evidence of Regeneration.*

Father in preſumption, and in the ſecurity of their Hearts only; and their diſappointment will be ſad, when inſtead of finding him their God and Father, they ſhall only find him their Judge. Now it appears that this Peace of a carnal Man's Conſcience is only from a deep ſpiritual Security, becauſe if you come to examine the grounds of it, what is it that ſuch plead, only the goodneſs of their Hearts; they bleſs God their Hearts are good, and in this they truſt, and of this they boaſt and glory; though they live in the conſtant neglect of holy Duties, and though they wallow in the filth of cuſtomary ſins, yet ſtill they boaſt of this, that they have good Hearts: But this is a meer ſelf-deluſion, for it is as utterly impoſſible that the Heart ſhould be good where the Life is wicked and prophane, as that a good Root ſhould bring forth evil Fruit. Such a ſecure Peace is no good Evidence that this great change is wrought upon the Heart by Regeneration, but is only founded upon meer obſtinacy and careleſneſs of the great Concernments of Mens Everlaſting Salvation.

2. *Trouble of Conſcience is no good evidence of Regeneration.*

Secondly, *As Peace of Conſcience is not, ſo neither is the Trouble of Conſcience a good evidence of a Man's Regeneration.* A dull Lethargick Conſcience that hath lain long inſenſible under the commiſſion of groſs ſins, may at length by ſtrong Convictions be ſtartled, awakened, and troubled with the ſence of ſin, and frighted with the ſight of Wrath, and yet all this while remain an impure and polluted Conſcience. God may ſet an unregenerate Man upon the Wrack, break all his Bones, and give him ſome foretaſtes of that Cup of trembling that he muſt for ever drink of; and as he made himſelf a *Devil* Incarnate by his ſins, ſo God may make his Conſcience an *Hell* Incarnate with his Torments. You hear *Cain*, that Primitive Reprobate crying out, *My puniſhment is greater than I can bear.* Nor could *Judas* find any other way to choak his Conſcience than with a *Halter.* Though in a courſe of ſinning Conſcience may be dead and ſeared, yet God will awaken this ſleepy Conſcience, and when it ſhall then ſee that it hath ſlept only on the top of a Mask, and on the brink of Hell, and that it is falling into it irrecoverably, what fears and terrors will this cramp it with? And yet it may leave it ſhort of true Grace; under the horrors of Sin, and yet ſhort of Grace; torment it here, and yet poſſibly be for ever tormented hereafter. Take heed therefore of collecting evidences of Regeneration only from the trouble of your Conſciences, which deceives many who take up with preparatory Convictions, which do often vaniſh away without leaving any ſaving effects of true Grace. Many if their Conſciences are awakened to admoniſh, reprove, and threaten them, they think this a good Argument of the goodneſs of their Conditions. St. *Paul* ſaith of himſelf in his unregenerate State, *Touching the righteouſneſs which is of the law he was blameleſs*; ſo ſtrict and rigid an obſerver was he of the Law, that his Conſcience had little to accuſe him of; and will you build your hopes upon a worſe Foundation than he did in his unregeneracy? Not that Conſcience hath nothing to accuſe you of, but that it doth accuſe you; not that you are not guilty, but that you are ſenſible of your guilt: What is this more than Sinners ſhall find in Hell? It is a great and an inſufferable part of thoſe Torments to be purſued with the ſtinging regret of an enraged Conſcience, which is that *Worm that never dies*; and will you take that for an evidence of Grace that muſt be for ever the puniſhment of Sin? And yet do not many of us reſt only on this that Conſcience is awakened, frighting us in ſin, and deterring us from ſin? Thoſe ſins that before we could ſwallow down without ſtraining at, and digeſt without nauceating, now Conſcience riſeth at them, and we dare not commit them for a World; and thoſe Duties that formerly we lived in the neglect of, Conſcience now ſtraitly enjoyns, and we dare not for a World neglect them; thoſe ſins that heretofore we committed quietly, Conſcience now returns upon us with torment, and is not this a work of Grace? Is not this Regeneration? No, it is not, if there be no more; all this only proves Conſcience to be awakened, but not to be ſanctified; Conſcience may be defiled, though it be not feared. A filthy puddle may be ſtirred and troubled as well as a clear ſtream; and Conſcience may work horros and terrors in that Soul where the Spirit of God never yet wrought Grace; ſo that you ſee we cannot argue from the Peace of Conſcience, nor yet from the Trouble of Conſcience, that we are in a ſtate of Regeneration, which is of abſolute neceſſity to obtain Heaven.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, *As to the Affections, thoſe ſweet motions of the Heart, though they are uſully much relied on, yet even theſe Affections unto holy and heavenly Objects are not always infallible evidence of a Man's Regeneration.* In *Mat.* 13. 20. there are ſome ſaid there to *receive the Word with joy*; and yet that they were unregenerate is clear, for it is ſaid *they had no Root.* And ſo *John* 5. 35. Chriſt tells the *Jews* that they did rejoice for a ſeaſon in the light of *John Baptiſt*, that is, in his Doctrine and Preaching; and *Herod* alſo is ſaid to hear him gladly: So that you ſee theſe Affections of delight in holy Duties and Ordinances, they may be in thoſe that are yet without a ſaving work of Grace. And as there may be theſe Affections of joy and delight, ſo alſo of ſorrow for ſin: Thus *Mat.* 27. 3. it is ſaid expreſly of *Judas*, that he *repented himſelf*; and *Ahab*'s humiliation was ſo great, that God took ſpecial notice of it, 1 *Kings* 2. 21. Why now all theſe Affections are but Temporary and Vaniſhing, and they may be excited from ſeveral advantages that holy things have in them to commend them to the hearts of carnal and unregenerate Men. 3. *Affections to holy and heavenly Objects are no evidences of Regeneration. For,*

First, *Sometimes the very Novelty and Strangeneſs of them may affect them.* Novelty uſually breeds delight, which longer Cuſtom and Acquaintance ſomewhat abates: And this may be given as a true reaſon why ſoon after Converſion new Converts Affections are more ſtrongly drawn out in the ways of God than afterwards when he is a grown and ſettled Chriſtian; his Affections then may not have that full Springtide as when he was but a *Novice* in Chriſtianity, the reaſon is, becauſe Novelty in that way and courſe that he is entred upon doth naturally affect him, beſide the real deſireableneſs of the things themſelves; and this alſo may ſatisfie us, though many have turned aſide from the Truth as it is in Jeſus, and from the ways of his Worſhip that he hath appointed, do yet boaſt that they have in thoſe new ways found more new Comfort and ſweet Affections than they did before; yet is not this becauſe that thoſe ways have any thing in them that really yields more Comfort and Delight, but only becauſe they are new ways, and new things will for the preſent affect; after ſome continuance in thoſe ways, they find that joy and delight that they ſpake of to flag, and then they ſeek out other new ways, and commend them as much, having as great delight in them; and it is no wonder, for new ways will ſtir up new Affections. And thus may the Affections of carnal unregenerate Men be ſtirred up by their entring upon the Profeſſion and external Practice of Religion, becauſe of the Novelty of it to them. 1. *Sometimes Novelty may affect.*

Secondly, *Good Affections may be ſtirred in us from the affecting nature of ſpiritual Objects, for ſpiritual Objects may affect us in a natural way.* Who can read the Hiſtory of Chriſt's Paſſion without being affected with ſorrow for all that ſorrow that he underwent for us? He hath a Heart certainly harder than a Rock that can think of the Agonies, Reproaches, cruel Scourgings, and curſed Death, that ſo Innocent and ſo Excellent a Perſon as Chriſt was, underwent; and that for Sinners alſo, and not be moved and affected with grief and compaſſion to him: And yet it is poſſible theſe Affections may be deceivable, and move no other ways than they would do in the reading of ſome *Tragical Story* in a Romance; to read ſome ſad and diſmal Story will naturally affect the Heart with grief and ſorrow: And ſo it may be with the Truths revealed in the Goſpel, upon thy reading of them they may affect thee according as thoſe Truths are; if they promiſe Bleſſings, they may affect thee with joy; if they threaten, and thou readeſt ſad and diſmal Events, they may affect thee with ſorrow, and yet all this may be only from the nature of the Objects, and not from any Divine Affections that are in thy Soul. 2. *Good Affections may be moved from the affecting nature of ſpiritual Objects.*

Thirdly, *The Affections may be ſtirred from or by the Artificial Rhetorick of others, by the Abilities of the Miniſters whom you hear.* And thus God tells the *Prophet*, *Ezek.* 33. 32. *Thou art unto them as a lovely ſong, as one that hath a pleaſant voice, and canſt play well upon an inſtrument.* They may have their Judgments pleaſed with the Learning ſhewed in a Sermon, and with the well methodizing of it, and their Affections may be pleaſed with the Oratory, and powerful Utterance of it. Now though theſe are good helps to ſpiritual Affections, yet are they not good tryals of them. 3. *The Affections may be ſtirred by Artificial Rhetorick, or by the Miniſters Abilities.*

Fourthly, *Pride and ſelf-ſeeking may in the performance of Duties excite good Affections.* And Men may be much deceived in this particular, as in Prayer they may think they are affected with the things that they pray for, when as poſſibly their Affections are moved only with the manner of their Prayer, with their Words, with that copious, free and admirable Gift they have of expreſſion; whereas a contrite Heart 4. *Pride and Self-ſeeking Duties may excite good Affections.*

that is moved with true ſpiritual Affections, may not be ſo adorned with ſuch an admirable Gift of Expreſſion. As the ground that is fulleſt of precious Mines hath leaſt Graſs growing upon it, ſo is it many times with the Children of God in holy Duties, where the Heart is moſt full of Grace, and where there are many precious Affections ſtirring in it towards God, yet there are the leaſt flouriſhings of expreſſions in their words; ſo that you ſee you cannot gather the truth of Regenerating Grace from the ſtrong workings of your Affections, which are very deceitful, even about ſpiritual things.

4. *Every change of the Will is not this Regeneration.*

Fourthly, *Every change wrought upon the Will, is not an infallible evidence of Regeneration.* It is indeed the thorough change of the Will in which this great work principally doth conſiſt. This is the firſt Principle of Spiritual Life, without which whatſoever other change is wrought upon us, is no more than to ſet the Hand of the Watch right to the Hour when the Spring is broken. The Will is by the *Philoſopher* called the commanding and ſwaying Faculty of the Soul, which controuls the Affections and inferiour Faculties, and makes them obey its Inclination; ſo that ſuch as the Will is ſuch is the Man. And therefore the *Scripture* in ſetting forth the twofold eſtate of Man, of Nature, and of Grace, doth it by ſhewing the temper of their Wills, what their Wills are. Unregenerate Men are deſcribed by their wilfulneſs, *John* 5. 40. *Ye will not come unto me*, ſays our Saviour, *that you might have life.* And the Regenerate Men are deſcribed by their willingneſs, *Pſalm.* 110. 3. *Thy people ſhall be a willing people in the day of thy power.* Now here I ſhall endeavour two things.

Firſt, *To ſhew you after what manner the Spirit of God works this renewing change upon the Will.*

Secondly, *To ſhew you what other changes may be wrought upon it that are not good evidences of a Man's Renovation.*

After what manner the Spirit of God worketh this renewing change on the Will.

For the firſt, *After what manner the Spirit of God works this renewing change on the Will.* You muſt know there are two ways whereby God doth effectually change the Heart of a Sinner, and they are Moral Perſwaſions, and Phyſical Determinations, or real Efficiency, which is nothing elſe but God's All-powerful Grace, whereby he doth immediately turn the bent and inclination of the Will towards himſelf. And both theſe always concur in this great change of the Will.

First, *God doth convincingly perſwade us of our own vileneſs, and of the emptineſs of all thoſe vain things that our Deſires are ſo eagerly purſuing.* And on the other hand, he clearly repreſents to us the great excellency of himſelf and of his ways; that he is the greateſt good we can enjoy, and that there is no other way of enjoying, but by loving and ſerving of him; to do this he makes uſe of Moral Perſwaſions working upon our Reaſon by cogent and prevailing Arguments, and then diffuſeth ſuch a heavenly ſweetneſs through the Heart as makes it diſreliſh all thoſe fulſome delights of Sin, that would ſeparate us from that Infinite Good with which they can hold no Compariſon: So that finding more true Delight in God and his ways, more charming and alluring Joy than ever before we did in ſenſual Pleaſures, we are thereby carried forth to them by an infallible, yet altogether a free, voluntary, and amorous Motion, and this is done by the real and immediate Efficiency of the Spirit of God upon the Will it ſelf; and this operation of the Spirit of God upon the Will is ſo ſweetly attempted to the native liberty of the Will, that it would be a pain and torment to the Soul to be ſeparated from that God whom now its underſtanding apprehends, and its will claſps about as its chief and only good. Here you ſee is both a Moral ſwaſion, and a Real determination of the will in the work of Regeneration; God really terminates it by the efficacious touch of his own Grace, whereby he powerfully turns the bent and inclination of it to himſelf, which before ſtood to Sin and Vanity; and that this might be no infringement upon the Will's Prerogative in acting freely, at the ſame time he morally perſwades it, repreſenting himſelf as the beſt and moſt ſatisfying *Object* for all its inclinations to center in. And thus the efficacy of Divine Grace, and the liberty of Man's Will, do fully accord in this work of Regeneration, which ſome have thought to ſtand at an irreconcileable diſtance one from another; for the freedom of the Will doth not conſiſt in its indifferency to act or not to act, either to love and fear God, or not to love and fear him; for otherwiſe the *Saints* and *Angels* in Heaven that are under that bleſſed neceſſity that they cannot but love God, ſhould not then love him freely: But the liberty of the Will conſiſts in the Will's acting upon rational grounds, which by how much the more

more ſtrong the grounds and reaſons are that the Will acts by, ſo much the more do they in a ſort neceſſitate the Will to act, and yet by ſo much the more free is the Will in its actings; ſo that here that the liberty of the Will may not violate the certainty of God's Purpoſe and Decree, he changeth it by the power of his irreſiſtible Grace, and yet that this irreſiſtible Grace may not violate the liberty of the Will, he perſwades it by ſuch powerful and rational Arguments that it ſhould not act freely if it ſhould diſſent from it. Though God uſeth an Infinite Power in Regenerating and Converting of a Soul, yet he uſeth no violence, he ſubdues the Will, but he doth not compel it: This is that victorious Grace, that doth not more overcome a Sinner's reſiſtances than it doth his prejudices; it overcomes all oppoſitions by its own irreſiſtible Power, and it overcomes all prejudices by its attracting ſweetneſs; and when it brings a Sinner to ſubmit to God, it makes him apprehend alſo that it is his chiefeſt happineſs and joy ſo to do. This is the ſweet nature of Regenerating Grace, and it is the ſame winning ſweetneſs that afterwards preſerves the Regenerate from a total *Apoſtacy* from Grace; for though there is a conſtant ſupply of Grace to keep them that they ſhall never certainly draw back to perdition, yet withal their own freedom is ſuch that they may, if they will; but how can they Will it, ſince the Will never inclines but to that which moſt pleaſeth it, and nothing pleaſeth a Regenerate and Sanctified Will ſo much as that Soveraign Good that comprehends in it all other good, and that is God himſelf? And thus you ſee how God diſpoſeth of the Will of Man in changing of it to himſelf, without conſtraining of it, turning it, as unforcibly ſo infallibly to himſelf, when he draws it by the ſweetneſs of his own Efficacious Inſpirations. And thus I have diſpatched the firſt particular, in ſhewing you after what manner the Spirit of God works this change on the Will, by perſwading it with rational Arguments that it cannot gainſay, and by overcoming it by his irreſiſtible Grace that it cannot oppoſe.

2. *What changes they are that may be wrought on the Will that are no Evidences of Regeneration.*

The Second particular is to ſhew you, *What other changes may be wrought upon the Will that are no good evidences of a Man's Renovation and Regeneration.*

1. *Unregenerate Men may have many faint velleities and wiſhes after Grace.*

And firſt, *An Unregenerate Man may have many faint velleities and wiſhes after Grace:* When he hears ſo much ſpoken of the Beauty and Excellency of Holineſs, he is convinced in his Judgment that theſe things are true, that without holineſs no Man ſhall ſee the Lord; and though now whilſt he is carnal, ſpiritual Duties are tedious and burdenſome to him, yet were he himſelf but ſpiritual, they would be pleaſing and delightful to him, that thoſe very pleaſures of ſin that now keep him off from cloſing with Grace, were he but renewed they would all be but an unſavoury thing to him; that that which he is afraid to loſe ſhould he turn to Chriſt, he would not value the loſs of were he but in Chriſt: When an unregenerate Man is fully convinced of this, it makes him break out into pangs of Affectionate wiſhes for Grace, *O that I were holy and gracious! O that my Heart were changed and renewed! O that I were better, and could do better!* Let every Man appeal to his own Conſcience, whether when he hath been convinced of the Excellency and Deſireableneſs of Holineſs, he hath not breathed forth ſuch wiſhes as theſe are? When you have ſeen a Chriſtian Eminent and Exemplary for Piety, have you not wiſhed your ſelf in his condition, not only in reſpect of his future Reward and Glory, but alſo in reſpect of his preſent Grace and Holineſs, and wiſh not only with *Balaam, to die the death of the Righteous, and that your latter end may be like his*, but *alſo to live the life of the Righteous?* And yet ſtill you continue, notwithſtanding theſe wiſhes, in the ſame ſinful courſe and ſtate as formerly you did: Now ſuch as theſe are, are but empty velleities, and idle wiſhings and wouldings. An unregenerate Man may poſſibly wiſh he were a *Saint*, as a Man may wiſh he were an *Angel*, but ſuch a Man's wiſhes put him not upon any ſerious and conſtant attempting of the means whereby he may become ſo; no Man that wiſhes he were an *Angel* is thereby put upon the means of making himſelf an *Angel*; ſo many wiſh they were Saints, but never put themſelves upon the uſe of thoſe means that might make them ſuch; generally their wiſhes and ſighs vaniſh away together, and the one leaves no more impreſſion on their Hearts, than the other doth in the Air; they run to the commiſſion of ſin even with a wiſh in their Mouths that they might not commit it, and they neglect Duty, and yet at the ſame time wiſh they were a performing of it, ſuch contradictory wiſhes have they; they wiſh themſelves holy, and yet they are willingly ſinful; they wiſh themſelves better, but yet they never endeavour and ſtrive after their own amendment; theſe

are idle and empty wiſhes and velleities, and are no good evidences of a Man's Regeneration.

2. *Unregenerate Men may have Reſolutions of amendment, and yet remain in a ſinful unrenewed ſtate and condition.*

Secondly, *An Unregenerate Man may not reſt in theſe ſlight wiſhes, but he may riſe up to reſolutions.* He may be reſolved Luſt ſhall no longer enſlave him, that the pleaſures of the World ſhall no longer bewitch him, that the difficulties of Religion ſhall no longer fright him, but that he will break thorough all, and that he will act like a Man, and like a Chriſtian: Such generous Reſolutions as theſe, Men that are in a ſinful eſtate may fortifie themſelves with; Grace they know they muſt have, or they muſt Eternally periſh; and they know withal, that God doth not uſe to be wanting to Mens endeavours, and they are peremptorily reſolved therefore that they will not be wanting to themſelves. See the ſame ſtrong Reſolutions in thoſe that came to enquire of the *Prophet Jeremy*, in *Jer.* 5. 6. *The Lord*, ſay they, *be a true and faithful witneſs betwixt us, that we will do according to all things, for which the Lord thy God ſhall ſend thee to us, whether it be good or evil, we will obey the voice of the Lord our God.* And yet in the next Chapter you find none ſo rebellious againſt God as theſe Men that had formerly made this Remonſtrance.

The Corruption of an unregenerate Man's Will appears.

But yet notwithſtanding theſe wiſhes and reſolutions, the Will of an unregerate Man falls ſhort of a ſaving change uſually in ſome of theſe Particulars.

1. *It is a fickle Will.*

First, *In that it is fickle and unconſtant.* Their deſires may ſometimes be violent and eager as if they would take Heaven by force, and wreſt Mercy out of the Hands of God; their Prayers may be ſo importunate and earneſt as if they would take no denial from God: But yet this Volitable Spirit is ſoon ſpent, and this full bent of their Souls ſoon ſlugs, and they return to the road of as dull and formal a Profeſſion as ever, and it may be to the commiſſion of the ſame foul groſs ſins as before. Such a Will as this, though at firſt it ſeems to hurry Men on apace, yet it ſoon tires and leave Men far ſhort of Grace. A Chriſtian's Race is not run at ſo many heats, but by a conſtant courſe and progreſs, ſtill getting ground upon Luſt, and approaching daily nearer to the Kingdom of God. It is with ſuch Men as I have ſometimes told you it is with the *Sea*, which when it is *Spring-tide* covers all its Shores, but when it *Ebbs* it diſcovers there is nothing but Sand, where it ſeemed to be a deep *Sea* before: So theſe ebbing and flowing Chriſtians diſcover plainly that there is nothing but a barren Sand at the bottom, they are *unſtable as water, and cannot excel*, as *Jacob* ſpeaks of *Reuben*, *Gen.* 49. 4. A Chriſtian is not made in a fit, nor is Regeneration wrought in a Paſſion, but it is a ſetled, ſolid and conſtant frame of Heart that brings a Man unto Chriſt, and makes him perſevere to be a New Creature.

2. *It is never univerſally changed.*

Secondly, *The Will of an Unregenerate Man is never univerſally changed, but he reſerves ſtill to himſelf ſome Luſt or other that he will not part with.* His reſolutions are ſuch as were the reſolutions of *Naaman* the *Syrian*, 2 Kings 5. 8. *Thy ſervant*, ſays he, *will henceforth offer neither burnt offerings nor ſacrifices to any other God but to the Lord, but in this thing the Lord pardon thy ſervant, that when my maſter goeth to worſhip in the houſe of* Rimmon, *and I bow my ſelf in the houſe of* Rimmon, *the Lord pardon thy ſervant in this thing.* So many peremptorily reſolve to forſake their ſins, but yet ſtill there is ſome one dear Luſt or other that they cry out with *Naaman*, *the Lord pardon thy ſervant in this thing*; all their other ſins they will willingly ſacrifice to Chriſt may they but be allowed to retain this one ſin. Why now that thin partition that any one ſin makes betwixt the Soul and Chriſt will keep it from ever cloſing with Chriſt; as if there be but a thin film betwixt the *Cyene* and the *Stock*, they can never be engrafted and grow together.

3. *It is very irrational.*

Thirdly, *The Will of an Unregenerate Man uſually it is very irrational.* He would obtain the end, but yet he will not uſe the means; Grace he would willingly have, but you cannot bring his averſe Will to cloſe with the performance of thoſe unpleaſing and irkſom Duties wherein God uſually beſtows Grace. Could they be holy with a wiſh, and ſuddenly metamorphoſed to other Men, none ſhould be better Chriſtians than themſelves; could they enter into Heaven by being willing to have it, none ſhould ſhine higher in Glory than they; but when ſo much hard and unpleaſing work muſt be done firſt that they may be Regenerate, and then after that they are Regenerate to perfect them for Glory, they look upon theſe things at a great diſtance and afar off, and ſo they ſit down with idle wiſhes, far ſhort of Grace and Glory.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, *The Will of an Unregenerate Man uſually it is a general not a particular Will.* If God ſhould ask them, *Sinners*, what would you do to be ſaved? O any thing, every thing, ſay they; why leave off ſuch and ſuch a ſin, perform ſuch and ſuch Duties, why, yes, Lord, they will do any thing but this Duty, or leave any thing but that ſin; juſt ſo is it with many Men, they will do any thing, every thing in general, but bring it down to particulars, to the doing of this or that Duty, or to the leaving of this or that Sin, and then they are willing to do juſt nothing. And thus you ſee how far the Will it ſelf may be wrought upon in Unregenerate Men, and what it is that uſually hinders this change from being a thorough work of Regeneration. 4. *It is a general Will.*

Fifthly and laſtly, *There may be alſo a great and wonderful change wrought in their lives, and yet they may continue in their former Unregenerate ſtate.* They may have *eſcaped*, as the *Apoſtle* ſpeaks, *the pollutions of the world thorough the knowledge of Chriſt, and yet be again entangled*, which ſhews them to be unregenerate, as it is 2 *Pet.* 2. 20. To eſcape the pollutions of the World is no Argument of the truth of Grace, unleſs your ſelves alſo are cleanſed from the pollutions of your own Hearts; for ſins may be left meerly from external forced principles, ſuch as are the terrours of Conſcience, or the heavy Judgments of God; when God ſets a flaming Sword betwixt a Sinner and thoſe ſins that he counted his Delight and Paradiſe; to leave ſin upon ſuch conſtraints as theſe, is to leave ſin with a great deal of reluctancy and unwillingneſs; as a *Mariner* in a Storm caſts his Goods over-board, he doth it indeed with a kind of Will, but it is with an unwilling willingneſs, he is frighted and terrified to it, for fear he and they ſhould ſink together; ſo when a Soul is toſſed in a Tempeſt of Divine Wrath, ready to ſplit againſt the Rock of Ages, and to ſink and be ſwallowed up in a Sea of Fire and Brimſtone, it is forced to lighten it ſelf, and to caſt this and that dear Luſt over-board, and this it doth from a Will, but yet it is with ſuch a forced Will as the *Mariner* throws his Goods into the *Sea* in a Storm; and as ſoon as the Tempeſt is allayed, the one gathers up his *Wrack*, and the other gathers up his ſins again. Theſe Men leave their ſins as *Lot's Wife* left *Sodom*, they dare not longer continue in them for fear Fire and Brimſtone ſhould rain down upon them, and yet in leaving them they give many a look back towards them, and at laſt they return again to them. I have ſpoken to this formerly on this ſubject, I ſhall not therefore inſiſt on it longer now, only be ſure you rely not upon theſe broken Reeds as evidences of Eternal Life and Glory, for theſe things are deceitful, and have deceived many, at leaſt, for a time; and ſo much for the firſt Branch of this Uſe of *Trial*, which was to ſhew you what changes may be wrought upon carnal Men, which they may miſtake for evidences of their Regeneration. 5. *There may be a change in the Life without Regeneration.*

The ſecond Branch of this Uſe of Trial, is to lay down ſome particulars that the *Scripture* hath made infallible Marks and Teſts of a *Regenerate Perſon*. But before I come to mention theſe in their particular Order, it will be expedient briefly to premiſe ſomething concerning the manner of obtaining aſſurance of Grace, by the Signs and Characters of Grace. 2. *Branch of this Uſe of Trial.*

In the firſt place therefore, *It is poſſible for a Chriſtian to attain an aſſured knowledge of his Regeneration*, I ſay, an aſſured knowledge, to carry it higher than the *Papiſts* do, that allow no more than a conjectural probability, which may well enough preſerve from deſpair, but yet doth not exclude all fears and doubtings: But it is no wonder that they that will not truſt their natural ſenſes in the Doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation, ſhould not much leſs truſt their ſpiritual ſenſes in the Doctrine of Aſſurance. A Chriſtian's Aſſurance is many degree above theſe weak gueſſes, and arrives at a far greater certainty than any demonſtration can be, for the evidences of ſenſe and reaſon is not ſo clear as that of Aſſurance is; the teſtimony that ſenſe and reaſon gives is but Humane, but the teſtimony given in a Chriſtian's Aſſurance is Divine, and therefore is far more certain, and more infallible. The *Apoſtle* groundeth the evidence of Aſſurance upon the Divinity of the Witneſs, in *Rom.* 8. 16. *The Spirit it ſelf* (mark that) *beareth witneſs with our ſpirits that we are the children of God*; what greater ground for Aſſurance can there be than this? The Spirit it ſelf beareth witneſs, and what God ſpeaks is infinitely more certain than that which our very Eyes ſee; and therefore it is very injurious to his Truth and Veracity, when he by the ſecret and ſweet whiſperings of his Spirit informs the Soul that it is in a ſtate of Grace, to think that this teſtimony only gives probable gueſſes and conjectures. The witneſs that the Spirit gives is ſuch a full aſſurance as removes all *Aſſurance of Regeneration may be attained in this Life.*

doubts

doubts and fears, for it is the witneſs of God himſelf. Now ſuch a witneſs as this is a Chriſtian may have, and therefore it is poſſible, and it neceſſarily follows alſo, that he may have a full aſſurance beyond all doubts and fears; nor is this poſſible by way of Revelation, as a ſpecial priviledge indulged only to ſome few, and them the choiceſt of God's Servants, for in 2 *Pet.* 1. 10. the *Apoſtle* exhorts all Chriſtians, *to give diligence to make their callings and elections ſure*, which he would never do were it an impoſſibility, and could not be obtained with our diligence; ſo in 2 *Cor.* 13. 5. *Examine your ſelves*, ſays the Apoſtle, *whether you be in the faith, prove your ſelves, know you not that Jeſus Chriſt is in you, except you be reprobates?* Reprobation in this place by the way doth not ſtand oppoſed to the Decree of Election, as if none were Elected but thoſe that were already actually in Chriſt, but it ſtands oppoſed to Approbation, for God doth not approve of any in whom Chriſt is not formed; now, ſays the Apoſtle, ſince you know this, try and prove your ſelves whether Chriſt be in you: But it were a vain thing to put a Chriſtian upon Self-examination and Trial, if there were no ordinary means to attain to the knowledge of it, but he muſt expect and depend upon ſome extraordinary Revelation from Heaven, a thing that is never but rarely given unto ſome few. It is true, among Chriſtians ſome may not have this Aſſurance at all, and none have it at all times. As in a Walk that is Shaded with Trees, and checkered with Light and Shadow, ſome tracks and paths in it are dark, and others are Sun-ſhine: Such is uſually the Life of the moſt Aſſured Chriſtian, ſometimes he walks in the light of God's Countenance, and rejoices in the ſmiles of his Favour, and at other times he walks in darkneſs, and can ſee no light; he ſteps out of the bright manifeſtations of God's Love, into the umbrages of ſad and cloudy apprehenſions concerning his preſent ſtate of Grace and his future ſtate of Glory; ſo that ſome Chriſtians never have any full Aſſurance at all, and no Chriſtian hath this full Aſſurance at all times. Now this inequality of Aſſurance proceeds from a double cauſe.

Why it is that tho' ſome have Aſſurance, yet others have not.

1. *Becauſe of the various diſpenſations of the Spirit.*

First, *Sometimes from the free and various Diſpenſations of the Spirit who is arbitrary in his workings, who is that Wind that bloweth when and where he pleaſeth.* For the Treaſures as well of Comfort as of Grace are in his Hand. As the Sun diſpoſeth to the Soul its Summer and Winter Days according to its approaches to, or receſſes from it.

2. *By reaſon of the commiſſion of ſome Sin.*

Secondly, *Sometimes it ariſeth from new contracted guilt that blots our evidences, and makes them illegible till it be taken off again.* It is frequent with Chriſtians when they have done ſinfully or hypocritically in one particular inſtance, then they begin to queſtion all their ſincerity, and upon the prevalency of one corruption, to doubt of the truth of all their Graces. We do not therefore affirm that there is in all, or may be in any at all times this full Aſſurance, but in ſome there is, and in all there is ground for it, and a poſſibility by diligence to attain it; give diligence to make your Callings and Elections ſure, that's the firſt thing.

2. *Signs of Grace without the Teſtimony of the Spirit cannot work Aſſurance.*

Secondly, *The marks and ſigns of our Regeneration in which the Scripture abounds, are of themſelves inſufficient to raiſe us to a full aſſurance whithout the teſtimony of the Holy Spirit of God.* This I doubt not but appears very clear to thoſe who have taken pains to ſearch out their ſpiritual Eſtate by marks and ſigns; if the Spirit comes not in to ſatisfie them, by his own witneſs they may ſoon run themſelves to a loſs, and at the end ſet down as doubtful and perplexed as when they firſt begun: As for inſtance, if a gracious Soul ſhould call into queſtion the Truth and Sincerity of his Love to God, and ſhould begin to examine himſelf, how ſhall I know whether I do indeed love God? Why the *Scripture* tells me, by keeping his Commandments, by obeying him ſincerely; yea, but the ſincerity of our Obedience is as difficult to be known as the Sincerity of our Love, and how ſhall I know whether my Obedience be ſincere? Now here, tho' many ſigns might be given as evidences of this, yet ſtill the doubting Soul will be driving of it ſelf from one ſign to another, and never find ſatisfaction in any of them, unleſs the Spirit of God comes in by its undeniable witneſs to ſilence all its *Objections*, and to reſolve all its Doubts by a kind of peremptory and diſcuſſive voice that it is ſo, otherwiſe there is no end of looking after ſigns, for they will ſtill leave the Soul full of perplexities; unleſs the Spirit of God comes in as a ſatisfactory Witneſs, we may run from one ſign to another ſign to enquire after Grace whether it be there and there, and when all is done, we may be as much at a loſs concerning that ſign as we were at firſt concerning the Grace which we enquired after. And there are two reaſons why ſigns of Grace without the teſtimony of the Spirit cannot work in us a full and abſolute Aſſurance.

First,

First, *Becauſe uſually one Grace is the ſign of another.* Signs of Grace are Graces themſelves, and therefore ſtand in need to be evidenced by other ſigns; and them ſigns being Graces too, do ſtand in need to be evidenced by others, and ſo we ſhould run to an *infinitum*, unleſs the Spirit of God by his Witneſs puts a ſtop to this ſearch. 1. *Becauſe one Grace is the ſign of another.*

Secondly, *Becauſe moſt of the ſigns and evidences of true Grace may be ſo exactly counterfeited by Hypocrites, that the judgment that we paſs upon our ſelves by theſe alone, will ſtill leave place for perplexing doubts and fears, leſt all our Graces, and all our ſigns of them too, ſhould be but Hypocritical Deluſions.* So then unto a full Aſſurance there is neceſſarily required an inward peremptory witneſs of the *Holy Ghoſt*; ſigns and marks without his infallible Teſtimony are inſignificant and unſatisfactory things. 2. *Becauſe moſt ſigns of Grace may be counterfeited.*

Thirdly, *That Aſſurance that Chriſtians have of their Regeneration, is not wrought in them meerly by the Teſtimony of the Spirit without the help of ſigns and marks.* As marks and ſigns cannot raiſe up to a full Aſſurance without the Spirit of God, ſo neither do we obtain a full Aſſurance meerly by the Teſtimony of the Spirit without the help of ſigns and marks; for to what end doth the *Scripture* ſo much abound in giving Characters of Men's Eſtates, which is the main ſcope and drift of the whole firſt Epiſtle of St. *John?* Theſe were all ſuperfluous, if the uſual way of the Spirit's evidencing were without them. I am Regenerated, but how come I to be aſſured of this? Not barely becauſe the Spirit teſtifies to me that I am ſo, that looks too much like *Enthuſiaſm*, and a wild and groundleſs Deluſion, but the Spirit proceeds in a more rational way, I am a Chriſtian and Regenerated becauſe I find thoſe marks upon me that can belong to none but to ſuch who are ſo. Indeed all our Aſſurance muſt be intimately reſolved into the alone verdict of the Spirit of God, and that without the help of further ſigns and marks; for when a Chriſtian gains Aſſurance, he doth not with the *Sun* run thorough all the ſigns of the *Zodiack* to know if he be a Chriſtian by this and this ſign, and then to try the truth of that ſign by another, and that other by a third, and ſo onward, that were endleſs and unſatisfactory; but when he is brought to ſigns that lie a remove or two off from the Grace that he enquires after, he doth not uſually make a farther ſearch whether they be truly in him or not, but the Spirit darts in a clear and heavenly light that diſcovers them to him not diſcourſorily only but intuitively, ſo as that he is able to ſay they are in me beyond all deceit. 3. *Aſſurance is not wrought by the Spirit without ſigns and marks.*

Fourthly, *The uſual way whereby Chriſtians come to be Aſſured of their Regeneration, is by the joint Teſtimony both of marks and ſigns of Grace, and alſo by the Spirit's witneſſing to us that theſe marks and ſigns are in us.* The Word and the Spirit are the Twin-lights that diſcover to us our Condition. And as *Mariners* preſage to themſelves a proſperous Voyage when two lights, *Caſtor* and *Pollux*, appear, but a dangerous Voyage if only one appears: So here it is unſafe in the trial of our Regeneration to take up with one ſingle ſolitary light; but when both the light of *Scripture* marks and ſigns, and alſo of the Spirit's witneſſing appear together, we may then proſperouſly and happily proceed to a diſcovery of our ſelves. So in *Rom.* 8. 16. *The Spirit beareth witneſs with our ſpirits that we are children of God.* To evidence that we are *born again* there comes in a twofold Witneſs, the Witneſs of our Spirits, and the Witneſs of God's Spirit; our Spirit depoſeth that we are ſo, that we are born again, and become the Children of God, and this it doth by obſerving the proper Marks and Characters that the *Scripture* gives of a Child of God; and the Spirit of God comes in as another Witneſs, that in the Mouth of two Witneſſes this may be eſtabliſhed, and by his immediate light clears up the truth of that Atteſtation that Conſcience did make, which takes away all Doubtings and Heſitances, and fills us with a full Aſſurance, yea, gives us a *Plerothy*; ſo that ſtill marks and ſigns are of great uſe for the diſcovery of the truth of Grace. In 1 *John* 2. 3. *By this we know that we know him, if we keep his Commandments*: But ſtill we may be puzzled to know whether our keeping of God's Commandments be ſuch a ground for our Comfort, therefore the Witneſs of the Spirit is here required to ſeal and confirm this unto us, without which ſtill we ſhall be to ſeek Aſſurance for all the marks that the *Scripture* lays down for evidences of our Graces. 4. *Aſſurance is obtained by the Teſtimony of Signs, and by the Witneſs of the Spirit.*

Theſe things I thought fit to premiſe before I give you any ſigns and marks of *Regeneration*, that ſo you may be exhorted and moved when you hear thoſe ſigns that the *Scripture* gives to examine your Hearts whether they are tranſcribed within you, and alſo to lift up your Hearts unto God, that his Spirit may dart into you ſuch a ſpiritual Light and clear Illumination, as may infallibly demonſtrate to you that theſe marks are indeed in you; it being the proper work of one and the ſame Spirit to work Grace in us, and to manifeſt it to us; it is he alone that can draw that Curtain that hangs before it, and gives us a view of it. As it is the light of the *Sun* only by which we can ſee the *Sun*, ſo is it the light of the Spirit only by which we can know the Spirit to be only in us. Let us therefore in the trial of our ſelves look to marks and ſigns for a Teſtimony in our own Conſciences, without which all our Aſſurance may be well ſuſpected for *Enthuſiaſm*; and let us alſo beg the Teſtimony of the Spirit, without which all marks and ſigns will be but vain and unſatisfactory.

Now to give you ſome ſigns of the Truth of Grace, I ſhall not inſiſt upon all that might be mentioned, for they are very numerous, ſince there is no one Grace but is the ſign of another Grace, yea, the ſign of all other, for all Graces are Concomitant; I ſhall only therefore ſelect out a few.

1. *Willingneſs to be tried a ſign of Grace.*

And the firſt is this, *It is a good ſign of Grace when a Man is willing to ſearch and examine himſelf whether he be gracious or not.* There is a certain kind of Inſtinct in a Child of God, whereby he naturally deſires to have the Title of his Legitimation tried, whereas a *Hypocrite* dreads nothing more than to have his rottenneſs ſearcht into. *David* therefore prays, *Pſalm* 26. 2. *Examine me*, ſays he, *O Lord, and prove me, try my reins and my heart.* God indeed hath many ways of trying of us, but eſpecially by the Word and Miniſtry. The *Scripture* is the great Treaſury of all ſpiritual Light. God hath amaſſed and ſtored it up all there, and whatever comes with ſpiritual Illumination upon the Conſcience muſt borrow it from thence; the preaching of the Word that is the darting abroad of thoſe beams that makes them pierce into the very Intrails of Sinners, and diſcovers the ſecret Thoughts and Intents of their Hearts. Now try your ſelves by this, do you love the Word of God becauſe it is a ſearching Word, becauſe it brings home Convictions to you, and ſhakes your carnal Confidences and Preſumptions? Do you love a Soul-ſearching Miniſtry that ſpeaks as cloſely and particularly to you as if it were another Conſcience without you, a Miniſtry that ranſacks your very Souls, and tells you all that ever you did? Do you delight in a Miniſtry that forceth you to turn inward upon your ſelves, that makes you tremble and look pale at every word for fear it ſhould be the ſentence of your Damnation? This is a ſign that your condition is good, becauſe you are ſo willing to be ſearched. *He that doth evil*, ſaith our Saviour, John 3. 20. *hateth the light, neither cometh he to it leſt his deeds ſhould be reproved.* But if you are pleaſed only with a formal, general Miniſtry, and ſuch *Prophets* as ſing only pleaſant Songs to you, ſuch as never toucht the Conſcience to the quick, that keep aloof off, and inſtead of brandiſhing the Word that is *ſharper than a two-edged Sword*, reaving the Heart with it, they only make a flouriſh of it; if you can brook no other but ſuch a quiet unconcerning Miniſtry as this is, this is a bad ſign that yet you are unſound. *A thief hateth the light*, ſays our Saviour, *leſt he ſhould be detected and diſcovered*; ſo a Hypocritical Profeſſor hateth that a beam of ſpiritual light by the Miniſtry of the Word ſhould break in upon his Conſcience to ſhew how rotten and unſound he is; and that's the firſt trial: It is a ſign of a good eſtate when a Man is willing to put himſelf on the trial.

John 3. 20.

2. *Love to the Godly a ſign of Regeneration in three things.*

Secondly, *Love to thoſe who are truly godly is a certain and infallible ſign of Regeneration.* 1 John 3. 18. *We know that we are paſſed from death to life becauſe we love the brethren.* This is a certain ſign a mighty change is wrought on the Heart; for naturally we are inclined to hate the Children of God upon that very account becauſe they are godly. It is a true rule of the *Schoolmen* borrowed out of *Ariſtotle*, that the Affections of the Soul are the ſame towards the Image of a thing as they are towards the thing it ſelf. If we love or hate any Perſon we ſhall accordingly love or hate his Picture and Reſemblance. Now all wicked Men naturally hate God becauſe he is a holy God, and thereby is contrary to their very natures that are corrupt and ſinful, and ſo they alſo hate the Children of God becauſe they are living Pictures of God, and bear his Image upon them, being made conformable to him by a work of Regeneration. *He that is born of the fleſh*, ſays the Apoſtle, *will perſecute and hate*

that is born after the Spirit, becauſe he is the Copy of that Original betwixt whom and them there is an *Antipathy* founded in their very Natures. Now when a Man who before did thus hate, ſcorn, and diſpiſe the people of God as a Company of affected and turbulent Hypocrites, ſhall find in himſelf a love and eſteem for them, and ſhall ſee the Beauty and Glory of that Holineſs that before rendred them odious to him; this is a ſign that certainly a mighty change is wrought upon the Man, and that he himſelf is transformed into the Image of God, becauſe he loves that Image in others. Now this trial will proceed upon theſe two or three Particulars.

1. *If it be to them becauſe they are godly.*

Firſt, *That this love be to them becauſe they are godly.* We may poſſibly love godly Men for other reſpects, becauſe they are wiſe or learned, or becauſe poſſibly they love us, or are related to us; but theſe are but by reſpects, and Grace hath no Intereſt at all in them. That love to the godly that can aſſure us of being godly and regenerate, muſt be a love to the Children of God meerly becauſe they are godly.

2. *If the more Godly they are, the more we love them.*

Secondly, *As we muſt love them becauſe they are Godly, ſo the more godly they are, the more we ſhould love them. My delight*, ſays *David*, *is in the Saints, and in the excellent ones of the earth.* The more holy a Child of God is, if we love him aright, the more we ſhall love him.

3. *If we love all the Godly.*

Thirdly, *If we love all that are godly*; not only thoſe of our Temper, Conſtitution, and Opinion in all things, but all of them, with a valuation and eſteem for them, with a prizing love, which the Image of God upon their Souls, and their ſimilitude to him challengeth; indeed our familiarity and intimacy may be with ſome of them more than with others, but our high and cordial eſteem muſt be of all of them. Now try your ſelves by this, do you love the Brethren? And ſo little truly is this love to be found, that the name of Brethren is become a Mock and a Jeſt by many; but is your delight in the Saints? Do you account them the excellent ones of the Earth? How few are there that love them that love God? Or if they do love them, it is poſſibly for other reſpects and reaſons; could you not love them better if they were not ſo rigid, ſtrict, and preciſe as they are? Let ſuch know, as St. *John* ſpeaks in 1 *John* 5. 1. *He that loveth him than begetteth, loveth him alſo that is begotten.* It is in vain to think that we are Born of God, if we have not a ſincere and cordial Affection for all thoſe that are the Children of God, and our Brethren.

SERMON XIV.

JOHN iii. 5.

Jeſus anſwered, verily, verily I ſay unto thee, except a Man be born of Water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.

3. *Univerſal Obedience to all God's Commandments a ſign of Regeneration.*

THirdly, *Another ſign of Regeneration, is a univerſal reſpect and obedience unto all God's Commandments.* This St. *John* expreſly gives us in his firſt *Epiſtle, chap. 2. ver. 3. Hereby*, ſays he, *we know that we know him if we keep his commandments.* And ſo in *ver. 3. Whoſo keepeth his word in him, verily is the love of God perfected, hereby we know that we are in him.* It is obſervable that the work of Regeneration is it ſelf called the writing of the Law in our Hearts, In *Jer.* 31. 33. *I will put my law into their inward parts, and write it in their hearts.* God hath written his Law three ſeveral ways; when he firſt Created Man he wrote it then upon his Heart by his Creating Finger, Man was the Tranſcript of God; as he was his handy-work, ſo he was his Hand-writing alſo; Man was then the only Copy of the Law extant in the World: This Copy it was perfect, but yet it was ſuch as might be blotted and torn. Next God wrote his Law in his Word, the *Holy Scriptures* exhibit to us an entire Syſtem both of Commands and Duties; and this Copy is both perfect and durable, ſuch as neither hath, neither can it ſuffer any decays from

length of time, or from the rage and malice of Men or Devils. And laſtly, God hath again wrote his Law upon the Heart of Man in his new Creation, and this Copy is Eternally durable, but yet it is but as a writing upon ſinking and leaky Paper, which in this Life is very obſcure and full of blots. Now this writing of the Law upon our Hearts is a figurative Expreſſion, and denotes nothing elſe but an Inclination joined with ſome ability to fulfil the Commands of God contained in his Word, a Conformity betwixt the Commands of the Law and the Affections of the Heart, that whatever the Law enjoined, the Heart alſo deſired and delights in. Thus *David* explains it, *Pſal.* 40. 8. *I delight to do thy will, O God, thy law is within my heart.* So that the Heart of a Regenerate Perſon anſwers to every tittle in the Law with ſincere deſires at leaſt to perform it. And as betwixt an *Indenture* and the *Counterpane* of it, there is an exact Correſpondency word for word; ſuch an exact Correſpondency is there betwixt the Law of God and the Heart, whatever the Law commands, the Heart readily embraceth, and endeavours to fulfil. This Harmony is expreſſed by *David* in *Pſal.* 27. 8. *When thou ſaidſt, ſeek my face, my heart ſaid, thy face, Lord, will I ſeek.* This is to have the Law of God written on the Heart, which is the proper Work of Regeneration.

Obedience Twofold, Perfect. or Imperfect, but Sincere.

Let us now therefore try whether our Conformity and Obedience to the Law and Will of God written in his Word, be ſuch as may give us good ground to hope that his Law is alſo written in our Hearts in our Regeneration.

There is therefore a Twofold Obedience to God's Commandments; firſt, *Perfect*; ſecondly, *Imperfect*, but yet *Sincere*.

Perfect Obedience conſiſts in a Conformity to the utmoſt latitude of all God's Commands, and our Duty, with the greateſt intenſeneſs of ſpiritual Love in the performance of them.

Firſt, *There is a perfect Obedience, ſuch as carries in it an abſolute Perfection both of Parts and Degrees.* To make up this two things are required.

Firſt, *That it be ſuch an Obedience as is ſtretched forth to the utmoſt latitude of all God's Commands, ſuch as is fully commenſurate to the fulleſt bounds of Duty, ſo as to leave nothing undone that the Law requires.*

Secondly, *That it be ſuch an Obedience as is wound up to the greateſt intenſeneſs of ſpiritual Love and Delight in the performance of it, inſomuch as not to permit in the leaſt any carnal ends, any ſtragling thoughts, or any wavering and unfixed Affections at all ſo much as to breathe upon it.* And this the *Scripture* calls a *ſerving God with all our hearts, and minds, and ſouls*, *Deut.* 10. 12. This is Obedience that is abſolutely perfect and univerſal, both in reſpect of the Object, and alſo in reſpect of the Subject. Now here as to this I ſhall lay down two Particulars.

1. We muſt not conclude we have no Grace because we have ſome remaining ſin.

Firſt, *That in the examining of our Regeneration we muſt not proceed by this abſolute and perfect Obedience, ſo as to conclude we have no Grace, becauſe we have ſome remaining ſin.* Obedience to God's Commandments is a ſign of Regeneration, where it is not thus conſummate and blameleſs; nay, indeed never any Man ſince the fall did or can keep God's Commandments in this abſolute and perfect manner, Chriſt only excepted: *There is no man that lives and ſins not*, in 1 *Kings* 8. 46. It is true we are commanded in *Mat.* 5. 48. *To be perfect, even as our heavenly Father is perfect*; but as ſoon may a clod of Earth ſhine as bright as the *Sun*, as we who have ſinful Natures ever attain to a ſinleſs ſtate in this Life; and yet ſuch an exceſs of Commands as theſe are, though they are impoſſible, yet are they not unjuſt, nor unuſeful; they are not unjuſt, becauſe God commands nothing that is ſimply in it ſelf impoſſible, but is equally proportioned to that ſtrength which he at firſt gave us; and if we have wilfully loſt our power of obeying, we have no reaſon to complain of God as rigid and ſevere becauſe he will not alſo loſe his Prerogative of commanding. Neither are they uſeleſs, becauſe to command beyond what we are able to perform, proves a means to excite us to perform ſo much at leaſt as God will be pleaſed to accept of, who always accepts of ſincerity in the deſires and endeavours, where abſolute Perfection is wanting and unattainable. *If there be a willing mind*, ſays the *Apoſtle*, 2 *Cor.* 8. 12. *it is accepted according to what a Man hath, and not according to what he hath not.* Let none therefore conclude they have no Grace, becauſe they have many imperfections in their Obedience. A weak Child is not therefore a Baſtard, or Illegitimate; ſo thy Grace may be very weak and imperfect, and yet thou mayeſt be truly Born again to God, and be a genuine Son and Heir of Heaven.

2. It is a ſign of a work of Grace, when though our Obedience be imperfect, yet we ſtrive after the utmoſt degree of Perfection.

Secondly, *It is a good evidence of the work of Grace in our Obedience, when tho' our Obedience be very imperfect, yet we reſtleſly aſpire both in fervent Prayer, and in earneſt Endeavours after the moſt abſolute Degree of Perfection:* Both of theſe muſt be concerned, for Prayers without Endeavours are but *Hypocritical*; and Endeavours will never be without

without Prayers, or at leaſt they will never be ſucceſsful. If we pray with unfeigned deſires that God's Will may be done by us on Earth with the ſame fixedneſs, delight, conſtancy, and perſeverance, as it is done by the *Saints* and *Angels* in Heaven, if we reſt not in our preſent attainments, and ſit down contented with what we have already, thinking that ſufficient to defray our Charges, and to bring us ſafe to Heaven at laſt, if we think we have attained nothing, while there is any thing defective in us, if we ſtrain every Sinew, and bend every Faculty of our Souls, preſſing forward to the Mark for the Prize of our high calling, and with a holy impatience breathe after farther meaſures of Grace, ſtill ſtrengthning our ſelves againſt Luſts and Temptations, and ſtriving after the ſpiritual performance of Duties: While we thus endeavour and ſtrive, it may be a good Evidence to us of our ſincerity; and in God's account ſincerity paſſeth for perfection. Thus much concerning the firſt ſort of Obedience which is abſolutely perfect; it is not attainable by Chriſtians in this Life, and therefore the want of it ſhould not deject us with a ſuſpiciency of the want of Grace; yet muſt we pray for it, and aim at it, and if we do ſo, it may be a good evidence of Sincerity, which is Evangelical Perfection.

Secondly, *As for that Obedience that is attainable in this Life in imperfect meaſures and degrees*, it becomed an evidence to us of our Regeneration in theſe following Particulars. 2. *Imperfect Obedience is a ſign of Grace.*

Firſt, *When it is Univerſal in reſpect of the ſubject*; *that is, there muſt be an obedient frame and rectitude of the whole Man, both inward and outward.* 1. *When it is univerſal in reſpect of the ſubject.*

Firſt, *Sincere and evidencing Obedience muſt be internal of the inward Man, ſuch as may regulate the Heart and Conſcience it ſelf.* The *Law is ſpiritual*, ſays the Apoſtle, and reacheth the Soul and Spirit of a Man; and hence, ſays St. *Paul*, *I delight in the law of God after the inward Man.* There is a ſpiritual force in the Law of God, that in a true Regenerate Soul checks all ſinful thoughts, and quenches and damps the flames of ſenſual Affections and Deſires; it judgeth thoſe ſecret and retired motions of the Soul, over which humane Laws have no Command or Prerogative. 1. *In the inward Man.*

Now examine your ſelves by this: Do the Commands of God pierce and inſinuate into your inward Man: Do they conform that to Obedience? Dare you not cheriſh thoſe ſins in your Souls that poſſibly you dare not commit in your Practices? Do you not dandle them in your Thoughts, and hover and flutter over them in your Affections? Are you not content with a fair and plauſible appearance towards Man? But do you labour alſo to approve your Hearts unto God, and to bring every Thought unto Obedience to Jeſus Chriſt? This internal Obedience is a good evidence of the truth of that Grace which always begins with the Heart, and from thence influenceth the Life.

Secondly, *Sincere Obedience muſt be external.* It is a vain plea to pretend, as many ignorant People do, that their Hearts are good, when their Lives abound with ungodly Practices? The Life is the Index of the Heart; and as the Hand of a *Dial* never goes amiſs but the fault is in the Wheels that moves it; ſo the Life would never be diſorderly, but the fault lies in the Heart and in the Affections that are the Wheels and Springs that move it. *An evil Man*, ſaith our Saviour, *out of the evil treaſure of his heart bringeth forth evil things.* True Grace ſeaſoneth the whole Man, and makes a thorough change both in the inward Diſpoſition, and alſo in the outward Deportment: As it makes the Thoughts holy, ſo it alſo makes the Diſcourſes ſavoury, and the Affections and Converſation heavenly; both muſt be conjoined in a Regenerate Perſon; for in the tendering unto God only an external conformity of the Life, when the Heart is required, is but only to mock God, and to think that we pleaſe God with good Affections, when we take no care of our Lives and Practices, is but to mock our ſelves. *In the outward Man.*

Now try your ſelves by this; Is your whole Man, both Soul and Body, formed to the Will of God? Do you ſerve him with your inward, and with your outward Man? Chriſt calls his Law a Yoke, and certainly it is a Yoke wherein both muſt be coupled: Do you deſire and endeavour to yield the Obedience of the Heart, and the Obedience of the Life alſo, as he requires, neither contenting your ſelves with a ſlight and overly performance of Duties, where the Lips out-run the Heart, and the Heart gives the Lie to the Lips; nor yet ſlighting that outward reverence that is neceſſary to teſtifie the due ſenſe you have of his glorious preſence, and that care you have to ſerve him both in Soul and in Body that are his: Do you ſo live as not to defraud God of any part of his Service, or of his Servant, but Sacrifice your ſelves

entirely unto him, your Bodies upon the Altar of your Soul and Affections, and both Soul and Body upon that Altar that alone can make both acceptable, even the Lord Jeſus Chriſt? This is a good evidence that you do ſo keep the Commandments of God, as that it may be a ground of Aſſurance to you that you do know him, and are in him; and ſo much for the firſt Branch.

Obedience muſt be univerſal in reſpect of the whole Law of God.

Secondly, *Obedience is a good and infallible ſign of our Regeneration, when it is univerſal, as in reſpect of the ſubject, the whole Man, Soul and Body, ſo alſo in reſpect of the Object, that is, the whole Law in every particular command of it.* The whole Law is contained in two things, in thoſe Duties that immediately concern God, and in thoſe Duties that do immediately concern Men. Now if thy Obedience be ſincere thou wilt have a general reſpect unto all God's Commands; to thoſe that concern thy Lord and Maſter, and to thoſe alſo that concern thy Fellow-ſervants. Bring this alſo to the Trial; art thou juſt and upright in thy dealing with Men? Art thou loving and helpful to thy Neighbours? It is well: But what then is thy *Religion* to God? Is not that a dull and formal thing? Is not this the beſt Charecter that can be given of thee, that thou art a good Neighbour, better to Men than thou art to God? Again, if thou haſt taken up a glorious Profeſſion of *Religion*, and art frequent in thoſe Duties of it that concern God, what art thou then as to Men? *Religion* hath of late ſuffered upon this very account, while the Profeſſors of it have acted high things in a way of Duty, and pretended to high things in a way of Enjoyment, but yet have been as unjuſt, oppreſſive, ſelf-ſeeking, covetous, and over-reaching, as if their only reward were to live upon the ſpoil of others. Thy *Religion* to God certainly is no ſign of Grace if thou art not alſo conſcionable in thy Dealings towards Men. *Herein do I exerciſe my ſelf*, ſays the Apoſtle, *to keep in all things a Conſcience void of offence both to God and Men:* But more particularly the Duties that reſpects others are either general, as thou art a Man to Men, or particular, as thy Relation in which thou ſtandeſt, Relative Duties. Now how is it that you perform theſe Duties that belong to thy ſpecial Relation, for herein the Life of Chriſtianity is ſeen? How doſt thou demean thy ſelf in the place were thou liveſt as a Magiſtrate in checking of Sin, and in puniſhing of Vice? How as a Miniſter? How as a Parent? How as a Yoke-fellow? How as a Child, and how as a Servant? Whatever a Man doth as to the general Duties of Chriſtianity, yet if he be negligent and careleſs in theſe particular Relative Duties, he hath great cauſe to ſuſpect himſelf; it argues truth of Grace when we are careful in the fulfilling theſe particular Relations and Stations that we ſtand in towards others. I ſhall cloſe up this note of Trial with that of the *Apoſtle*, in *James* 2. 10, 11. *He that offendeth in one he is guilty of all:* If there be a willing and indulging ſloth in the neglecting of any one Duty that God hath commanded, how difficult, and how oppoſite ſoever it be unto Fleſh and Blood, that Man hath ground to ſuſpect that whatever other Duties he performs, be they never ſo many, and never ſo admirable, yet they are not ſuch as manifeſt ſincery, and may give him a good evidence of a good Eſtate.

4. *Not to commit Sin a ſign of Regeneration.*

Fourthly, *Another ſign of Regeneration, which is the laſt that I ſhall mention, is that which St.* John *ſpeaks of in his firſt Epiſtle*, chap. 3. ver. 9, 10. *Whoſoever is born of God doth not commit ſin, for his ſeed remaineth in him, and he cannot ſin becauſe he is born of God; in this the Children of God are manifeſt, and the children of the Devil.* This place may perhaps be among the number of thoſe that had been more clear if they had been leſs expounded. I ſhall only give you the genuine native ſence of the words, and then proceed to manage them to my preſent purpoſe. *Whoſo is born of God ſinneth not*; ſome from hence have concluded a poſſibility at leaſt of a ſinleſs ſtate in this Life, others the infallible certainty of it, not only that a Child of God might attain to ſuch a Perfection as is excluſive of all Sin, but that whoever is a Child of God cannot upon that very account be guilty of any ſin; ſo like are *Errors* to *Precipices*, that if a Man loſe his firm footing uſually he falls headlong, nor doth he ſtop till he daſh himſelf againſt the bottom and foundation of all Religion and Piety. Had theſe Men but ſeriouſly pondered what the ſame *Apoſtle* ſaith in his firſt Chapter, ver. 7, 8, 10. *If we ſay we have no ſin we deceive our ſelves, and the truth is not in us; and if we ſay we have not ſinned we make God a Liar.* Had they but pondered this they would not have entertained ſuch an over-weaning conceit of a ſpotleſs perfection of Life here, whereof the greateſt part is no better than ſin, and the beſt of it but too to much defiled with it. Others interpret it thus, ſo long as we are the Children of God, ſo long we cannot ſin, and ſo the *Papiſts* go; but theſe go upon an erroneous

ſuppoſition,

ſuppoſition, that every mortal ſin, as they call them, makes an interceſſion of juſtifying Grace, and doth as it were, annihilate the new Creature; others interpret it thus, *in quantum ſumus Dei Filii*, we cannot ſin under that reſpect and notion as we are the Children of God, but even ſo far as we are the beſt of us in the moſt part unrenewed: Though this is a certain truth, yet it is but a dilute and wateriſh Expoſition of this place, and it amounts to no more than this, that a Regenerate Man ſins not as he is Regenerate, that the Principle of Grace in him is not that Principle from whence ſinful Actions proceed: And certainly no Man that conſiders the weight of this *Scripture expreſſion*, will think that the *Apoſtle* by ſuch an inſtance and ingemination would preſs ſo thin a meaning as this is. The *Interpretation* thereof that I judge to be the moſt natural and unforced in this: He that is Born of God ſinneth not, that is, he doth not ſin in that malignant manner as the Children of the Devil do, he doth not make a trade of ſin, nor live in the conſtant and allowed practice of it; neither *can he thus ſin becauſe his ſeed remaineth in him*; that is, either the Energy of the Word of God whereby he is begotten again to a ſpiritual Life, or the complexion of the Graces of the Spirit that are as it were the Seminary and Seed-plot of Glory: *Nor he cannot ſin becauſe his ſeed remaineth in him:* This Seed remaineth and keeps him that he cannot ſin, either as *Apoſtates* do, who totally forſake the ways of God, or as prophane Perſons do, who never embraced them. There is a great difference betwixt Regenerate and Unregenerate Perſons in the very ſins that they commit; all indeed ſin, but a Child of God cannot ſin; that is, though he doth ſin, yet he cannot ſin after ſuch a manner as wicked and unregenerate Men do; there is a vaſt difference betwixt them even in that wherein they do moſt of all agree; ſee that place in *Deut.* 32. 3. *Their ſpot is not the ſpot of his Children.* Even deformities themſelves are Characteriſtical, and a true Chriſtian may come to know by his ſins that he is not a ſinner; and as they differ in the committing of ſin, ſo much more in the oppoſing of it. Let us therefore examine our ſelves what evidences we have in reſpect of the keeping of our ſelves from ſin, that we are Regenerated and Born again. Deut. 38. 3.

First therefore, *It is a good evidence of the Work of Grace when our oppoſition againſt ſin is univerſal.* When we do, as *David* ſpeaks of himſelf, *hate every falſe way.* The reſervation, indulgence or allowance granted to any one known Luſt is utterly inconſiſtent with a ſtate of Grace. One Luſt that hath obtained your Paſs to go to and fro unmoleſted, and to Traffick with the Heart undiſturbed, whatever oppoſition you may make againſt other ſins, is a certain ſign of a corrupt Heart; one Luſt will ſerve as a Spy to hold Intelligence with the Devil. A *Cion* can never be incorporrted into the *Stock* while there is the leaſt Skin or Film betwixt them; no more can we ever be incorporated into Jeſus Chriſt if there be but the ſeparation of any of the leaſt allowed ſin to interpoſe betwixt him and us. Our Oppoſition therefore muſt be againſt all ſin: It is true, in our Bodies there are ſuch parts, that if we were wounded in them there needs no other Wounds to diſpatch us, but the Wound is inſtantly Mortal; as if a Man be wounded in the Heart you need not ſtrike him on the Head: But in the body of Sin and Death there is no ſuch wound; it is not ſufficient to deſtroy the *old Man*, that we wound him in any one part, but he muſt be made as our natural ſtate is deſcribed to be by the *Prophet*, *From the crown of the head to the ſole of the foot, all full of wounds and bruiſes.* Let us now try our ſelves by this, is there no Luſt that your Eye ſpares, nor that your Heart pities? Doth the Sword of Mortification draw the Heart-blood of every ſin? When they fly for ſhelter into your Boſom can you rend them from thence, and ſlay them before the Lord? When they plead profit or pleaſure, can you with a holy diſdain deſtroy them with ſuch Arguments in their Mouths? Canſt thou then cut off a right Hand when it is lifted up to plead for Mercy? Can you then pluck out a right Eye when it ſheds Tears to move you to compaſſion to it? If ſo, this is a good evidence of Regenerating Grace, whoſe proper effect it is to beget an *Antipathy* and Hatred in the Heart againſt all ſin. But if there be any one ſin that you allow and indulge in your ſelf, whatever other ſins you may abſtain from, aſſure your ſelf that the greateſt change that is wrought upon you is only ſome external change of the Life, but no change of the Heart or State; ſtill you are in your ſins if you allow your ſelf but in one of them. One allowed ſin is vent enough for the old Man to take breath at; and while it hath a breathing place allowed it, It is in vain to think that you have mortified and deſtroyed it. 1. *A hatred of all ſin a ſign of Grace.*

Secondly,

2. *A ſtriving againſt ſins of the Heart a ſign of Grace.*

Secondly, *As this oppoſition muſt be univerſal againſt every ſin in general, ſo it muſt be more eſpecially againſt the ſins of the Heart.* He that will deſtroy a *Toad* crawling on the ground, will much more deſtroy it ſhould it crawl in his Boſom. Why now theſe ſins they are the bubblings up of evil Thoughts and Motions of evil Affections and Deſires; thoſe lurking and inviſible Luſts that Hypocrites may foſter, and yet have a large Teſtimonial of their *Saintſhip*, to which all the World almoſt will be ready to ſet their Hands. But this now doth one that is truly Born of God moſt of all complain of and ſtrive againſt, in this indeed lies the moſt unerring Teſt and Trial of true Grace. What the Apoſtle tells us in *Rom.* 2. 28. *That is not circumciſion that is outward in the fleſh, but that which is inward in the heart and ſpirit*, the ſame may I ſay, it is not ſtriving and ſtrugling againſt ſins, that are outward in the fleſh, but againſt ſins in the Heart. There may be a numbneſs ſeize on the outward Members of the Body when yet the Heart bears ſtrong and quick, and the Brain work in ſprightful and vigorous Motions; ſo truly is it in this caſe, the *old Man* may ſometimes be benum'd in its outward Limbs, and deny'd it its executive part, when yet the Head may work buſily in building and ſhaping ſinful Objects, and the Heart eagerly beat and pant after them. It is uſually the only care of a wicked Man to keep his Luſts from raging and breaking forth into outward Act, though his Heart ſeeth and ſtew in malicious, unclean, worldly Thoughts, yet theſe he regards, laments not, nor ſuppreſſeth, ſo long as he can but keep them from boyling over, and from raiſing Aſhes and Smoke about him. But here lies the chief task of a *Regenerate Perſon*; for though it ſeem poſſibly an eaſie thing to deſtroy ſuch little naked Infant things as Thoughts are, that flutter up and down in the Soul, and that light ſtrokes would lay them dead; yet certainly a true Chriſtian, who by Experience knows what it is to deal with his own Heart, finds it infinitely more difficult to beat down one ſinful Thought from riſing up in him, than to keep a Thouſand ſinful Thoughts from breaking forth into open Act: Here lies his chief labour, to fight againſt *Phantiſms* and airy Apparitions, ſuch as Thoughts are; he ſets himſelf chiefly againſt theſe Heart-ſins, becauſe he knows theſe are ſins that are moſt of all contrary to Grace, and do moſt of all weaken and waſte Grace: Outward ſins are but like ſo many *Caterpillars* that devour the verdure and flouriſhing of Grace, but Heart-ſins are like ſo many *Worms* that gnaw the very Root of Grace. And therefore God calls upon *Jeruſalem* in *Jer.* 4. 14. *O* Jeruſalem, *waſh thine heart from wickedneſs, how long ſhall vain thoughts lodge within thee?*

Now try your ſelves by this, in the oppoſition that you make againſt ſin, what is it that you chiefly reſiſt? Do you not content your ſelves that you have beaten corruption from the outward Works into the very Fort; that whereas it ſallied forth before at his pleaſure, and wounded your Conſciences, now it is pent up in a narrower room and compaſs? Do you not content your ſelves with this, but ſtill you oppoſe it, and follow it into the Heart, and when it hides it ſelf in a ſinful Thought, do you ſtifle and kill it there? If ſo, this is ſuch an oppoſition that proceeds from true Grace, which works in you an *Antipathy* againſt all ſin: But when a ſwarm of Luſts is up, which perhaps ſome external Principles only may keep from flying abroad; if they cluſter in thy Heart, and thou hiveſt them there; and if thou canſt for the ſatisfying of Conſcience abſtain from the outward Acts of ſins, and yet for the ſatisfying of thy Corruptions, canſt alſo tolerate and allow the inward motions of ſin; it is a ſign thou never kneweſt the power of Regenerating Grace which firſt begins to cleanſe the Heart, as being the moſt compendious way and method to reform the Life.

3. *An oppoſing of ſpiritual Sins a ſign of Grace.*

Thirdly, *Look how you oppoſe thoſe Sins that are more ſpiritual Sins, ſuch as reſide in the refined and exalted part of a Man, his Mind, but have little Traffick or Commerce with the dreggy part of his Body:* Such as are Pride, Envy, Unbelief, Hypocriſie, Hardneſs of Heart, Slighting of Jeſus Chriſt, and the like, theſe are ſpiritual wickedneſſes; and if thou art truly Regenerate, thy chiefeſt Endeavours will be bent againſt theſe; for theſe are ſins of the deepeſt and blackeſt guilt in themſelves, though they are not branded ſo in the account of the World; and therefore when our *Saviour* rakes up the bottom of Hell, who do you find lies there? Is it the *Drunkard*, the Unclean Perſon, ſuch Sottiſh and Swiniſh Sinners? No, but it is the *Hypocrite*, the ſpiritual and refined Sinner, *Mat.* 24. 51. Theſe are thoſe ſins that are ſo inconſiſtent with the Image of God upon the Soul, that of all other ſins they make Men neareſt to reſemble the *Devil*; to be guilty of theſe ſins is to be a Sinner like him: Thoſe bruti-

tiſh Luſts wherein Senſualiſts wallow are not the proper ſins of the *Devil*; no, they are Intellectual Sins clarified from ſuch dregs, ſuch as Pride, Malice, Hatred of God and Goodneſs, and the like.

Now try your ſelves by this; you ruſh not poſſiby into the ſame exceſs of Riot with others, you reſiſt and refrain from outward groſs ſelf-condemning ſins; but do you ſtrive againſt Pride, Hypocriſie, Unbelief, and Hardneſs of Heart? If ſo, this is a good ſign that you are the Children of God, unto whoſe ſpiritual Nature, and unto yours alſo, theſe ſpiritual ſins are moſt of all contrary; but if you are only cleanſed from the pollutions of the Fleſh, and not alſo from the pollutions of the Spirit; if you indulge your ſelves in Pride, Malice, in Murdering and Revengeful Thoughts, and the like, know aſſuredly you do not bear the Image of God, but the Image of the *Devil*, whoſe peculiar ſins theſe are.

Fourthly, *A Regenerate Perſon bends his oppoſition as againſt Heart Sins, and Spiritual Wickedneſs, ſo alſo againſt his own iniquity in a peculiar manner.* *David* produceth this as a clear evidence of his Integrity in *Pſal.* 18. 23. *I was alſo upright before him, and I kept my ſelf from mine iniquity.* Indeed a Child of God can have no ſin his own by any deliberate Choice and Approbation of it, as one culled and choſen out from the reſt, and reſerved for him to commit; thus to have any ſin a Man's own is inconſiſtent with true Grace; but ſin may be called a Man's own by a too frequent practice of it, and by a too violent Inclination of his Heart unto it. Every one of us hath his peculiar ſin that we may call our own, that is more deeply rooted in us than others are, whether it ariſeth from the Temper of our Nature, or from Cuſtom that is a ſecond Nature, and from the verge and tendency of our Callings and Employments, or from what account ſoever they proceed; yet there are ſome Sins that a Child of God may call his own; and againſt theſe doth he more particularly bend himſelf, and ſingle them out unto the Combate. 4. *An oppoſing a Man's own Sin a ſign of Grace.*

Fifthly, *A truly Regenerate Perſon will be careful to avoid all Temptations unto, and all occaſions of ſin.* And therefore in that Prayer that Chriſt hath taught us, we firſt pray, *That we may not be led into Temptation*, and next, *That we may be delivered from evil.* So is it the firſt care of a Child of God that he be not tempted, and his next care, how he may eſcape when he is tempted. It is a ſign of a Heart wofully entangled with the love of ſin when Men chuſe to walk upon the very Borders of Sin and Temptation, and when they are under ſtrong Temptations ſecretly pleaſe themſelves with it, becauſe now they think they have ſome excuſe if they yield. 5. *An avoiding all Temptations to, and all occaſions of Sin, a ſign of Grace.*

Sixthly and laſtly, *Our oppoſition againſt Sin is a good ſign of the Truth of Grace, when it is not only univerſal againſt all Sin, but univerſal from our whole man; when it is not only from our Reaſon and Conſcience, but alſo from our Will and Affection.* For in Regeneration there is a Principle diffuſed thorough the whole Man that is contrary to ſin, and deſtructive of it in every Faculty; as it was with *Eliſha* when he ſtretched himſelf over the *Shunamite's Child, his eyes were againſt the child's eyes, and his mouth againſt the child's*; yea, every Limb in him correſponding to every Limb in the Child; ſo is it in a Regenerate Man, the new Man that is ſpread all over, and covers as it were the whole old Man, Limb for Limb, it is ſpread over every Faculty of the Soul and Body alſo. It is not enough that our Conſciences check us for ſin, but the Will and the Affections muſt be bent againſt ſin; the oppoſition muſt be from the whole Soul, or it is not an evidence of the Truth of Grace. 6. *An oppoſition of the whole Man againſt all ſin a ſign of Grace.*

Why now be exhorted to deal impartially with your own Souls, look into your own ſtate, examine your ſelves, try whether Jeſus Chriſt be formed in you. If your ſtate be good, ſearching into it will give you the comfort of it; if you ſtate be bad, ſearching into it cannot make it worſe, nay, it is the only way to make it better, for Converſion begins with Conviction. Now if you have tired your ſelves by any of theſe Marks, either you find that you are ſuch as are already paſſed from Death to Life, or that you are ſtill in a ſtate of ſinful Nature; accordingly I ſhall direct to you a word of Exhortation, and ſo ſhut up the whole Subject.

Firſt, *If you have a comfortable evidence of your Regeneration, that the habit of Grace is indeed wrought in you, be exhorted to draw it forth into Act:* If you are Born of God, live then as thoſe that are the Children of God. This Exhortation I ſhall branch out into two Particulars.

Firſt,

1. *They that have Grace muſt be fruitful in good Works.*

First, *Endeavour that the Graces of the Spirit be fruitful in good Works:* Your Corruptions are always vigorous and operative, and why ſhould not your Graces be ſo much more? Grace is in you that ruling and prevaling Principle, why ſhould it not alſo be moſt active in you? Yet ſo it is, as it was with *Sarah* and *Hagar*, *Sarah* the Free-born Miſtreſs is barren, but *Hagar* the Bond-woman is fruitful; ſo is it even in the Children of God themſelves, the noble, ſpiritual, and free-born part that uſually is barren and unfruitful, when the carnal and ſervile part is too too fruitful, ſtill conceiving, and ſtill bringing forth. What's the reaſon that Corruption that is conquered ſhould have a more numerous Off-ſpring than Grace that is triumphant? Your Grace is no ſluggiſh unacted Principle, no, it is Etherial, it carries a Divine and Heavenly Fire in it, and tends as naturally to what is good, as the Corrupt part doth to what is ſinful; it hath a natural propenſion to breathe it ſelf forth into holy Thoughts, holy Affections and Deſires, do not you then be wanting to it, but ſtir up the Grace of God that is in you; think how becoming a thing it is when God hath framed you according to his Image and Likeneſs, that you alſo ſhould frame holy Thoughts, and heavenly Affections, according to God's Likeneſs, and have a numerous Progeny like unto him: But alas the Children of God are much wanting to themſelves in this particular: If the Spirit at any time is impregnant upon their Hearts with holy motions; how do they neglect and ſtifle them ſo that there are but very few of them but prove meer Abortives? Our Hearts at laſt will be found to have been the *Graves* and *Sepulchres* of Thouſands of holy Thoughts and Motions, which we have ſtarved in their very Infancy.

2. *Indwelling Grace ought to be oppoſed againſt indwelling Sin.*

Secondly, *Oppoſe indwelling Grace againſt the prevalency and power of indwelling Sin.* Grace it is an Immortal Seed that will certainly ſprout up and flouriſh into Glory; it is a Living Fountain that will certainly ſpring up unto Eternal Life, a Ray of heavenly Light that will wax brighter and brighter to a heavenly Day; it is Immortal in its Seed, Victorious in a Spark, Triumphant in its Dawn; yea, take it when it is weakeſt, when this Dawn is clouded, when this Spark twinkles, when this Seed is unſpirited, yet even then is it mighty through God, and is ſtill an overmatch for Sin; to ſet Grace againſt Sin, is to ſet God againſt *Satan*, Heaven againſt Hell, the Spirit againſt the Fleſh, and what odds can any Chriſtian deſire more? Have we a Principle of Grace in us which will go forth Conquering unto Conquer, and will aſſuredly Crown us with Victory, and ſhall we not bring it to the Trial? Yea, let me tell you, you muſt detain Grace in unrighteouſneſs, and depreſs, and keep it under by violence; if you do not prevail with it, if you do not ſtrive againſt your Sins, you muſt ſtrive againſt your Graces; and therefore it is the greateſt ſhame in the World for you that have a Principle of Grace in you, that Principle that ſhall never totally be overcome, baſely to yield to any Temptation or Luſt whatſoever.

3. *Thoſe that are Born of God muſt live as the Children of God.*

Thirdly, *Be exhorted alſo, ſince you are born of God, to live as becomes the Children of God, and to expreſs your heavenly Parentage by your heavenly Converſation.* I have formerly in the handling of this Subject told you that we are the Children of God two ways, by Regeneration, and by Adoption; Adoption gives us the Inheritance of Children, and Regeneration gives us the Nature of our Heavenly Father: As we then bare the Relation of Children, ſo let us have the Affections of Children.

Duties required of thoſe that are the Children of God. As,

1. *That they fear God. Mal. 1. 6.*

First, *Let us poſſeſs our Hearts with a Filial Fear and Reverence of God.* God calls for this in *Mal.* 1. 6. *If I be a Father, where is mine honour!* And ſo the Apoſtle, 1 *Pet.* 1. 17. *If you call God Father, paſs the time of your ſojourning here with fear.* This holy awe and fear of God will be a great check upon us when we are apt to grow wanton and extravagant. Children whatſoever they do at other times, yet they will ſtrive to deport themſelves reſpectfully in the preſence of their Father. Why conſider, you are always in the preſence of your Heavenly Father who is Omnipotent, he is with you where-ever you are, his Eye is upon you whatever you are doing; Oh, therefore behave your ſelves with that holy Reverence and Compoſedneſs as becomes ſo awful a preſence as his is: Thou who wouldſt abſtain from any lewd and unbecoming Action before the Reverent Face of thy earthly Parents, wilt thou not much more reverence the all-controuling looks of thy heavenly Father? There is not a thought in thy Heart, nor a word upon thy Tongue, but God knows it altogether; and if this be not a moſt powerful reſtraint to keep thee from evil, know this, that the very immodeſty of thy ſinning is a clear proof that thou art no Child. When *Joſeph's* Brethren committed that horrid Fact of ſelling of him, they contrive how they may hide

hide it from the knowledge of their Father; doubtleſs if the Authority of *Jacob*'s preſence had been with them it would a over-awed them for that wickedneſs: Why, behold a more awful and dread Father than *Jacob* was is always with you: And therefore ſince you can hide none of your Sins from your dread Father's ſight, be careful that you commit none in his ſight.

Secondly, *Imitate your Heavenly Father in his Goodneſs and Bounty unto all.* He is kind to the froward, and to the diſobedient; *He cauſeth his Sun to ſhine upon the good and upon the bad, and doth good both to the juſt and to the unjuſt*; ſhould God have avenged all thoſe petulant Wrongs, and thoſe arrogant Affronts that Sinners have done againſt him, the whole World e'er this time would a been utterly deſtroyed; but he hath not left himſelf without Witneſs; it is the Witneſs of his patience and forberrance that the *Sun* yet ſhines upon us, that the Air ſupports us, that the Heavens give forth their cheriſhing influences to us. Now here is a pattern for you to imitate; alas, you cannot be ſo much injured by Men, or ſo beneficial to Men, as God is; they depend no more upon you than you do upon them, but we all depend upon a patient and forbearing God; and yet we are apt upon every ſlight provocation to break forth into Fire and Fury; this is not the Diſpoſition of God, neither ſhould it be the Diſpoſition of his Children: The Divine Nature, whereof we are made partakers, prompts us to be Long-ſuffering, and full of Bowels of Mercy and Compaſſion, and is pleaſed when it can like God forgive others. Jeſus Chriſt who had all the Hoſt of Heaven and Earth in pay under him, and could have commanded whole Legions to have ſecured and revenged himſelf; yet when he was under his Sufferings, hanging upon the Croſs, how patiently did he indure the Scoffings, Shoutings and Mockings of Men, and opens not his Mouth otherwiſe than in Prayer for them, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do*; *when he was reviled he reviled not again?* Imitate now your Lord and Maſter, your God and Father, and when the World reproaches you, and perſecutes you, ſhew that you have learned one thing that nothing but true godlineſs can teach you, to wit, that you are able and willing to forgive them.

2. *That they imitate their Father in his Bounty and Goodneſs.*

Thirdly, *If you are the Children of God be patient and ſubmiſſive under his correcting Hand; is it not thy Father that afflicts thee?* The *Apoſtle* argues this ſtrongly, *Heb.* 12. 9. *If we ſuffer our earthly Parents to chaſtiſe us for their pleaſure*, how much more ſhould we ſuffer patiently the Chaſtiſements of our Heavenly Father, who doth it only for our good, and if need be. Nothing puts a ſharper ſting into Affliction, and makes them more intolerable, than to look upon them as Puniſhments inflicted by an Avenging God; the Soul is not able to bear up under ſuch Afflictions, becauſe then it looks upon the lighteſt and ſmalleſt evil that befalls it to be but as it were the Pledge and Earneſt of a far greater that is to enſue. But now when we can look upon Afflictions as the Chaſtiſements of a gracious Father, this will enable us to bear them not only patiently, but thankfully alſo, as being the Teſtimonies and Effects of his ſpecial Love unto us; for ſays the *Apoſtle*, *He chaſtiſeth every Son whom he receiveth.* The end why God caſts thee into the Furnace of Affliction is to purifie thee from thy droſs, not to conſume thee; he knows what Afflictions, and the Meaſures of them, will beſt conduce to this end, for he is a Wiſe God, and he will bring no other Affliction upon thee than what ſhall accompliſh this end, for he is alſo a gracious Father.

3. *To be patient under his correcting Hand. Heb.* 12. 9.

Theſe Three Exhortations belong to thoſe who by the ſigns before-named, or any other, have attained to ſome Aſſurance that they are Renewed and Born again.

In the ſecond place, *Let me ſpeak to ſuch as are yet in a natural and ſinful Eſtate, in the ſame deplorable ſtate of Sin and Miſery in which they came into the World.* Unto theſe now I ſhall only direct a Twofold Exhortation, and ſo conclude the whole Subject.

2. *An Exhortation to Unregenerate.*

Firſt, *Beware that you do not flatter your ſelves with any deluding Hopes of Heaven, you are as yet without any right to it.* This is indeed a dreadful Caution, what, to beat Men off from their hopes of Heaven? And commonly it proves as fruitleſs as it is dreadful; Mens Hopes of all things frequently deceive them, they maintain themſelves with little, eſpecially the hopes they have of Heaven, and they live either upon weak probabilities, or upon ſtrong fancies; and hence the *Scripture* compares the Hope of a Hypocrite to a *Spider's Web*, *Job* 8. 4. Men ſpin out their hopes out of their own Bowels, and ſettle themſelves in the midſt of them, and doubt not but they ſhall catch Heaven it ſelf in their fooliſh Cobwebs. Should I come and ask you all one by one, do you and you hope to be ſaved? Where is the Perſon that would

1. *Not to deſlude themſelves with falſe hopes of Heaven.*

not by his diſdain at the very queſtion teſtifie how high and how great his Hopes are? Would not the *Drunkard*, the *Swearer*, the *prophane Perſon*, and the whole Rabble of wicked and ungodly Wretches, ſpeak as confidently of their Salvation as if they were Born with ſure proofs of Heaven in their Hands? What are theſe Men regenerate? Or is the price of Heaven fallen, and God become willing to part with it upon lower terms than the New-birth? Art thou Regenerated that hateſt God and Godlineſs, and all thoſe that bear the leaſt reſemblance to the *Divine Purity*? Art thou Regenerated that makeſt an impudent ſcoff at the Name, and derideſt the very Title that fallen Man hath unto Happineſs? Is it likely that the *New Nature* ſhould be hid under an *Old Life*. Regeneration is the ranſacking of the Soul, the turning of a Man out of himſelf, the crumbling to pieces of the old Man, and the new moulding of it into another ſhape; It is the turning of Stones into Children, and a drawing of the lively Portraiture of Jeſus Chriſt upon that very Table that before repreſented only the very Image of the Devil: This mighty change is wrought by Regeneration; Man's partaking of the *Divine Nature* is the greateſt change that ever was wrought in Heaven or in Earth, unleſs it were God's partaking of the Humane Nature. Why now art thou thus changed? Are *all old things done away, and all things in thee become new?* Haſt thou a new Heart and renewed Affections? And doſt thou ſerve God in newneſs of Life and Converſation? If not, what haſt thou to do with Hopes of Heaven? Thou art yet without Chriſt, and ſo conſequently without Hope: Sinners, what is it that you truſt to? Is it your own good Works? This indeed is the common Refuge of thoſe that have feweſt good Works to produce; but alas, What confidence canſt thou repoſe in theſe, when the very *Prayers of the wicked is an abomination unto the Lord*? Is it the Merit of Chriſt that you rely upon? Why Chriſt becomes a Saviour to none but to theſe in whoſe hearts he is firſt formed: Is it ſome ſlight and general Notions of God's Mercy that you truſt to? It is true, God is infinitely merciful though he hath already damned Thouſands for their Sins; and he will remain for ever infinitely merciful, when thou alſo art damned among them: It is in vain to preſs the Mercy of God to ſerve your fooliſh hopes againſt that inviolable Truth of his, that hath excluded you out of Heaven; except you be *Born again, you can in no wiſe enter into the Kingdom of God.* This is that irreverſible Sentence that is written on Heaven Gates, no entring there, but by paſſing firſt through the New-birth; no Dogs nor Swines muſt come into that Holy City; and ſuch are all unrenewed Perſons; yea, the *Scripture* calls them the Children of the *Devil*, 8. *John* 40. *Ye are of your Father the Devil.* And certainly, that God who hath chaſed Devils out of Heaven, will never admit any of his rude Off-ſpring into it. And therefore let me in the firſt place exhort you not to flatter your ſelves into Hell and Deſtruction with falſe and deluding hopes of Heaven.

2. *Unregenerate Men ought to labour to be Regenerate.*

Secondly, *Give no reſt either to God, or to your ſelves, till this thorough change be wrought upon you in your Regeneration.*

It is, as you have heard, of abſolute neceſſity unto Eternal Salvation; and unleſs you think that Salvation it ſelf is not of abſolute neceſſity; what can be the Reaſon that you trifle and dally in that which is of ſo vaſt a Concernment? What is it that you can plead for your ſelves? Is it that it is not within the compaſs of your power to Regenerate your ſelves? It is true, but although you cannot form this New Nature in you, why do you not yet do your utmoſt to prepare and diſpoſe your ſelves to receive it? Though we are all lamed and crippled by our Fall which we took in *Adam*, yet ſuch Cripples as we are may notwithſtanding make ſhift to get into that way by which Chriſt uſeth to paſs, and may poſſibly be healed by him. It is a ſure Rule, *Though God is not bound to give Grace upon Mens Endeavours, yet neither is he wont to deny it.* Do you expect that this change, like that of the ſurviving Saints at the laſt Day, ſhould paſs upon you e'er you are aware of it, in a Moment, in the twinkling of an Eye? It is true, Man's change of Heart is the greateſt *Miracle* that God works in the World, but yet he works it in an ordinary way, by our own Endeavours as well as by his own irreſiſtible and victorious Grace; and therefore God calls upon us, *Ezek.* 18. 31. *Make you a new heart, and a new ſpirit, for why will you die*? Do not therefore cheat your Souls into Eternal Perdition by ſuch lazy Conceits of your own weakneſs and impotency; do not content your ſelves with a few yawning drowſie Wiſhes, expecting till Divine Grace doth of its own ſelf drop down out of Heaven, and of its own accord change your Hearts, poſſibly before that time you your ſelves may irrecoverably drop into Hell; will you loſe your Souls for ever only out of a wretched

Ezek. 18. 31.

wretched ſloth? Doth one end of them lie burning as a Brand in Hell Fire, and will you not ſtretch out your Hand to pluck it thence? Believe it, as long as you continue in a ſinful ſtate you are wrapt about with Ten Thouſand Curſes, the Wrath of God is continually making its approaches unto you, and there is only a thin Mud Wall of Fleſh to fence it out, which is ſtill mouldring and falling away, and whether it will be able to hold out one day longer you know not; you hang over the bottomleſs Pit only by the weak Thread of a frail Life, which is ready to be ſnapt aſunder every moment; and if ſome conſuming Sickneſs ſhould fret this Thread, or ſome fore-unſeen Caſualty ſhould break it off ſuddenly; if Death work a change upon you before Grace works a change in you, of all God's Creation you are the moſt miſerable; better that you had been the moſt loathſome Creature that crawls upon God's Earth, yea, better that you had never been, than that you ſhould forget and neglect this great work of Renovation one moment too long; therefore uſe no delay; every moment that is not this preſent is too long a delay; while you are dreaming of Repentance and Converting ſome Months, or poſſibly ſome Years hence, God may ſnatch you away before the next Sand is run in Time's Glaſs, and where are you then? *Now is the accepted time, now is the day of ſalvation*; whatever is not now may be too late, and e'er that time comes that you have prefixed to your ſelves, God may ſet up your Souls as flaming Monuments of his Diſpleaſure, Juſtice, and Severity, in Hell for ever.

Two Directions how we may be Regenerated, and Born again.

If you ask me what you ſhall do to be Renewed? I anſwer, the Directions are not many; take only theſe two.

1. *Prayer.*

Firſt, *Be inſtant with God by Prayer, that he would by his Omnipotent Grace new create you to himſelf, and ſtamp again upon you his effaced Image.* There is a prevalency in the Prayer of a meer natural Man when he prays for Grace, elſe St. *Peter* would never have exhorted *Simon Magus*, who was in the *gall of bitterneſs, and in the bond of iniquity, to pray that ſo the thought of his heart might be forgiven him.*

2. *A diligent attendance and improvement of all the means of Grace.*

Secondly, *Improve diligently all the Means of Regeneration, whereof the Word is the chief. Of his own will begat he us by the Word of Truth*, ſays the *Apoſtle*, *James* 1. 18. Attend it conſtantly, meditate upon it frequently, endeavour faithfully to practice it; this hath been the way in all Ages that hath proved ſucceſsful for the bringing in of Sinners unto God; Heaven is full of happy Souls that hath been fitted for that glorious Eſtate, by ſuch very Ordinances as theſe are that now you ſet under. It is true, theſe are not of themſelves a ſufficient means; alas, what is the weak Breath of a poor Man to make impreſſions upon Hearts that are harder than the *nether Milſtones*? What can we do to give Sight to the Blind, and Life to the Dead, but only God who demoliſhed the Walls of *Jericho* by the ſound of a few *Rams Horns*, doth likewiſe make uſe of the preaching of the Goſpel to demoliſh the ſtrong holds of *Satan*, which would have been as impertinent and as inſignificant a ſound as that was, had not God put his Inſtitution upon it, and his Spirit into it? Wait upon the Ordinances therefore, that that happy Soul-ſaving Word may at length be ſpoken that may cauſe thee to ariſe, and to ſtand up from the Dead; endeavour to do whatever lies in thy power in order to thy Regeneration; it is true, it is not in our power to make our ſelves New Creatures; but when God ſees thee Conſciencioufly improving that power that thou haſt, he will then give thee that power that thou wanteſt; never yet was there an inſtance of any that did vigorouſly to their utmoſt labour after Grace, that did not alſo leave ſome good Evidences behind them that they did obtain it; and certainly thou haſt no reaſon to think that God will make thee the firſt inſtance and preſident. So much for this time, and for this ſubject.

THE All-ſufficiency OF CHRIST To SAVE SINNERS: WITH THE Prevalency of His Interceſſion.

SERMON XV.

HEB. vii. 25.

Wherefore he is able alſo to ſave them to the uttermoſt that come unto God by him, ſeeing he ever liveth to make Interceſſion for them.

THE general deſign of the Apoſtle in this *Epiſtle*, is to ſhew the Dignity of Chriſt, above the *Levitical Prieſthood*, which he doth, as by many other deep and accurate Arguments; ſo likewiſe by affirming him to be *a Prieſt after the Order of* Melchiſedeck, in the laſt Verſe of the foregoing *Chapter*. In this *Chapter* he proſecutes the Argument by drawing a long parallel between the *Prieſthood* according to *Melchiſedeck*'s Order, and the *Prieſthood* according to *Aaron*'s Order; and in every Compariſon he gives the preheminence to the former above the latter; and thereby proves that Chriſt, who was a *Prieſt* after the Order of *Melchiſedeck*, obtained a more excellent Prieſthood than they who were *Prieſts* according to the Order of *Aaron*.

Now

Now becauſe in this parallel there are many things hard to be underſtood, I ſhall give you a brief Explication of them, and thereby bring you to the *Text*.

Now concerning this *Melchiſedeck* there is much enquiry who he was; ſome think him to be Jeſus Chriſt the Son of God, the Second Perſon in the Bleſſed Trinity, who aſſumed Humane Shape then when *Abraham* returned from purſuing of the Four Kings; but this is altogether impoſſible, becauſe the *Scripture* makes him to be the *King of Salem*, a Viſible and a Temporal King over *Jeruſalem*; for by *Salem* that muſt be implied, as is clear from *Pſal.* 76. 2. Others conjecture this *Melchiſedeck* the ſame with *Shem* the Son of *Noah*; but whether it was him or no it is not much materal, this is certain, that he was appointed and raiſed up by God to be an Eminent and Illuſtrious *Type* of our *High Prieſt Jeſus Chriſt*. Now though the *Levitical Prieſthood* was a clear Type of Chriſt's *Prieſthood*, yet this *Melchiſedeck*, who lived Four Hundred Years before the Inſtitution of that Order, was a more cloſe, adequate *Type*, and far ſuperior to them, and this is here expreſſed.

Firſt, In that he was *King of Salem*, as well as *Prieſt* of the moſt High God, *ver.* 4. Now the *Levitical Prieſts* were not Kings as he was; as in thoſe firſt Ages of the World, it was an uſual Cuſtom for the ſame Perſon that was *King* to exerciſe the *Prieſtly Office*, and therefore he was a more expreſs Reſemblance of Chriſt than the *Aaronical Prieſts* were.

Secondly, In that he was deſcribed to be firſt King of *Righteouſneſs*, and then *King of Salem*, *ver.* 2. that is the King of Peace; herein alſo he is a moſt lively *Type* of Chriſt, who obſerved the ſame Order. Chriſt was *King* of Righteouſueſs, to ſubdue our Sins, ſanctifie our Natures: And he was *King* of Peace, to pacifie our Conſciences through the Aſſurance of Pardom and Acceptance, for this Peace he doth uſually beſtow upon us as the Fruits of Righteouſneſs formerly communicated to us.

Thirdly, In that he was *without Father or Mother, without Deſcent, having neither beginning of Days, nor end of Life*, as *Melchiſedeck* is deſcribed in the third *Verſe*. And herein he outvies the *Aaronical Prieſthood*, for their Birth and Death the *Scripture* Records, but of *Melchiſedeck* it witneſſeth *he lives*, *ver.* 8. Now herein he is a nearer Reſemblance to *Chriſt* than they, for *Chriſt* as God was without Mother, and as Man he was without a Father; as God he hath not beginning of Days, as God and Man he is without end of Life.

Fourthly, He excels them in that *Aaron*, who was the Father of all the *Aaronical Prieſts*, did pay Tythe to him; ſo *ver.* 4. And he received them from him, *ver.* 6. Which denotes that *Abraham* himſelf was Inferior to him, as *ver.* 7. and much more the Children of *Levi*, the Off-ſpring of *Aaron*, who themſelves are ſaid to pay Tythes to *Melchiſedeck*, being in the Loyns of their Father *Abraham*, as we have it in the 9th and 10th *Verſes*. As the publick Acts of the Parent are interpretively the Acts of a Child, ſo likewiſe *Abraham*'s paying Tythes to *Melchiſedeck* is Recorded by God, as *Levi* his paying Tythes in *Abraham*'s Loyns, and thereupon they were profeſſedly Inferior to him. Now that this compariſon may be the more clear and evident, we muſt conſider that *Melchiſedeck* was a Type of Chriſt under a Twofold reſpect.

Firſt, As he was in his own Perſonal Capacity.

Secondly, As deſcribed to us in the *Scriptnre*; for there is a great difference, as we ſhall ſee anon.

Firſt, If we conſider his *Perſonal Capacity*, ſo he was *King* and *Prieſt*; he was really in himſelf ſo; he met *Abraham*, received Tythes from him, and conferred a Bleſſing upon him: But there are other things ſpoken of this *Melchiſedech* in the ſixth Chapter, which to underſtand as really agreeing to the Perſon of *Melchiſedeck*, were utterly impoſſible, as that *he was without Father or Mother, or without Deſcent, or beginning or end of Life*, as we have it in the third and eighth Verſes; and therefore ſome conſidering that this deſcription could not agree to any Man, have fondly fancied that this *Melchiſedeck* was not true Man, but was either *Chriſt*, or the *Holy Ghoſt*, or ſome *Angel*.

Secondly, Therefore we note that theſe things were ſpoken of *Melchiſedeck*, not as really he was in himſelf, but as he is repreſented to us in the *Scripture*, therefore he is ſaid to be *without Father or Mother*, becauſe the *Scripture* mentioneth nothing of them, Records nothing of his Parentage or Pedigree, nothing of his Birth or Death, but is purpoſely ſilent in theſe things, *ver.* 3. That he might be made like the Son

of

of God, the *Scripture* is purpoſely ſilent concerning the Pedigree of *Melchiſedeck*, and the beginning and ending of his Days; that he might be a more lively *Type* of the Son of God, who himſelf in his Divine Nature was without beginning or end of Days; ſo that though truly and really *Melchiſedeck* was a Man Born of Parents by a long Deſcent from *Adam*, whoſe Life had a date both when it begun, and when it ended; yet it is truly ſaid that he was without theſe, becauſe they are not mentioned and recorded in the *Scripture*. Now among theſe high Priviledges and Prerogatives, *Melchiſedeck* doth Typifie the *Prieſthood of Chriſt* better than the *Aaronical Prieſts* could Typifie him, for he is one that *abides and continues* a Prieſt, *ver.* 3. And *he lives*, as in the nineteenth Verſe. The *Scripture* ſpeaks nothing either of his laying down his Office or his Life. Now in this he is an Eminent and Conſpicuous *Type* of Chriſt our *High Prieſt*. For,

Firſt, He hath not laid down his Life ſo as to loſe it, for he was *made after the power of the endleſs life*, as *ver.* 16. Nor,

Secondly, Hath he laid down his *Prieſthood* ſo as not to exerciſe it, for he is a *Prieſt for ever*, and becauſe he *continues for ever, therefore he hath an unchangeable Prieſthood*, as in *ver.* 20. Now the words of the *Text* are a moſt comfortable Inference drawn from all this Diſcourſe concerning the Eternity of *Melchiſedeck*'s *Prieſthood*: The Eternity of it (I ſay) becauſe the *Scripture* ſpeaks nothing of the ceſſation of it, ſo that my *Text* is a comfortable Inference. *Chriſt is able to ſave to the uttermoſt them that come to God by him, ſeeing he ever liveth to make interceſſion for them.* Doth Chriſt for ever live, and for ever ſit at the Right Hand of God? Doth he continually lay open his Wounds, repeat over his Sufferings, plead his Death and Merits, claim a right to a ſure purchaſe? Is he continually perfuming Heaven with the Odour of that ſweet Incenſe, which he daily offers up with Prayers for all the Saints? Believe it, ſuch a Sacrifice muſt needs be acceptable, ſuch an Advocate muſt needs be prevalent, ſuch a Saviour muſt needs be All-ſufficient. *Wherefore he is able to ſave them to the uttermoſt that come unto God by him, ſeeing he ever liveth to make Interceſſion for them.*

In theſe words we have,

Firſt, A *Poſition* couched under a *Suppoſition*: The *Suppoſition* is this, If ſo be Chriſt ſhall ever live to make Interceſſion for the Saints: The *Poſition* is, That Chriſt doth live for ever to make Interceſſion, *&c.* which the Apoſtle before proves, *He is a High Prieſt for ever.*

Secondly, There is an *Inference* or *Corollary* drawn from it, *Therefore he is able to ſave to the uttermoſt*, &c.

In the *Poſition* obſerve theſe two things;

1. The Eternity of the Life of Chriſt in the higheſt Heaven.

2. The Eternity of his *Prieſtly Office*: The former is this, *He lives for ever*: The latter is, *And he lives for this very end*, to make Interceſſion for us.

In the *Inference* we may obſerve,

1. The Truth inferred and aſſerted, *He is able to ſave.*

2. The meaſure and degree of this Salvation, and that is, *to the uttermoſt*, to all ends and perfections; he is able to ſave to all perfections, (that is) altogether.

3. Conſider the Perſons whom he is able thus perfectly to ſave, and they are thoſe only that come unto God by him; and theſe are deſcribed,

1. By their Obedience, *they come unto God*, that is, they perform Service, Obedience and Duty to God.

2. They are deſcribed by their Faith, *they come to God by him*, that is, by Chriſt.

All the Duties and Services which they perform they tender them up by Faith in Chriſt, and by Chriſt to God, they come unto God by him. And beſides all theſe, here is a Connexion of the *Inference* and the *Poſition* together by the word, *Wherefore he is able to ſave*, &c. In the Connexion we have alſo the number of thoſe whom Chriſt makes Interceſſion; not for all Man, but *for thoſe that come to God through him.* O what a rich Vein of *Scripture* is before our Eyes, which lies as an ineſtimable and unſearchable Treaſure in Golden Mines! Though I may ſeem to have but broken and crumbled the words, yet there is abundance of preciouſneſs in every part and parcel of them: I ſhall not now ſtand to raiſe and inſiſt upon all thoſe Obſervations that might pertinently and properly be made from the words thus divided, but ſhall briefly ſpeak to ſome few.

1. From

1. From the Truth inferred, *He is able to ſave to the uttermoſt*. Obſerve,

Doct. I. *That Jeſus Chriſt is an Almighty and an All-ſufficient Saviour.*

He is an High Prieſt and a Saviour All-ſufficient.

Firſt, By his Father's Eternal Deſignation, *Pſal.* 89. 19. *I have laid help upon one that is mighty*, &c.

Secondly, He is an All-ſufficient Saviour by his own voluntary ſuſception and undertaking for us, *Pſal.* 40. 7. *Then ſaid I, lo, I come in the volume of thy book, it is written of me, to do thy Will, O God.* And the Apoſtle quotes it in *Heb.* 10. 7.

Thirdly, By the Infinite Glory and Excellency of the Divine Nature, which hath a double Influence to make him an All-ſufficient Saviour.

1. *It puts an infinite worth and value upon his Sacrifice*, and ſo hath made his Offering acceptable, and a full Price and Ranſom for Sinners. It is called the *Blood of God*, Acts 20. 28. *Feed the flock of God which he hath purchaſed with his own Blood:* And certainly the Blood of God muſt needs be an All-ſufficient Expiation for the Sin of Man.

2. The Divine Nature gave Chriſt a Power, and an Ability to appeaſe and ſatisfie Infinite Juſtice and Wrath, and break the Chains of Death, and the Barrs of the Grave, under which he had been detained, elſe our Salvation had been a thing deſperate and deplorable; but herein is he manifeſted to be the Son of God, and Saviour of the World, even with power, in that he died and roſe again.

Fourthly, *He is an All-ſufficient Saviour by his Humane Capacity:* As he would not have been able to ſave us, unleſs he had been God, ſo he would not have been capable to ſave us, unleſs he had been Man. Now Chriſt's *Humanity* hath a Twofold Influence into the Work of our *Redemption.*

1. In that thereby that Perſon who is God became *Paſſive*, and a fit Subject to receive and bear the Wrath of God.

2. Hereby ſatisfaction is made to offend Juſtice in the ſame nature which tranſgreſſed and offended: *By Man came death, and by the Man Jeſus Chriſt came the reſurrection from the dead*, 1 *Cor.* 15. 2. And therefore Chriſt ſaith, *A body haſt thou prepared me*, *Heb.* 10. 5. To what end? The *Apoſtle* tells us, *That through death he might deſtroy him that had power of Death, that is, the Devil.* Both Natures are here required, his *Humane Nature*, without which he could not ſuffer Death, and the *Divine Nature*, without which he could not deſtroy him who had power of Death.

Fifthly, *He became an All-ſufficient Saviour by the overflowing and unmeaſurable Unction of the Holy Ghoſt.* Thus *Iſa.* 6. 1. *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, becauſe the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings*, &c. *John* 3. 34. *God gave not his Spirit in meaſure to him*, yea, the *fulneſs of the Godhead dwelt bodily in him*, *Col.* 2. 9. and all this was on purpoſe to furniſh him with Gifts and Graces ſuitable to the diſcharge of the great work of his *Mediatorſhip.* Now certainly ſince he was by God the Father deſigned, and of his own Self ready and willing, by his Humanity capacitated, by his Divinity fortified, and by Unction of the Holy Spirit furniſhed to the Work of our Salvation, he muſt needs be an All-ſufficient Saviour, *able to ſave to the uttermoſt thoſe that come to God by him.*

In the next place for the Perſons whom Chriſt is thus enabled to ſave, they are deſcribed by their Faith and Obedience; they come to God by Chriſt. Obſerve,

Doct. II. *That Chriſt himſelf, although he is an All-ſufficient Saviour, able to ſave to the uttermoſt, yet he is not able to ſave the Diſobedient, and Unbelievers.*

He only ſaves thoſe that come unto God by him. Now this,

Firſt, Is not for want of Merit or Vertue in that Sacrifice which our High Prieſt hath once offered up; not for want of any Value or Preciouſneſs in his Blood, or Sufficiency in his Price, for there is Intrinſick Vertue enough in the Blood of Chriſt to ſave the whole World. Nor,

Secondly, Is it from any natural dependance that Salvation hath upon Faith and Obedience, for God was free, and might have diſpoſed of the Eternal Inheritance upon other terms. But,

Thirdly,

Thirdly, It was only upon the Ordination and Appointment of God, who hath inſtituted the way of Salvation to be by the Death of Chriſt, who hath appointed the vertue of his Death to be applied to us only by the Grace of Faith, which Faith without Obedience and good Works is in it ſelf dead, and can neither juſtifie nor ſave us; ſo then without Faith and Obedience Chriſt cannot ſave us, becauſe that Vertue whereby he ſhould ſave us, cannot without theſe reach us. Faith being the conveyance of the Vertue of Chriſt's Merits to the Soul, that is the ſecond Propoſition. The third and laſt ſhall be raiſed from the Connexion of both parts of the *Text* put together. *Therefore he is able to ſave to the uttermoſt thoſe that come to God by him, becauſe he ever liveth to make interceſſion for them.* Obſerve from hence.

Doct. III. *That the true ground and reaſon of Chriſt's All-ſufficiency to ſave Sinners, is laid upon the prevalency of his Interceſſion for us.*

And this becauſe it is the moſt comprehenſive Point, taking in both the former, is that which I chuſe to inſiſt upon.

In the proſecution of which *Doctrine*, I ſhall,

Firſt, ſpeak of *Chriſt's Interceſſion.*

Secondly, Concerning his *All-ſufficiency to ſave*, which depends upon, and flows from it.

And concerning *Chriſt's Interceſſion*,

I ſhall enquire into Three Things.

1. *What it is, and wherein it doth conſiſt.*
2. *What are the Benefits that do redound to Believers by it.*
3. *What the Extent and Latitude of it is.*

Firſt, For the opening what it is, we muſt know that *Interceſſion* is a Law-term borrowed from *Courts of Judicature*, and ſignifies the Action of a *Proxy* or *Attorney*, either in ſuing out the Rights of his *Client*, or anſwering the Cavils and Objections brought againſt him by the *Plaintiff*. Thus doth Chriſt for Believers, *he appears for them*, Heb. 9. 24. *He is entred into heaven appearing in the preſence of God for us.* Nay, he doth in ſome ſenſe carry Believers into Heaven with him, and there ſets them before his Father's Throne, as we have it, *Eph.* 2. 6. *And hath raiſed us up together, and made us ſet together in heavenly places in Chriſt Jeſus.* Even as the *High Prieſt* did bear the Names of the *Twelve Tribes* upon his Breaſt when he entred into the *Holy of Holies*; ſo Chriſt when he entred into Heaven he bears upon his Heart the Names and Perſons of all his, and preſents them before his Father; he hath taken their Cauſe, and pleads it with God his Father; as the *Apoſtle* ſpeaks, *We have an Advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the Righteous*, 1 John 2. 1.

This *Interceſſion* is of three ſorts.

Firſt, *Charitative Interceſſion:* And thus one Man is bound by the Duty of Charity and Conſcience to pray and intercede for another. And of this kind of *Interceſſion* we have mention made, 1 *Tim.* 2. 1. *I exhort therefore that firſt of all ſupplications, prayers, interceſſions, and giving of thanks be made for all Men*; that is, Interceſſion of Mutual Charity one for another.

Secondly, There is an *Adjutory Interceſſion*, a helping Interceſſion; and thus the *Holy Spirit* makes Interceſſion for Believers, *Rom.* 8. 26, 27. *Likewiſe the Spirit alſo helpeth our infirmites, for we know not what we ſhould pray for as we ought, but the Spirit it ſelf maketh interceſſion for us with groanings which cannot be uttered*, &c. He makes *Interceſſion* for us, becauſe by his holy Inſpirations he makes thoſe Prayers and Interceſſions for us, which we make for our ſelves, and this is an *Adjutory Interceſſion*; we are indigent, and ſee not our own wants, nor have we Tongues to expreſs them; and withal, we are dull and heavey, and make not importunate Supplications, and therefore God ſends his Spirit into our Hearts to diſcover our neceſſities to us, to raiſe deſires in us, and put words into our Mouths, and teach us what to pray for, and how to pray as we ought.

Thirdly, There is an *Official and an Authoritative Interceſſion*, and this properly belongs to Chriſt; and this may be conſidered under a Twofold Reſpect.

Firſt, His *Interceſſion* in his ſtate of *Humiliation*, and this is in a Congruity to that debaſed ſtate, wherein *with ſtrong cries, and tears, and groans, he made ſupplications to God*, *Heb.* 5. 7. Yea, when he was under the ſharpeſt Agonies, when he was bruiſed by God, and broken by Men, ſuffering the wrath of the one, and the wrongs of the other. When his own Pains might have made his Prayers Selfiſh, or his Enemies Malice might have made him Revengeful, yet even then he forgets not to intercede for them, Luke 23. 34. *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.* Although he was made in the *form of a ſervant deſpiſed and rejected of Men*, Iſa. 63. 3. *Accurſed of God*, *Gal.* 3. 13. expoſed to reproach and injuries, devoted to Death, notwithſtanding all this his *Interceſſion* was not at all regarded the leſs, or the leſs prevalent, but even in this low eſtate and vile appearance, he prayed with *Majeſty* and *Authority*, *Father, I will that thoſe whom thou haſt given me may be with me where I am*, John 17. 24. *I am that they may behold my glory*, &c.

Secondly, His Interceſſion may be conſidered as performed on our behalf in his *ſtate of Glory an Exaltation*; after his offering up himſelf here upon Earth as a Sacrifice upon the Croſs, he entred into the moſt Holy Place, and there he proſecutes the ſame Suit which he here commenced, *Rom.* 8. 34. *It is Chriſt that died, yea, rather that is riſen again, who is aſcended into heaven*, where he continually maketh *Interceſſion* for us.

Now this glorious *Interceſſion* of Chriſt doth principally conſiſt in theſe following Particulars, which I ſhall endeavour to illuſtrate and open.

Firſt, in his appearing in the Court of Heaven in both Natures, as our *Mediator* and *Advocate*, ready to anſwer any Charge laid in againſt us, or ſuing out any good thing that belongs to us. Thus when *Joſhua* the *High-Prieſt* ſtood before the *Angel* in filthy Garments, *Zach.* 3. 1. *Satan ſtood at his right hand to accuſe him.* The Accuſation was true, the Crime was manifeſt: Now here the *Angel* (that is Jeſus Chriſt) interpoſeth, he appears for us, ſaying, *The Lord rebuke thee Satan*; what though the Garments be filthy, I will take them away, *I have cauſed their Iniquity to paſs from them*; and this may be for our abundant Conſolation, though *Satan* by his Accuſations and Temptation ſtand continually at our Right Hand to reſiſt us, yet Chriſt in Heaven always ſtands at the Right Hand of God to plead for us, and ſilence *Satan*: And this was typified to us by the *High-Prieſt* entring into the Holy of Holies, to make *Interceſſion* for the People.

Secondly, Chriſt preſents as his own Perſon, ſo likewiſe the Perſons of all his Bleſſed Ones throughout the World of all Believers, and the Elect Ones, to God the Father, and that not only in the general or total Sum, that they are ſo many Thouſands, for whom he obtained Mercy, for whom he muſt obtain Salvation, not only as the *High-Prieſts* among the *Jews*, who only had the Names of the Twelve Tribes engraven upon their Breaſt-plates, but not the Name of every particular Perſon of thoſe Tribes; but Chriſt hath every particular Saint's Name ingraven upon his Breaſt, and makes mention of every particular Saint in his Interceſſion to his Father; *He is the good ſhepherd*, John 10. 3. *that knows every one of his ſheep* by Name. Let the meaneſt Chriſtian who is ſo obſcure that his Name ſtands unknown upon Earth, let him take comfort, and rejoice in this, that his Name is well known in Heaven; Chriſt hath often ſpoken, and God hath often heard it; yea, though Chriſt hath ſo many to hear, ſo many to relieve and gratifie, yet let not the meaneſt, the moſt inconſiderable Saint on Earth, think that he forgets him, for he knows him by Name, and takes as much care and ſolicitouſneſs for thy Salvation, as if there were not a Soul in the World to ſave beſides thee, making Prayers for thee that thy Faith fail not, as Chriſt ſaid to St. *Peter*; and what is ſaid of him may be applied in truth to every Believer, *Luke* 22. 37.

3. Thirdly, *Chriſt's Interceſſion* conſiſts in preſenting the performances of his People unto God.

All the Duties and Services of all the Saints on Earth, they do only aſcend to God, when as they preſented to him by Chriſt; for he is that *Angel* mentioned in *Rev.* 8. 3. having a *Golden Cenſor* with much Incenſe, which he offers up with the Prayer of all Saints on the Golden Altar, *&c.* It was a true Speech of him, *John* 9.

31. *God heareth not ſinners*, and therefore he never heareth us becauſe we are Sinners; but he always heareth his Son, who ſpeaks over for us the ſame Prayers that we have before ſpoken, and ſo he hears us ſpeaking by him, and he is well-pleaſed with thoſe Duties that otherwiſe would be an abomination to him.

Fourthly, Chriſt preſents to God as our Services, ſo alſo his own Merits, and that as the full and the equitable price of all the Mercies for which he intercedes; for Chriſt's *Interceſſion* is not a bare begging of bleſſings to be beſtowed *gratis* upon us, but all his Tranſactions in the Court of Heaven are in a way of Satisfaction and Purchaſe. Is Sin to be pardoned? Lo here is the Blood of Propitiation and Atonement. Is Mercy to be procured? Lo here is the price of the Purchaſe, all that we receive through the *Interceſſion* of Chriſt; it is at once both the Effect of Free Grace and Bounty, and yet likewiſe the Purchaſe of All-ſufficiency, and of a Meritorious price in reſpect of us; all is free in reſpect of Chriſt's undertaking, without our Preordination, free as to performance without our Premotion, free in the effectual Application of it to us; but though all this is free Grace in reſpect of us, yet in reſpect of Chriſt it is the Purchaſe of a full price, and coſt him the laying aſide of his own Glory, the obſcuring of himſelf in a Vail of Fleſh, aſſuming a Body to prepare him for the Work of our Redemption. It coſt him the loſing of his Life, the ſhedding of his moſt precious Blood to accompliſh that Redemption, 1 *Cor.* 6. 20. 1 *Cor.* 7. 27. *Ye are all bought with a price*, &c. *We are not redeemed with corruptible things, as ſilver and gold, but with the precious blood of Chriſt*, 1 *Pet.* 1. 18. Now as Chriſt once offered up himſelf up to the Croſs, ſo he continually offers up himſelf in Interceſſion, and preſents that Blood to his Father that he formerly ſhed for Sinners; and therefore it is remarkable, that where Chriſt is called our *Advocate*, he is called likewiſe our *Propitiation*, 1 John 2. 1, 2. *If any Man ſin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the Righteous, and he is alſo the Propitiation for our ſins.* Noting to us that the validity of the Interceſſion of Chriſt conſiſts in the Merits of his Death and Sufferings, which price offered up as a Propitiation unto God in his Interceſſion is for the Sins of all thoſe that believe.

Fifthly, *Chriſt alſo preſents his Will and Deſire to his Father in his Interceſſion.* Which by vertue of his Merits is always heard and granted; and this he doth not in a ſupplicatory manner, but by Authority, by his abſolute Dominion which he hath over thoſe Mercies he intercedes for; *Father, I will that thoſe whom thou haſt given me may be with me*, &c. *All Authority is given to the Son*, John 5. 22. Therefore it is ſaid, *Rom.* 8. 34. *That he is at the right hand of God making interceſſion for us*; which Phraſes imports, that all Power both in Heaven and Earth is conſigned over to Chriſt, and therefore his *Interceſſion* at the Right Hand of God is an *Interceſſion* with Authority, ſuch an *Interceſſion* as cannot, as ſhall not be denied; ſo then in theſe *Five Particulars* we may ſee wherein the *Interceſſion* of Chriſt conſiſts in preſenting his own Perſon, and appearing in the Court of Heaven for us, in offering up our Duties and Services, in preſenting his own Merits, and likewiſe his Soveraign and Uncontroulable Will to his Father; by all which we may reſt abundantly ſecured, that all the good things which we ask in his Name, and that he asks on our behalf, ſhall be certainly conferred upon us. So much for the *firſt* thing propounded, what the *Interceſſion* of Chriſt is, and wherein it doth conſiſt.

Secondly, Let us conſider (according to the Method propounded) this *Interceſſion of Chriſt in the latitude and extent of it*; I ſhall do this under a Twofold Reſpect.

1. In reſpect of the *Time* wherein it is made.
2. In reſpect of the *Perſons* for whom it is prevalent.

1. Conſider *the Interceſſion of Chriſt in reſpect of the Time*; and ſo we may take notice too how he performed it before his Aſſumption of Fleſh, and likewiſe how it ſhall be performed after the Conſummation of all things to all Eternity: As to the former obſerve, that though it be moſt eminently performed ſince the *Hypoſtatical Union* of both Natures in the Perſon of Chriſt, yet it was alſo effectually performed before his taking of our Fleſh upon him. For as now Chriſt intercedes upon the account of thoſe Sufferings he hath undergone in his Body, ſo he interceded, and his Interceſſion was prevalent before he was made Fleſh, though the Merit which made

that

that Interceſſion prevalent was wrought out in the Fleſh; therefore we find in the *Old Teſtament* Chriſt interceding before he was *God-Man* actually, but as the *Second Perſon* of the Bleſſed *Trinity*, he was afterwards to be made *God-Man*, Zach. 1. 12. *The Angel of the Lord* (that is Jeſus Chriſt) *anſwered and ſaid, O Lord of Hoſts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on* Jeruſalem, *and in the Cities of* Judah? *&c.* Yea, the Saints then alive made uſe of the Name of Chriſt in their Prayers to God the Father; ſo you have it, *Dan.* 9. 17. *Now therefore, O our God, hear the Prayer of thy ſervant*, &c. *and cauſe thy face to ſhine upon thy ſanctuary that is deſolate for the Lord's ſake:* So that hence you ſee that *Chriſt's Interceſſion* begun in Heaven long before his abode here upon Earth, yea, it was the very firſt part of the Office of his *Mediatorſhip* that he entred upon; Chriſt did nothing as *Mediator* till after the Fall; and the firſt thing he did as in that relation it was interceding for fallen Man, to keep him from Death threatned, and to reſtore him to Life which he had forfeited.

2. Conſider Chriſt's Interceſſion, not only as performed from all Eternity, but after the conſummation of all things. He intercedes for his Church, not only while Militant on Earth, but when Triumphant in Glory, *He ever lives to make Interceſſion for us.* Chriſt is ſaid to be a *Prieſt for ever*, *Heb.* 6. 20. and to have an unchangeable *Prieſthood* in the Verſe before the Text. Now the *Prieſthood* of Chriſt hath two parts, *Oblation* and *Interceſſion*; his Oblation was when he made his Soul an Offering for Sin, and offered up himſelf as a Sacrifice to God upon the Altar of the Croſs: Now this part of his *Prieſthood* is ceaſed, *Heb.* 10. 14. *By once offering up himſelf, he hath for ever perfected them that are ſanctified*, &c. *Heb.* 9. 26. Chriſt being a *Prieſt* for ever, and not being a *Prieſt* any longer in reſpect of his Oblation, it remains that the Eternity of his Prieſthood deſcends upon his *Interceſſion* only, and therefore his *Interceſſion* is Eternal. But you may ask me, what need ſhall we ſtand in of the Interceſſion of Chriſt, when we are glorified with him, and what then ſhall he intercede for? To this I anſwer, The *Interceſſion* of Chriſt is Twofold, *Conciliatory* and *Reconciliatory*; the firſt is, That whereby Mercy and all good Things, both Temporal, Spiritual and Eternal are effectually procured for us, and beſtowed upon us. The other is, That whereby Pardon, Juſtification and Atonement are freely conferred upon us. While we are upon the Earth, we ſtand in need to receive the Benefit of both theſe *Interceſſions*, for they are aptly ſuited to our Twofold ſtate of Wants and Miſeries. Our ſtate of Sin and Imperfection. Our Wants are ſupplied by his *Conciliatory Interceſſion*, and our Sins pardoned by his *Reconciliatory Interceſſion*, and both theſe we have abſolute need of while we live here in this vale of Tears: But accordingly as the Church and People of God do out-grow the ſtate of Want and Sin, ſo alſo theſe *Interceſſions* of Chriſt our High-Prieſt ceaſe.

1. Chriſt's Reconciliatory Interceſſion that ever ceaſeth in Heaven when he hath gathered together the number of his Elect into one, for then they ſhall all be in a full, perfect and ſinleſs condition; we ſhall then never more offend God, never more be alienated and eſtranged from God by ſin; and when we are poſſeſſed of ſuch a bleſſed ſtate as this is, there ſhall be no more need of a Days-man for to make Interceſſion and Reconciliation for all diſtances, and enmity ſhall be utterly aboliſhed; therefore Chriſt's *Interceſſion* doth not laſt for ever as to this part which is *Reconciliatory*.

2. As for his *Conciliatory Interceſſion*, whereby he obtains for us Mercy and all good Things, that is, thoſe good things that are either Temporal or Spiritual, that reſpect this Life, or elſe which reſpect the future ſtate of Glory in Heaven. The former part of this *Interceſſion* of Chriſt that ſhall likewiſe ſhortly ceaſe, becauſe this Life it ſelf ſhall ſhortly ceaſe, and the Saints themſelves alſo; for when all that have been tranſlated, or that have died, ſhall be raiſed to a better Life, all the wants which they do now ſuſtain on the account of Grace, or a want of Peace, or a want of Protection, or a want of Proviſion, inward wants, or outward worldly wants or evils, ſhall all ceaſe there, and therefore the Interceſſion of Chriſt, as it reſpects the Mercies of this Life, ſhall ſhortly ceaſe. Now *Chriſt's Interceſſion for future Glory*, that is, either for the ſubſtance of it, or for the continuance of it; as for the ſubſtance of their Glory Chriſt intercedes for that before he Crowns them

with it. John 17. 24. *Father, I will that thoſe whom thou haſt given me may be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou haſt given me.* The *Beatifical Viſion* is the very Glory and Happineſs of the Saints in Heaven, and when they are brought to behold this Glory of Chriſt this *Interceſſion* ceaſeth. But then,

Laſtly, There is Chriſt's Interceſſion for the continuance of their Glory, and this is that *Interceſſion* which is Everlaſting, that *Interceſſion* which he ever lives to make; as our Saviour Chriſt ever lives, ſo he ever makes *Interceſſion* for the Saints, that they may never be cut off from God's preſence, nor fall from their Happineſs, nor forfeit their Glorious Inheritance; for in Heaven it ſelf, though we be there in a moſt perfect and ſinleſs ſtate, yet were it not for the *Interceſſion* of Chriſt, whereby every moment he procures us a confirmation of that eſtate, we ſhould have no more ſecurity of our continuance than the *Angels* which fell, who were more holy and happy than ever we were; we ſhould have no more confirmation than *Adam* had in *Paradiſe*, who forfeited his Happineſs by the mutability of his own Will. Therefore I ſay, the *continuance* of the Saints now in Heaven depends upon the *Everlaſting Interceſſion*, of Jeſus Chriſt. Thus we have conſidered the extent of Chriſt's *Interceſſion*, as to the time where he makes it, and that before his Incarnation, and likewiſe after the Conſummation of all things.

2. Let us now conſider the *extent* of *Chriſt's* Interceſſion as to the Reaſons for whom he intercedes, and that is for all his in oppoſition to the World; we have this plain in Chriſt's Prayer on Earth, whis is the pattern and draught of his *Interceſſion* in Heaven, *John* 17. 9. *I pray not for the world, but for thoſe thou haſt given me out of the World.* I pray for them, thoſe that thou deſigneſt ſhall be brought to Glory by my Merits. Now for theſe, ſome are yet in a ſtate of Nature, diſobedient, impenitent, Unbelievers, others are in a ſtate of Grace actually converted and regenerated; Chriſt intercedes for both; for theſe latter he intercedes thoroughout the whole Chapter, *John* 17. 20. *Neither pray I for theſe alone, but for all thoſe that ſhall believe on me through their word.* And many which were then living, and received the Benefits of Chriſt's *Interceſſion* in their Effectual *Vocation* and *Converſion* for Unbelievers Chriſt prays that they may obtain Grace, for Believers that they may obtain more Grace, and through it be brought to Glory, and that is the *ſecond* Conſideration in reſpect of the Interceſſion of Chriſt, as to the *latitude* and *extent* of it, both as to the Time and Perſons.

3. Another thing propounded, is to conſider the *Interceſſion of Chriſt in reſpect of the Benefits that flow from it*, and thoſe are very great and manifold Bleſſings, worthy to be obtained by ſo great an *Advocate*.

Now there are but two things wherein the Office of an Advocate properly conſiſts. The

Firſt, Is to defend his *Client* from Wrongs and Injuries.
Secondly, Another is to procure good things for him.

The Firſt he doth by anſwering the Accuſations and Exceptions that are brought againſt him, and the latter he doth by ſuing out his Right and Title; both theſe the Lord Jeſus Chriſt our *Advocate* doth for us.

1. He defends us from thoſe evils that our Adverſaries by their Accuſations bring againſt us; as we are Sinners, God's Juſtice, our own Conſciences, and *Satan's Malice* come in as our Adverſaries, and all laying their ſeveral Charges againſt us; *Juſtice* that calls for Vengeance, *Conſcience* thunders, *Satan* rageth, and all accuſe us. God calls to the Bar, Sinner, ſuch and ſuch a Sin thou art guilty of that deſerves Eternal Damnation; true, Lord, ſaith *Conſcience*, I will witneſs the ſame againſt him, having warned him of it, and checked him for it, but he hath fallen upon me, and wounded me, while I in thy Name, I have given him theſe Admonitions. True, Lord, ſaith the *Devil* too, all this he did upon my Suggeſtions and Temptations, therefore reſign him over to me for Puniſhment. Now when the poor Sinner ſtands mute and trembling, his mighty *Advocate* pleads his Cauſe, and ſilenceth all theſe Accuſations that are brought againſt him, and ſets him right; and this he doth two ways.

1. He

1. He doth it by Reconciling God and *Conſcience* through his own Blood, which Blood, as it is the Blood of Atonement, ſo it reconciles God and us; and as it is the Blood of Sprinkling, ſo it reconciles our own *Conſcience* to us. As it is the Blood of Atonement, ſo we are reconciled to God, and God to us, *Rom.* 5. 10. *We are reconciled to God by the death of his Son*, and it is that *blood which ſpeaks better things for us than the blood of Abel*; for as that cries to God for Vengeance, ſo this cries louder for Mercy and Forgiveneſs. As it is the Blood of Sprinkling, ſo it reconciles our own Conſciences to us, and makes them at peace with us. *Heb.* 10. 22. *Let us draw near with a true heart, in full aſſurance of faith, having our hearts ſprinkled from an evil Conſcience*, &c. An evil Conſcience, that is, an accuſing and an affrighting Conſcience; it is ſaid to be ſprinkled, becauſe the Blood of Chriſt muſt firſt produce purity in our Souls before it can procure any well-grounded peace, that is the *firſt* Particular, how Chriſt defends us from the Accuſations of our Adverſaries, by reconciling the Juſtice of God, and our own Conſciences to us.

2. Our Advocate defends us as by reconciling God and our own Conſciences to us, ſo by gagging the Mouth of the Devil, who becauſe he can never be reconciled, therefore he muſt be ſilenced; ſo we find that Chriſt ſtopt the Mouth of that great Accuſer, *Zach.* 3. 2. *The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan, even the Lord that hath choſen* Jeruſalem, *rebuke thee*, &c. Thus our Lord Jeſus Chriſt by his powerful Interceſſion ſilenceth all the Accuſations that are brought againſt us, by the Juſtice of God and our own Conſciences, reconciling them unto us, and ſtopping the Mouth of our implacable Adverſary the Devil; ſo that none of their Accuſations, though preferred againſt us, can prevail to our detriment or diſadvantage. All this we have ſummarily collected together in *Rom.* 8. 33, 34. *Who ſhall lay any thing to the charge of God's Elect? It is God that juſtifieth, who is he that condemneth? It is Chriſt that died, yea, rather that is riſen again, who is even at the right hand of God making interceſſion for us.* This is the firſt Great *Benefit* which we receive from the *Interceſſion* of Chriſt, he defends us from thoſe Evils which our Adverſaries through their Accuſations endeavour to bring upon us, and preferr againſt us.

THE

THE All-ſufficiency OF CHRIST To SAVE SINNERS: WITH THE Prevalency of His Interceſſion.

SERMON XVI.

HEB. vii. 25.

Wherefore he is able alſo to ſave them to the uttermoſt that come unto God by him, ſeeing he ever liveth to make Interceſſion for them.

I Now come to ſpeak of thoſe good things which by Chriſt's Merits we have a Right and Title to, and innumerable are the Benefits that redound to Believers by the Interceſſion of Chriſt; if you enquire what they are, I anſwer,

1. In General, the whole Work of our Salvation depends as well upon the *Life* and *Interceſſion* of Chriſt as upon his *Death* and *Sufferings*; this, though it may ſeem ſtrange poſſibly to thoſe who are wont to hear our Salvation aſcribed only to the *Death* and *Sufferings* of Chriſt's, but yet it evidently appears from *Scripture*, that our Salvation, and all the Benefits we are to receive and expect, do as much flow from the Vertues of his Glorious *Life* and *Interceſſion*, as from the Merits of his *Death* and *Paſſion*. There are two things requiſite before any good thing can become ours.

1. A Meritorious Procurement or Purchaſe of the thing it ſelf.

2. An actual and Effectual Application of it to us. Now the Purchaſe is made by his *Death* and *Sufferings*, but the Effectual Application of them, that is, by his *Life* and *Interceſſion*; by the former the Mercies are purchaſed, by the latter the Purchaſe is enjoyed; therefore if Chriſt had only died, and not riſen again, and overcome and triumphed over Death in his own Empire, and triumphed over the Grave as in his own Territories, his undertakings had redounded to his own diſappointment, but not at all to our Salvation: But herein, ſaith the *Apoſtle*, doth he *declare himſelf to be the Son of God with power by his Reſurrection from the dead*, Rom. 1. 4. Our hopes of Salvation had been all buried in the ſame Grave with him, but that what he died to purchaſe he lives to beſtow, for *he ever liveth to make Interceſſion*. There was no one

one prejudice that hindered the *Goſpel* ſo much from taking place in the Hearts of the *Heathens* in the Primitive Times as the Death and Croſs of Chriſt, for they believed he was lift up upon the Croſs, but would not believe he was raiſed from the Grave: Their natural Reaſon herein taught them this Inference, that to expect Life from Chriſt was to hope for it from him that could not preſerve his own, or reſtore it again after the loſs of it. It is true, it ſeems to natural Reaſon to be Folly thus to hope for Life from a dead Perſon: Were it not that his Life applied what his Death purchaſed, and our Salvation which was begun on the Croſs is perfected on the Throne; and therefore we have it in *Acts* 7. 24. *God raiſed him from the Grave, becauſe it was impoſſible that he ſhould be held of it?* why ſo; Was it not poſſible that Chriſt ſhould be held of the Grave? I anſwer, upon theſe two accounts, one impoſſibility was in regard of his Perſon, another in regard of his Office; for as he was Man, ſo he abhorred *Death*, and a ſeparation from his Body; and as he was God, ſo he was able to reunite them, to overcome *Death*, and burſt aſunder the Barrs of the Grave; ſo that as Man having a deſire to live, and as God having power to live, it was impoſſible for him to be detained Priſoner in the Grave; but this is not all, there is another impoſſibility in regard of his *Office*, he was appointed to redeem loſt Man, to reſcue him from Eternal Death, and therefore it was impoſſible for him to be kept under the power of any Temporal *Death*, becauſe this could not be done while he lay under a reſtraint of the *Grave*, his *Death* would have been but a dead thing to us without his *Reſurrection*. It was his Life that put vertue into his *Death* for the Obedience of Chriſt; it hath a Twofold Vertue.

1. *As it is a Satisfaction to Offended Juſtice.*
2. *As it is a Purchaſe of Forfeited Mercy.*

Now both theſe become Benefits to us by Chriſt's Life and Interceſſion.

1. *His Satisfaction to Offended Juſtice*, whereby we are reconciled to God, and God to us; that ſatisfaction which was purchaſed and procured by his Death becomes beneficial to us by his Life; ſo we have it, *Rom.* 5. 10. *For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the Death of his Son, much more being reconciled we ſhall be ſaved by his Life.* But the Actual Application of this is by his Life, therefore it follows in the ſame place, *much more we ſhall be ſaved by his Life.* We were fully reconciled by his *Death* in reſpect of Merit, but we are much more reconciled by his *Life* in reſpect of the effectual Application of that Merit to us.

2. Chriſt purchaſed thoſe Bleſſings and Mercies which we had forfeited, and they are made effectual and beneficial to us by his Life. There are three great and principal Mercies which Chriſt purchaſed for us, *Juſtification and Pardon*, *Sanctification or Holineſs*, and the future *Inhetitance* of Life and Glory. Now theſe three become effectual to us by *Chriſt's Life.*

1. *Juſtification and the Pardon of our Sins* that becomes effectual and beneficial to us by the Life of Chriſt, *Rom.* 4. 25. *He was delivered for our Offences, and was raiſed again for our Juſtification.* If he had not riſen from the dead, he himſelf could not be juſtified, much leſs could we be juſtified by him. And therefore, ſaith the *Apoſtle*, 1 Tim. 3. 16. *And without controverſie great is the myſtery of godlineſs, God manifeſt in the Fleſh, juſtified in the Spirit, ſeen of Angels*, &c. That is, he was manifeſted in the Fleſh in his *Incarnation.* He was ſeen of *Angels* in his *Glorious Aſcention*; but he was juſtified in the Spirit in his *Reſurrection*; had he never been raiſed from the dead by his Spirit, that is, by the Almighty Power of the Divine Nature, he had not been declared juſt, nor could he ever have juſtified us.

2. *Sanctification and Holineſs* is the powerful effect of the *Life* of Chriſt, though it was the purchaſe of his *Death*, therefore ſaith the *Apoſtle*, Phil. 3. 10. *That ye may know him, and the power of his Reſurrection*; that is, that power that through his Reſurrection he doth apply to us, and raiſeth us up alſo to newneſs of Life, and this he calls *our being planted together into the likeneſs of his Reſurrection*, Rom. 6. 5. *For if we have been planted together in the likeneſs of his death, we ſhall be alſo in the likeneſs of his Reſurrection.*

3. *Our future Inheritance of Life and Glory* is likewiſe aſcribed to the *Life* of Chriſt, though it was purchaſed by his *Death*, John 14. *Becauſe I live ye ſhall live alſo*; that is, becauſe I live Eternally in Heaven, ye ſhall live Eternally in Heaven alſo. So then in the *General*, you ſee that there is no benefit redounding to Believers by the *Death* of Chriſt, but the ſame doth redound to them likewiſe by the *Life* of Chriſt, which *Life* is ever imployed in the Work of *Interceſſion*, *He ever liveth to make Inter-*

ceſſion

teſſion for us. See what the *Apoſtle* ſaith, *Whether we live, we live unto the Lord, or whether we die, we die unto the Lord, or whether we live or die we are the Lord's.* It might happily be inverted to us, whether the Lord lives, he lives for us, or whether he dies, he dies for us, and whether the Lord lives or dies, it is for our Advantage; but this is only in the General; and therefore,

2. To come and deſcend to Particulars, there are a very many great *Benefits* that do redound to Believers by the *Life* and *Interceſſion* of Chriſt.

Benefit 1. Hence we obtain the Myſtical Union both to God and one another, *John* 17. 21. Chriſt prays that his Saints may be all one, *as thou Father art in me, and I in thee,* and from this Union flows all that Fellowſhip and Communion which they have either with God, or one another; their Communion with God depends upon their Union to him in the ſameneſs of Spirit, and their Communion among themſelves depends upon their Mutual Union to the ſame Body, and both depend upon this Prayer of Chriſt.

Ben. 2. *The ineſtimable Gift of the Holy Ghoſt, likewiſe is the benefit of Chriſt's Interceſſion.* John 16. 17. *If I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart I will ſend him to you*; ſo John 14. 16, 17. *I will pray the Father, and he ſhall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever.* All the Motions, Breathings, Evidences and Supports of the Holy Spirit you enjoy as they were the Purchaſe of Chriſt's *Death,* ſo alſo are the Benefits obtained by his *Life* and *Interceſſion* for us; hence alſo was it that in the firſt Age of the *Church* there were thoſe extraordinary and miraculous Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, the Gifts of Tongues and Healing, *&c. Acts* 3. 35.

Ben. 3. *Through this Interceſſion we have boldneſs and confidence at the Throne of Grace,* Heb. 4. 14, 15. *Seeing then that we have a great High Peieſt that is paſſed into the Heavens, Jeſus the Son of God; let us therefore come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain Mercy, and find Grace to help in time of need.* Eph. 3. 12. *In whom we have boldneſs and acceſs with confidence through the faith of him.* Who would not be encouraged to go boldly to God, that hath ſuch an *Advocate* to plead for him that never yet had the leaſt denial.

Ben. 4. *Hence alſo we receive all our ſtrength aud growth in Grace,* John. 17. 17. *Sanctifie them through thy truth, thy word is truth.* Grace, together with all the meaſures and degrees of it, they are derived to us as from Chriſt's fulneſs, ſo by his Interceſſion, they are received by our Prayers, and conveyed to us by his Prayer.

Ben. 5. *Hence we obtain likewiſe Perſeverance and Continuance in Grace,* John 17. 11. *Holy Father, keep through thine own Name thoſe whom thou haſt given me. I have prayed,* ſaith Chriſt to *Peter, that thy faith fail not,* and upon this Incenſe of Chriſt's Prayer is Built the Perſeverance of the Saints in Grace.

Ben. 6. *Hence likewiſe we are preſerved both againſt Temptation, and from Sin. When under Temptation,* John 17. 15. *I pray that thou ſhouldeſt keep them from the evil*; that is, from the evil of Temptation, ſo that *Satan* never came near us, nor the evil which he tempts us to, ſo that though he aſſault us he may never prevail; that we may be either free from Temptation, or at leaſt victorious over it. So *Luke* 17. 21.

The Devil he is bound up by this Almighty Prayer; and though there be no Saint on Earth that enjoys perfect freedom either from Sin, or Temptations to Sin, yet theſe Temptations would be much more frequent, and always prevalent over us, were not Chriſt's Prayer interpoſed by mighty force and ſtrength, and beat back *Satan*'s fiery Darts that they cannot reach us, or rebate their force and ſharpneſs that they cannot hurt us.

Ben. 7. *From Chriſt's Interceſſion we likewiſe do obtain acceptation of all our Duties.* He ſees the iniquity of our holy things, and cleanſeth us from all Imperfection, Corruption and Sinfulneſs that adheres to them, even by that Incenſe that he offers up, with the Prayers of all the Saints, he makes them acceptable and a ſweet ſavour to God the Father. Not that the Incenſe of the Interceſſion of Chriſt caſts a Miſt before God, that he ſhould not diſcern the faults and infirmities of our beſt Services, yea, he clearly ſees them, and fully knows them, yet thoſe performances which in themſelves were abominable and ſinful, through the perfume of his Incenſe they become a ſweet ſavour to God, and he accepts of them with as much complacency and delight as he doth of the perfect Services of the *Angels* themſelves.

Ben. 8. *From the Interceſſion of Chriſt we receive the Benefit of the Spirit's making Interceſſion for us in our Hearts, with Prayer for us that we through the Spirit may be inabled to pray*

again

again. All our Prayers are indeed but the ecchoing back of his own Spirit, *Gal.* 4. 6. *Becauſe ye are ſons, God hath ſent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.* The *Holy Ghoſt* is here called the Spirit of his Son, becauſe Chriſt hath purchaſed him for his by his Death, and ſent him into the Hearts of his by his Authority and Commiſſion. Thus you ſee there are ſundry great Benefits and Priviledges which we receive by the Life and Interceſſion of Chriſt in Heaven.

But you may ſay, Doth Chriſt's Interceſſion always prevail? Is he never denied? And may we be certain to obtain all theſe Benefits by him?

I anſwer, We may, and this certainty is grounded upon Three Things.

1. In that the Father always hears and grants him all his deſires, *John* 11. 46, 47. *I know that thou heareſt me always.* He is the well-beloved Son of God, and therefore as we are bid by that Heavenly Voice, *Mat.* 17. 5. *to hear him* in all his Commands, ſo will his Father hear him all his Requeſts.

2. The Father himſelf loves us, and is willing and ready to give forth thoſe good things to us which we ſtand in need of; ſo we have it, *John* 16. 26. *I ſay not that I will intercede for you*, you may be fully aſſured I will, and therefore whatſoever I ask ſhall be granted, *for my Father loves you*, and will deny me no requeſt that is for your good.

3. That all theſe Benefits they are at the command and diſpoſe of Chriſt himſelf; and therefore as he intercedes that theſe Benefits may be beſtowed upon us, ſo he himſelf will beſtow them, for they are at his Command, and under his Authority, *Mat.* 28. 18. *All power is given me in heaven and earth*; and therefore all theſe things certainly ſhall be conferred upon you in their due time and order, through the prevalency of the Interceſſion of Chriſt. Thus I have curſorily run over theſe things, which might have been much dilated upon, becauſe I will haſten to that which is more practical. Thus much for that Poſition, *That Chriſt ever lives to make Interceſſion for us.*

The next thing that remains to be treated of, is the *Inference* deduced, and drawn from the *Poſition*, *Therefore he is able to ſave to the uttermoſt thoſe that come unto God by him*, from which I ſhall handle, *Chriſt's All-ſufficiency to Save*, and therein labour to ſet forth the freeneſs and fulneſs of Divine Grace in the Salvation of Sinners; in order whereunto I have already ſhewed you, that Chriſt was made thus an All-ſufficient Saviour by the Father's Deſignation, and his own voluntary Suſception, by the Capacity of his Humane Nature fitting him to receive Wrath, by the power of the Divine Nature inabling him to reluctate it, and by an unmeaſurable Unction of the *Holy Ghoſt* furniſhing him with all Endowments requiſite to perfect our Redemption: Now Chriſt being thus every way qualified for this great Work, he is made All-ſufficient to ſave; and his *All-ſufficiency* to ſave will appear in theſe following *Particulars.*

1. *In the greatneſs of the Number and the heinouſneſs of the Nature of thoſe Sins from which he is able to deliver.* Though your Sins be as many as *Sands*, and as great as the *Mountains* ſwelled up with fearful aggravations that makes them out of meaſure ſinful, yet he can ſay to the *Mountains* be removed, and caſt into the bottom of the Sea, even the *Red Sea of his own Blood*, and it ſhall be done. This was prefigured by the *Scape-Goat*, *Lev.* 16. 21. upon which the Iniquities of all the Children of *Iſrael* were laid, that he might carry them into the *Land of Forgetfulneſs.* And as the *Scape-Goat* ſo the *Paſchal Lamb* repreſented Chriſt, and his All-ſufficiency to ſave; and therefore we have that Speech of *John the Baptiſt*, John 1. 19. *Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the ſins of the world:* Yea, this was alluded to by the Impoſition of his Name, *Mat.* 1. 21. *Thou ſhalt call his Name Jeſus, for he ſhall ſave his people from their ſins.* Now there is two things in Sin which we ſtand in need to be ſaved from.

1. From its *Pollution*, which of it ſelf is enough to exclude us out of Heaven into which no unclean thing ſhall ever enter.

2. From its *Condemnation*, by which we are excluded out of Heaven, and adjudged to Hell; from both theſe he is able to ſave to the very uttermoſt.

1. *Chriſt is able to ſave you from the Pollution and Defilement of your fouleſt Luſts and Sins, and that by the waſhing of Regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghoſt*, *Tit.* 3. 5. Thoſe ſpots of defilement that have ſo polluted and ſtained your Conſciences, that no Tears, though your Eyes were turned into over-running Streams, would ever be able to waſh out, yet the ſprinkling of the Blood of Chriſt it can purge the Heart and Conſcience from dead Works, *Heb.* 9. 14. and change the Scarlet and Crimſon Complexion of it into whiteneſs and purity. There is no Sinner here this day, though his Heart be as foul and black as Hell, though his Life does ſwarm with abomi-

nable Luſts of all ſorts, yet Chriſt by his Almighty Spirit, and efficacious Grace, can in an inſtant transform and new mould him, and of a deſperate outrageous Sinner make him an humble and broken-hearted Saint. See that Black Catalogue, 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10, 11. *Be not deceived, neither Fornicators, nor Idolaters, nor Adulterers, nor Thieves, nor Drunkards ſhall inherit the Kingdom of God.* What ſaith the *Apoſtle* concerning ſuch? *Such were ſome of you*; why is it poſſible that Grace ſhould change, or Mercy pardon, or the Devil loſe ſuch great Sinners as theſe are? Yet *ſuch were ſome of you; but ye are waſhed, but ye are ſanctified in the name of the Lord Jeſus, and by the Spirit of our God*, &c. Yea, and this All-ſufficiency of Chriſt to ſave and ſanctifie the vileſt and moſt flagitious Sinner, is made more eminently glorious in theſe Particulars.

1. In that he is able to effect this mighty change in a moment, in the twinkling of an Eye, without waiting upon the methods of previous Preparations or Diſpoſitions. The Spirit doth not always ſtand knocking by common Motions, Perſwaſions and Convictions, and legal Terrors, but ſometimes forceth and breaketh open the Heart, and by his irreſiſtible efficacy ſuddenly ſurprizeth the Soul, and ſeizeth on it, and captivates it to the obedience of the Lord Chriſt; as at Mid-day when we remove the ſhuts of our Windows, Light doth not enter in by Degrees, firſt dawning and darting in ſome weak beams of Light, and then ſome further degrees, but it ſprings in at once, and at one moment irradiates and inlightens the Room with a perfect and full grown brightneſs, ſo ſometimes the *Sun of Righteouſneſs* doth ariſe upon the Heart without the Circumſtances of a dawning, though this is not indeed God's uſual Method in Converting Sinners. Nay, ſometimes it darts both light and warmth at once through the whole Heart, by which our Almighty Saviour can in a moment work a greater change by far than God wrought in all the *Six days Creation*: He can at once melt down the hard Heart and ſubdue the ſtubborn Will, tame headſtrong Paſſions, and violent Affections, demoliſh the ſtrong holds of Iniquity, that have many years been fortifying againſt him, he can both wound, and heal, kill, and make alive, deſtroy Sin, and plant Grace, and that with ſuch diſpatch as can prevent not only the endeavours, but the obſervation of a Sinner, *James* 5.

2. The All-ſufficiency of Chriſt to ſave and ſanctifie appears in this alſo, that ſometimes he works this mighty change at ſuch an unlikely Seaſon, when the Sinner is the hotteſt, and the moſt eager in the proſecution of his Luſt. It is eaſie to ſhew by ſome remarkable Inſtances what he is able to do by Converting a Sinner to himſelf, not only without preparations to aſſiſt him, but againſt the ſtrongeſt preparations that the Sinner and the Devil have made to reſiſt him, ſome have been ſurprized by Grace in the very act of Sin, that might have provoked Juſtice to have Damned them: Mercy hath made it an opportunity for their Salvation; ſome Circumſtances in their Sin hath proved to be the beginning of their Converſion. Thus St. *Paul* in the midſt of his threatning, in the height and heat of his Perſecution, when he was going to *Damaſcus* to hale and impriſon thoſe that made Profeſſion of the Name of Chriſt, he was by the Almighty Grace of Chriſt turned to be an *Apoſtle*; and ſo *Iſa.* 5. 13. Notwithſtanding that he goes on to add Sin to Sin, and Iniquity to Iniquity, *I have ſeen his ways*, ſaith God, *and I will heal him* by my Efficacious and Almighty Grace breaking in upon him in a moment.

3. Chriſt's All-ſufficiency to ſanctifie and ſave a Sinner appears to be eminently glorious, in that he is able to work this great and mighty change by ſuch contemptible means, as to the Eye of Humane Reaſon, is altogether inſufficient to atchieve it, and that is, by the preaching of the Word. Should God himſelf ſpeak out of Heaven in Thunder, ſhould we hear the Voice of his terrible Majeſty now rattling in the Clouds, *Repent, Repent, or Eternally periſh.* Should ſome *Angel* that is now miniſtring among us make himſelf viſible, and from this place denounce Wrath aud Vengeance againſt impenitent Sinners, and promiſe Peace and Pardon to all that ſhall believe, repent and reform their Lives. Should ſome Damned Wretch be releaſed out of Hell, and ſent *all burning red hot* hither, on purpoſe to warn you to repent, or for ever to be ſwallowed up in fiery Wrath, if you ſhould ſee him ſpeaking Flames at every Word, this were a likely courſe to move you, for who would be ſo ſenſleſs and obdurate as not to be convinced at ſuch a Sermon as this? But know that God hath committed the Word of Reconciliation not unto them, but unto us *Earthen Veſſels* as we are, and yet alas what can we do? We can but ſtammer out a few words that are ſoon loſt, that are ſoon ſcattered. We can but reprove Men for their ſins, threaten them with Wrath, admoniſh them to fly to Jeſus Chriſt for his Righteouſneſs, and

and beſeech them through him to be reconciled to God. Now that this ſhould be of ſuch force as to perſwade Conſcience to break the Heart, to ranſack the Bowels even of thoſe very ſinners, who perhaps came with prejudices, contempt and ſcorn, what is this but a plain and evident demonſtration of the Almighty Power of God, *who by the fooliſhneſs of preaching ſaveth thoſe that do believe*, thereby convincing the World that there is nothing ſo weak and contemptible but God can by it bring to paſs things wonderful and miraculous. That is the *firſt* thing whereby it doth appear that Chriſt is All-ſufficient to ſave ſinners, the greatneſs of the number, and the heinouſneſs of the nature of thoſe ſins from which he is able to deliver, and from the pollution of them, as I have ſhewed in theſe three Particulars.

2. *Chriſt is able to ſave, not only from the pollution of the fouleſt, but from the guilt and condemnation of the greateſt Sins, and that by a free Pardon and Remiſſion of them.* What greater ſins than *Blaſphemy* and *Perſecution?* Yet ſaith St. *Paul* concerning himſelf, 1 *Tim.* 1. 13. *I was before a blaſphemer, and a perſecutor, but I obtained mercy*; therefore we cannot ſay with *Cain* as the *Marginal Note* renders it, *My iniquity is greater than can be forgiven*, I have out-ſinned Mercy, and there is nothing remains for me but the fearful expectation of the fiery Indignation which will certainly devour me. Is not that Blood of Infinite Value which God ſhed for thee? Hath not this All-ſufficient Saviour born the whole Wrath which thou ſhouldſt have born? Hath he not *brought life and immortality to light*, and wilt thou be ſo injurious as to think thy ſin's more vile than his blood is precious? Or that there is more Venom in them to deſtroy thee than there is Vertue in his Blood to ſave thee? Let not the *Devil* perſwade thee before the commiſſion of thy ſins that they are ſo little that they need no Pardon, and after the commiſſion of them, they are ſo heinous that they cannot be pardoned; Man is in nothing more provoking to God than when he believes that his ſins cannot be pardoned. There are but two ſins which are unpardonable, the one is the dreadful *Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt*, and the other is *Final Unbelief*, Final Unbelief cannot be pardoned, becauſe the Death of Chriſt, by which all pardon is obtained, can be applied to the Soul by no other means than Faith. The *Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt* cannot be pardoned, becauſe it is a malicious rejection of the Blood of Chriſt, and all pardon by it. Haſt thou reaſon to think thy ſelf guilty of either of theſe ſins? Thou canſt not ſay thou art guilty of *Final Unbelief*, for that cannot be until the laſt moment of thy Life; but that which moſt of all troubles the deſpairing Soul is, leſt it hath committed the *Unpardonable Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt*, and this many are afflicted with, this they fear, and ſo in the extream anguiſh and horror of their Souls, they cry out that they are loſt, that they are Damned, that there is no hope, no pardon for them. If it be ſo indeed that there is no pardon for thee, yet this Outcry confutes it ſelf, for the Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt is of all others the leaſt jealous and ſuſpicious; I am perſwaded that the conſideration of the Nature of this Sin will perſwade us that there is no Man guilty of it, but he that is alſo given up by God to a reprobate Mind, to a ſeared Conſcience, and grown quite paſt feeling, and ſo as never to complain of his miſerable condition. So then thy very Troubles, thy very deſpairing Thoughts ſhew that thou haſt no reaſon to deſpair, and that thy Sins are not unpardonable; and therefore be they what they will, the deformity of them never ſo ugly, the guilt of them as ghaſtly as thy guilty Conſcience repreſents them, yet there is an All-ſufficiency in Chriſt to ſave thee fully: Is it the numberleſs number of them that affrights thee? Were they yet more Chriſt can ſave thee from them, 1 *John* 1. 7. *The blood of Chriſt cleanſeth from all Sin.* Doſt thou complain, *Oh Soul*, that thy ſins are as many in number as the Sand upon the Sea-ſhore? Yea, but doſt thou not know likewiſe that the Sea can cover the Sands? So the overflowing Blood of Chriſt, it can reach the uttermoſt Borders and Extent of all thy ſins, and keep them from the ſight of God, that they ſhall never more appear. Well then, is it the greatneſs and the heinous Nature of thy ſins that afflicts thee? Poſſibly thou might'ſt think I flatter thee, to tell thee thou ſhouldſt gather ground of hope rather than of deſpair; for thou haſt now a plea for pardon. See how the *Prophet David* urgeth this as an Argument with God for the Forgiveneſs of them. *For thy name ſake, O Lord, pardon my Iniquity*; (why) it may be they are ſo great that they cannot in Juſtice be pardoned, *Yea, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity for it is great.* It is a very ſtrange Argument, one would think, thus to plead with Men. Pray pardon me, becauſe I have done you a great injury, and yet with God, whoſe Thoughts are not as the Thoughts of Men, and whoſe Ways are not as the Ways of Men, this ſtrange Ar-

gument is very forcible and prevalent, *Lord, pardon me*, becauſe I have ſinned greatly; thou ſpeakeſt more reaſon by far than if thou ſhouldſt ſay, Thy ſins are great and heinous, and therefore there is no hope of pardon for them. Now Chriſt's All-ſufficiency to ſave the greateſt and the worſt of ſinners appears in theſe following Particulars.

1. *In that he is able to ſave the oldeſt and moſt accuſtomed Sinner*; and to make the laſt hour of his Life the firſt of his Eternal Happineſs, and in this, if any thing, the Almighty Power of Chriſt to ſave is made moſt wonderfully Glorious. When an old ſinner that hath trudged on apace to Deſtraction, and hath arrived even to the very Brink of *Hell*, when there was but a few ſteps between him and *Eternal Death*. Nay, when he ſtuck there, and there was nothing to recover him, for Chriſt then to give him a lift over that vaſt *Gulph*, and then give him another lift over to *Everlaſting Life*. What can be ſaid in this caſe but what the Pſalmiſt ſaith in *Pſal.* 89. 13. *Thou haſt a mighty Arm: ſtrong is thy Hand?*

Such a Man's condition is very ſad and dangerous; and if any thing were too hard for *All-ſufficiency* to atchieve it were altogether deſperate. Now there are ſeveral things which advanceth the power of Chriſt in ſaving *Old Sinners*. As,

1. That the Devil's poſſeſſion of an old overgrown ſinner is mightily confirmed both in Strength and Title; Strength, in that he hath had time to fortifie every *ſtrong hold of Iniquity*, and to make them impregnable. In Title, becauſe through long poſſeſſion the *Devil* pleads right by preſcription, and time out of mind, over the Soul, ſo that it ſeems almoſt a vain attempt to reſcue that Soul from ſin. And though all things were made by and for God, yet here you ſee God's Title ſeems as it were to fail, and the Devil's takes place; for by a long cuſtom in ſin, ſuch outſtand the offers of Grace, abuſe the patience of God, and provoke him to give them up judicially to hardneſs of Heart; by long delay, they more ſtrengthen the Devil's Title, and make their Salvation the more difficult and hazardous.

2. *Old Sinners are ſo ſoaked and drenched in the Cares and Concernments of this World; that by a ſtrange ſottiſhneſs, the nearer they approach to the evil Day, the further they put it off from them, never thinking of Eternity until they are irrecoverably ſwallowed up in it.* As thoſe that work in deep *Mines* ſee not the *Sun*, and know not how the Day paſſeth away, ſo thoſe *Earth-worms* that toil and drudge to load themſelves with thick Clay out of the Bowels of the Earth, never conſider how far their Day is ſpent, nor how near their Sun is to ſetting, never conſider once how the Day goes over their Heads, but ſtill work deeper and deeper till they have opened a paſſage through *Earth* into *Hell*, into which at laſt they fall headlong.

3. *Old Sinners* they have long built up and ſupported themſelves with falſe and flattering hopes, either preſumptuous Conceits of God's Mercy, or proud Conceits of their own Merits, or ſome ſuch rotten Principle or other; and becauſe with theſe they have worn out many ſtorms of Conſcience, and many powerful Convictions, they will not forſake their Hopes, nor let go their vain Confidence, but cry out peace, peace to themſelves, till they and their Hopes periſh together.

4. By a long courſe of ſinning incorrigibly, in which they have wearied out Divine Patience, and all the ſtrivings of the Bleſſed Spirit of God, till at laſt they have provoked the Lord to pronounce a Curſe, and a judicial Hardneſs upon theſe *Old Sinners*.

And becauſe they would not be purged when he would have purged them, therefore they ſhall never be purged from their Iniquities till Wrath ſeizeth upon them, and ſeals them, and ſets them aſide for the *Devil*. The condition therefore of *Old Sinners* is very dangerous and deplorable, and very ſeldom are ſuch converted and ſaved.

But yet this is not the cauſe; the oldneſs or cuſtomarineſs of their ſins makes them not unpardonable, nor ſets them out of the reach of Chriſt's All-ſufficiency to ſave, but becauſe that they are ſo tough and ſtubborn that they will not come to God through Chriſt, that they may be ſaved by him; but notwithſtanding their caſe is thus forlorn and deſperate with them, yet the All-ſufficiency of Chriſt may be extended unto ſuch as theſe, to bring them to Salvation, and to cure, and heal them, and ſave them from thoſe ſins that would deprive them of it. Poor ſinners did you never read that Chriſt ſtencht an *Iſſue of Blood* that run Twelve Years? *Mat.* 5. 7. and how he ſtraitned a Woman that was bowed together Eighteen Years? Yea, how he healed an impotent Man that had an Infirmity Thirty Eight Years? *John* 5. 5. And ſhall a Miracle of Power be able to cure an Old Diſeaſe, and not a Miracle of Grace

Grace be able to Cure an Old Sinner? Though your *Bloody Iſſue* of ſin hath run long, though you have lain bound under ſin not Seventeen or Eighteen, but perhaps Eighty years, yet come, though it be in the laſt Hour of the Day. Though your ſins are *Old*, yet they are not ſo old as thoſe Mercies that are everlaſting; you are not too old for Grace, nor too old to be *New-born*. *Lazarus* riſeth again, though he had lain four days in the Grave, and the ſame hand that raiſed him can raiſe you from the power of the Devil, though you have lain three not four days, but fourſcore years dead in ſin and treſpaſſes. The *Thief* on the *Croſs* Chriſt ſaved not many hours before his Death, as though Chriſt would ſhew the World by this *Example* what he can do in a deſperate Caſe. And could he thus ſave when he Suffered, and cannot he much more ſave now he is Glorified and Triumphant? *Old Houſes* many times are repaired and made meet Habitations again; ſo you, though you have been an *old Tenement* for the *Devil*, you may be ſo repaired by Grace as to become a Temple for the *Holy Ghoſt*: Be perſwaded therefore yet at length to accept of the tenders of an All-ſufficient Saviour; your Day is almoſt ſpent, and your Life ſtands upon the Brink of the Grave, if you now neglect ſo great ſalvation, as the Lord Jeſus in the Goſpel proffers to you, your Death may be ſo ſoon as to prevent another offer of him to you, but it ſhall not, nay, it cannot be ſo ſoon as to prevent ſalvation by Chriſt, if you accept of this offer.

3. *Chriſt is able to ſave thoſe who have frequently relapſed into the commiſſion of the ſame Sin.* This is that, I know, which galls and ſtings the Conſciences of many ſinners; it is not ſo much the multitude of their ſins that affright them, as the frequent commiſſion of the ſame ſins. Oh! ſaith one, I am guilty of reiterated and oft-repeated ſins, I have committed the ſame ſin again and again, notwithſtanding I have been convinced of it, notwithſtanding I have prayed, reſolved, and vowed againſt it, notwithſtanding all the convictions and overtures I have had, and notwithſtanding all the reſolutions I have made, I have again relapſed into the ſame ſins, and thoſe not of ordinary infirmity and humane frailty, but ſins of groſs and ſcandalous nature; and are ſuch ſins pardonable?

I anſwer, They are theſe Relapſes, although they are very dangerous, yet they are not altogether incurable. It is hard to ſoften a Heart that is treacherous to God, and to it ſelf, and very deeply engaged in ſome particular Luſt, when we are frequently overcome by the ſame Corruption, by the ſame Temptation, but yet this is not ſuch an aggravation as ſhould leave our ſins unpardonable, or us deſperate. The *Jews* indeed have a Tradition among them, that the fourth relapſe into the ſame ſin makes it an unpardonable offence, but we know the Mercy of God, and the Infinite Merit of Chriſt, are not ſtinted by any number of ſins, nor by any number of the ſame ſins. It is not with us as with drowning Men, that if they ſink the fourth time that they never riſe again; certainly, that Chriſt who bids us to forgive our Brother, though he ſhould offend us to *ſeventy times ſeven* offences, and hath not excepted reiterated provocations, will upon our Repentance ſo much oftner forgive us, as his great Mercy is above our Charity. Though we have committed thoſe ſins and provocations againſt himſelf, though it be matter of bitter and deep Humiliation that any Corruption ſhould be ſo prevalent as frequently to overcome us, and notwithſtanding Conviction, Contrition and Heart-breaking Confeſſion, yet it is no cauſe of Deſpair of Mercy, yet the Grace of Chriſt can ſubdue ſuch rooted ſinners as theſe. And what ſins ſoever the Grace of Chriſt can ſubdue, the Mercy of God can pardon.

4. *Chriſt can ſave the profoundeſt and moſt notorious Backſlider.* And it is the greateſt obſtruction to a ſinner's hope; this is that which fills him with Fears and Terrors. Oh! I have been ſo guilty of *Apoſtacy*, I have taſted of the ſweetneſs of the Heavenly Gift, and of the Powers of the World to come, yet I have fallen back to my Carnal Temper, from the holy ways of God, and have again backſlided and wallowed in my former pollutions, from which I ſeemed ſometimes to be cleanſed and refined: And is this *Apoſtacy* pardonable?

I anſwer, There is indeed an unpardonable Apoſtacy deſcribed in that dreadful place, *Heb.* 6. 8. It is impoſſible for ſuch a one to be renewed by Repentance, *&c.* This is the ſame with the ſin againſt the *Holy Ghoſt*, and this no Man is guilty of but he that hath caſt off all means tending to Salvation and Eternal Life, and all deſires after it. There is alſo an *Apoſtacy* from great Attainments both of Gifts and Graces. When a Man's Zeal to God's Glory cools, when his vigour in holy Duties faints, when his reliſh to ſpiritual Objects vitiates, and he returns to a lukewarm and indifferent

ferent Temper, and it may be to a ſinful and wicked Life; this, though it be very ſad and dreadful, yet the Man is both pardonable and recoverable. See that moſt comfortable place, *Jer.* 3. 22. *Return ye backſliding Children, and I will heal your backſlidings. Behold we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God.*

I ſhall not inſtance in any other Aggravations which makes ſin out of meaſure ſinful, and makes the ſinner out of meaſure dangerous, ſince if the *Old Sinner*, if the *Relapſing*, if the *Apoſtatizing Sinner* be pardonable and ſaveable, there is none then have reaſon to exclude themſelves from the hopes of Eternal Life. Indeed the only danger is leſt the wickedneſs of Men abuſe this moſt comfortable *Doctrine*, and turn that into *Preſumption*, which is only intended to arm them againſt *Deſpair*. Indeed both *Preſumption* and *Deſpair* do tend in divers manners to inrage and harden Men in ſin. The *Deſpairing Perſon* judgeth, if I muſt not be ſaved, if my ſins are ſuch as that there is no pardon for them, to what purpoſe do I then live ſtrictly, and vex, and croſs my ſelf, and perplex my Life? I'll let looſe the Reigns, and enjoy my ſelf, and reap as great a Crop as I can of pleaſure, and if I muſt to *Hell* I will make the way as delightful as I can. And the Argument on the other ſide that encourageth and hardeneth the *Preſumptuous Sinner* is this, Chriſt is able to ſave to the uttermoſt the vileſt Sinners. We hear no ſins are beyond his All-ſufficiency to ſave, therefore (ſay they) what need we trouble our ſelves to repent and reform, we will yet a while indulge our ſelves in ſin, for the Efficacy of Chriſt is able to ſave in the laſt moment of our Lives, as after many years preparations. We ſee iniquity every-where fearfully abounding: And though we uſe to ſay *Deſpair* kills its Thouſands, and *Preſumption* its Ten Thouſands, yet if we narrowly conſider, poſſibly it may be found that this kind of *Deſpair* in Men ariſing from Sloth and Careleſneſs, is as great a ſource of impiety as *Preſumption*. Whence elſe is it that many who are convinced, and their Conſciences blackened with the ſenſe of Wrath, perſiſt ſtill to add iniquity to iniquity, but becauſe they think that there is no Salvation for them, that their Doom is fixed, and that their State is determined, and therefore ſince they muſt pay ſo dear as Eternal Damnation, they are reſolved to make up their Pennyworths in their preſent pleaſures of ſin, like thoſe in *Jer.* 18. 12. *And they ſaid, there is no hope, but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart?* I ſhould judge it one of the moſt conducible means to promote Mens endeavours after Godlineſs, if I could but bring them to a ſerious and ſettled Belief that their Salvation is attainable, for certainly ſo good a thing as Salvation is, it cannot but ſtir up Affections and Induſtry proportionable to our Apprehenſions of the valuableneſs of it. Hence then to tell Men what great ſins Chriſt can pardon, what great ſinners he can ſave, is no encouragement to *Preſumption*, but rather to the exerciſe of Holineſs; for ſince the way to Heaven is cleared from impoſſibilities, it is moſt unreaſonable for Men to ſtick at difficulties; but if any abuſe this Doctrine of *Chriſt's All-ſufficiency to ſave the greateſt Sinners*, to ſloth, and the ſupport of their wickedneſs, promiſing themſelves peace and happineſs in the end, though they go on in ſin preſumptuouſly, adding iniquity to iniquity, let me only tell them (and it will be enough to damp all their vain hopes) that though Chriſt be able to ſave to the uttermoſt, yet he is not able to ſave them in their ſins, but only from their ſins; that is the *firſt* Demonſtration of Chriſt's All-ſufficiency to ſave ſinners in theſe particulars. He is an All-ſufficient Saviour, becauſe he is able to ſave Men from the greateſt number, and from the moſt heinous ſins in their Nature, though they be as many as the *Sands*, and as great as the *Mountains*; he is able by his ſanctifying Grace to remove the filth of our ſins, and by his juſtifying Grace to remove their guilt, and he is able to convert and change the ſinner at ſuch an unlikely ſeaſon when he is hotteſt and moſt eager in the proſecution of his Luſts, he is able to do this by the moſt contemptible means; he is able to ſave the *Oldeſt Sinners*, thoſe that have frequently relapſed into the ſame ſins, and the greateſt and moſt notorious Backſliders, if they do but at laſt repent and return to him.

2. *Another Demonſtration is this, Chriſt's All-ſufficiency to ſave appears in this, that he is able to beſtow upon us All-ſufficing Mercy.* He is able to inſtate us in the choiceſt and richeſt Bleſſings, that we are able either to receive or imagine, and therefore he is able to ſave to the uttermoſt. If I ſhould now mention Temporal Bleſſings in this account the inſtance would ſink too low. The World ſtands but as an empty Cypher, and ſignifies but a great *round nothing*, when it is reckoned up with Bleſſings which flow in upon us through Chriſt's All-ſufficiency, and yet what a *big Vanity* is this World in the eſtimation of moſt Men? It may be if they have but a little part of it to

to beſtow, it may be ſome ſlaviſh Office, ſome ſlight and trivial Gift, what a diſtance do they keep at? How are they overwhelmed with Suitors and Floods of Attendants, and when they ſee how many ſtand in need of them, they are apt to think themſelves ſufficient, and to ſtand in need of none. Should I ſay to the *Ambitious* and *Proud* Man, Chriſt is able to make all the Princes of the World crouch and humble themſelves unto thee, and lick up the duſt of thy Feet. Should I tell a *Covetous* Perſon, that Chriſt is able to make Gold and Silver not only as plenteous as Stones, as in *Solomon*'s time, but that he can turn *Stones* into *Diamonds*, and *Dirt* into *Gold*; that he can Sequeſter the Eſtates of all Men in the World, and beſtow them upon him: I need ſay no more unto ſuch, for theſe Men would believe that Chriſt by this would prove himſelf an *All-ſufficient Saviour*; this is that little which the moſt regard and admire; indeed Chriſt can do all this, for he is Lord of the whole World, and of all things in it; they are at his beck, and at his diſpoſals; yet had he no other, no better Treaſures to beſtow than the whole World, it would not be ſatisfactory, ſince the whole World it ſelf is but a poor inſufficient thing; no, but Chriſt will have his All-ſufficiency to be ſeen and glorified, by giving that to his People which is an All-ſufficing Good. Three things therefore Chriſt doth beſtow upon them which indeed are All-ſufficient.

Chriſt giveth unto his People,

1. *An Intereſt in an All-ſufficient God.*
2. *A Poſſeſſion of All-ſufficing Grace.*
3. *An All-ſatisfactory Inheritance.*

1. *He gives them an Intereſt in an All-ſufficient God.* All-ſufficiency is God's moſt comprehenſive *Attribute*, that which ſpeaks out all the reſt in one word: *Wiſdom*, *Power*, *Juſtice*, *Mercy*, *Goodneſs*, *Truth*, they are ſeveral Perfections of the Divine Nature that ſhine Glorioufly each of them in their own Sphere, but *All-ſufficiency* is as it were the Gloſs and Luſtre that doth redound or reſult from all theſe *Attributes* combined together. Other *Attributes* they are like ſeveral *Stars* that ſhine with their proper and diſtinct Light, but *All-ſufficiency* is like a *Conſtellation*, when all the *Stars* make but one Light; therefore when God proclaims himſelf to *Abraham* to be *God Almighty*, or *God All-ſufficient*, *Gen.* 17. 1. it was as much as if he had ſaid, I am Wiſe in Heart, Mighty in Power, Merciful in Diſpoſition, Juſt in Proceedings, Good in Promiſes, Faithful in Performances: For *All-ſufficiency* is the iſſue and product of all the reſt of *God's Attributes*. Oh what a rich Portion have they that have all God's Attributes for their own. This *All-ſufficiency* by Chriſt becomes ours, *Heb.* 11. 16. *God is not aſhamed to be called our God.* What can Chriſt do more to approve himſelf to be a *Saviour* to the uttermoſt, than by giving unto his an infinite boundleſs good? If the Power of God, the Wiſdom of God, the Salvation of God can ſave them, they are ſure to be ſaved to the uttermoſt; and hence *David* ſo often glories that God is his Portion, *Pſal.* 16. 5. *Pſal.* 73. 26. *Pſal.* 118. 57. *Pſal.* 16. 5. And what Concluſion doth he draw from all this? *Pſal.* 23. 1. *The Lord is my Shepherd, I ſhall not want.* No, Soul, it is impoſſible for thee to want, all things are thy own, God is thine, and all God hath is thine; while others ſeek to quench their thirſt at the broken leaky Ciſtern, thou maiſt lay thy ſelf at the Fountain and Spring-head of Living Waters, and there find compleat ſatisfaction. Certainly unleſs *All-ſufficiency* may fail, unleſs God's Attributes moulder and drop away from him, and leave him a deſtitute and indigent God, thou canſt never be impoveriſhed, and without ſupply. God's Wiſdom is full of Counſel, his Power is full of Protection, his Mercy is full of Pardon, his Truth and Faithfulneſs is full of Security, Himſelf is Eternally full of Crowns. And thoſe certainly muſt needs be ravenous and unſatiable Deſires which ſuch an *All-ſufficient God* as our God is cannot fill and ſatisfie.

2. *Chriſt alſo inſtates the Soul in an All-ſufficing Portion of Grace.* Grace hath a double ſignification, it may either be taken for *Subjective* or *Objective Grace*, or what is the ſame, for *Relative* or *Real Grace*. *Relative Grace* is that whereby a change is made in the Relation in which we ſtand to God. In a ſtate of Nature we ſtood in a threefold ſad and wretched relation to God. We were ſtrangers to God, and Rebels, and Enemies to God, and alſo Guilty Malefactors, and as ſuch are liable to Eternal Condemnation, but now the Grace of God intervening, makes a Bleſſed Change in all theſe Relations; of Strangers we are brought near, and enrolled in the Family of Heaven, and ſo are made Children of God, and Heirs of Glory, by the Grace of Adoption. Of Enemies we are made Friends and Intimates, and accepted through the Beloved through the Grace of Redemption. Of Guilty Malefactors we are acquit-

ted,

ed, and pardoned, and accepted to Eternal Life by the free and abſolute Grace of Juſtification. Now this Relative Grace is not that which is wrought in us, but it abides in God, and is only terminated upon us; indeed it is nothing elſe but the acting of God's ſpecial Love and Favour towards us; and the word Grace in Scripture is very ſeldom taken in any other ſenſe but for Relative Grace, the acting of God's Love and Favour determined to us.

2. There is *Subjective or Real Grace*, which is that whereby a change is wrought upon our Natures in our firſt Regeneration, and whereby it is carried on gradually to perfection, in our further Sanctification, univerſal Habits of Holineſs which are infuſed in our Converſion by God, which in Scripture is called the *New Man*, and the *New Creature*. We uſually call it the Principle of Grace, and the Working of Grace; and ſo likewiſe thoſe ſpecifical habits which are ſo many branches of this univerſal habit; it is (as I may ſo ſpeak) the ſeveral Limbs, the ſeveral Members of the New Man, commonly called the Graces of the Spirit, as the Grace of Faith, Love and Hope: And likewiſe the Spirit's acting of theſe Graces is called the acting of Grace. Now of theſe two kinds the former is properly called *Grace*, the latter improperly, becauſe where-ever it is wrought it denotes the ſpecial Favour and Grace of God towards that Soul. Now both theſe, both *Relative* and *Real Grace*, they have an All-ſufficiency in them, and are of an All-ſufficing Nature.

1. A Chriſtian's Portion in *Relative Grace* is an All-ſufficing and Satisfactory Portion. It is ſo great that you can deſire no more; for this Grace admits of no degrees, and he that hath any of it, hath as much as any can have. Here therefore the weakeſt Chriſtian may have abundance of Comfort; others poſſibly may have greater meaſures of Gifts and Parts, and of the Sanctifying Graces of the *Holy Ghoſt*, but in Relative Grace, all ſtand upon the ſame level, *Adoption*, *Juſtification*, *Reconciliation*, *Myſtical Union*; all the Priviledges which Chriſt hath purchaſed for Believers are all common, and no more belong to the ſtrongeſt than to the weakeſt and moſt feeble Chriſtian. An Infant may be as much a Son and Heir as a grown Man; others may poſſibly have greater meaſures of the Spirit of Adoption, whereby they cry, *Abba, Father*, but none can have a greater meaſure of the Grace of Adoption, nor is God more a *Father* to one than he is to another, no more to the ſtrongeſt than to the weakeſt Chriſtian; and though one may have a greater meaſure of the *Spirit of Adoption*, yet all Believers have the like meaſure of the *Grace of Adoption*; others may have a greater Familiarity and Acquaintance with God, but none can be more reconciled to God than thou art, if a true Believer; others may have a more comfortable ſenſe of this *Adoption*, yet none can be more adopted, and more juſtified than thou art. We do not uſually beg of God further meaſures, and further degrees of theſe things; but if we ſtand under theſe Relations to God, and have but the evidence of it in our own Conſciences, then we reſt fully ſatisfied; therefore what *Philip* ſaid to Chriſt, *Shew us the Father, and it ſufficeth us*, the ſame may every true Chriſtian ſay, Lord, ſhew me my Father, ſhew me that God is my Father, that I am adopted into the number of his Children, and this ſufficeth; I have no more to ask, no more to receive in that Particular.

SERMON XVII.

HEB. vii. 25.

Wherefore he is able alſo to ſave them to the uttermoſt that come unto God by him, ſeeing he ever liveth to make Interceſſion for them.

I Come now to the next Particular, and that is,

2. As the Chriſtian's Portion in *Relative Grace* is ſatisfactory, ſo likewiſe his Portion in the *Sanctifying Graces* of the Holy Spirit, this is an All-ſufficient and a Satisfactory Portion.

How can that be, may ſome ſay? Are not Chriſtians always unſatisfied in their preſent Attainments, and think they have got nothing if they fall ſhort of abſolute Perfection, either they are not ſufficient, or elſe their Deſires are moſt unreaſonable?

I anſwer, though the Truth of Grace wrought in a Chriſtian makes him always deſirous of more than what he hath already, yet is that Grace ſufficient and ſatisfactory in theſe Reſpects.

1. The

1. The leaſt degree of true Grace is ſufficient to make the Heart upright and ſincere, ſufficient to break the reigning power of Sin, to caſt Satan out of his Throne; it is ſufficient to ſway the Heart to God as its chiefeſt good, and to make his Intereſt in the Soul victorious and prevalent over the Intereſt of the World and Fleſh; this ſufficiency the weakeſt degree of true Grace hath. And herein is Chriſt's Power and Ability to ſave moſt eminently glorious; *Grace* is a Creature in its own Nature Mortal and Corruptible, and ſhould Chriſt but for a moment ſuſpend his Influence, every Temptation, every Corruption would eaſily deſtroy it; now for Chriſt to preſerve this weak and helpleſs Creature in the midſt of ſo many ſtrong and mighty Corruptions that oppoſe it, it argues as All-ſufficient a Power as it doth to preſerve alive a ſingle *Spark of Fire* in the midſt of the raging and foaming *Sea*. Now Chriſt not only preſerves this weak Grace alive, but makes it Victorious and Triumphant over all the Powers of *Hell*; they are not able to ſtand before it, it batters down their ſtrong Holds, it routs Armies of Luſts and Temptations, it alters and changes every Faculty of the Soul, and reduceth them all to Obedience, as if it were Chriſt's deſign not only by his Power to ſave the Soul, but to do it in ſuch a way as ſhould moſt of all ſhame the *Devil*, baffling and ſubduing him by ſuch a weak and contemptible thing as Grace. And therefore St. *Paul* when he prays againſt that *Temptation* which ſorely buffeted him, 2 *Cor.* 12. 4. God anſwers him, *My Grace is ſufficient for thee, for my ſtrength is made perfect through weakneſs:* As boiſterous and as raging as thy Temptations are, yet it ſhall appear that thy weak Grace through my Strength ſhall at length overcome them.

2. The leaſt degree of true ſanctifying Grace is ſufficient to entitle the Soul to Heaven and Glory. Let weak and doubting Chriſtians therefore know this for their Comfort, that the Promiſe of Eternal Life is not made to the degrees of their Grace, but to the truth of it, not to Grace as ſtrong, but to Grace as true. Now the truth of Grace may be in the leaſt and in the weakeſt degree; that Grace to which our Salvation is principally aſcribed is our Faith. Now it is not ſaid, he only whoſe Faith is ſo ſtrong as to overcome all Temptations, and all Doubts, and to flouriſh up into Aſſurance, he only ſhall be ſaved; but whoſoever believes ſhall be ſaved, tho' his Faith be very weak, and very wavering; and the reaſon of this is clear, for Faith doth not ſave us as it is a Sanctifying, but as it is a Juſtifying Grace; for if it ſaves us as it ſanctifies, then muſt all periſh, ſince the Faith of the ſtrongeſt Believer is mixed with ſo many Imperfections that render them worthy of Eternal Death: Faith therefore ſaves as it juſtifies, and juſtifies as it entitles us to Chriſt's perfect Righteouſneſs, which Title we obtain by being united to him, and made one with him through this Grace of Faith. But now a weak Faith is a moſt ſure and inviolable Band of Union to Chriſt as well as a ſtrong Faith. A weak Faith can make a full conveyance of the Righteouſneſs and Merits of Chriſt to the Soul, as well as a ſtrong Faith, therefore the weakeſt Faith of the moſt trembling and timerous Chriſtian doth as firmly entitle him to Heaven and Glory, as the moſt ſtrong and undaunted Faith of the moſt aſſured Chriſtian: Thus then, though the Children of God complain ſadly of the weakneſs of their Grace, yet in the very leaſt and meaneſt degree of Grace there is a Twofold Sufficiency, a ſufficiency to break the reigning Power and Dominion of the ſtrongeſt Luſt, and a ſufficiency to give a firm Title to Heaven and Glory, and what would you have more? Hath not Chriſt approved himſelf an All-ſufficient Saviour in giving and diſpenſing ſuch Grace, that the weakeſt and loweſt condition of Believers hath ſuch a great ſufficiency as this is. But this is not all; for,

3. *The leaſt degree of true Grace is a ſufficient ground of Joy and Comfort*; for Comfort and Satisfaction, for Joy and Aſſurance. Theſe overflowing Joys, this Glorious Aſſurance Believers may abound with, even then when they moſt of all complain of the poverty and weakneſs of their Grace: It is not the degree of our Graces that gives us Comfort and Satisfaction, but it is the knowledge and evidence of the truth of them in our own Conſciences. The *Sun* may be in a black and diſmal Eclipſe when many glittering and twinkling *Stars* are not. The talleſt *Cedars* caſt the longeſt ſhade; and ſo many times that Chriſtian that is the talleſt and the moſt eminent in Godlineſs, may be under the blackeſt and saddeſt diſſertions; the meaſures of Comforts are not ſtinted by the meaſures of

Grace, but the meaneſt Grace is a ground of true and inward Joy and Satisfaction, when the Spirit's Witneſs doth irradiate it to us as well as the greateſt degree of Grace is. Joy and Satisfaction flows from Grace, both as it is the poſſeſſion of that which in it ſelf is very deſirable, and becauſe (more eſpecially) it is the earneſt Penny of a future Glorious Inheritance. And hence it is that there may be at once in the ſame Heart a complaining for the want of Grace, and yet Joy unſpeakable and full of Glory for what we have. As Grace in it ſelf is the moſt deſirable good, for a Chriſtian ſadly complaineth that he hath no more, but is ſtinted and kept ſo ſhort in his Allowance; but then as Grace is the Earneſt of future Glory, ſo it yieldeth Joy in the very Poſſeſſion, as knowing that a *Penny* is as good an Earneſt as a *Pound*, and the weakeſt Grace may as firmly aſſure a Chriſtian of Eternal Glory as the ſtrongeſt. Thus I have ſhewn that there is an All-ſufficiency and Satisfactorineſs in the weakeſt and loweſt degree of Grace if it be but ſincere, for it is ſufficient to make the Heart upright and ſincere, it is ſufficient to break the reigning Power of Sin, it is ſufficient to caſt *Satan* out of his Throne, it is ſufficient to ſway the Heart to God, it is ſufficient to Intitle the Soul to Heaven and Glory, and conſequently is always a ſufficient ground of true Joy and Comfort.

3. If an Imperfect ſtate of Grace be of an All-ſufficing Nature, what will it be when Grace ſhall mount up into Glory? If there be ſo much in the Earneſt, what will there be in the Inheritance it ſelf? And this declares the All-ſufficiency of Chriſt indeed, ſince he is able to inſtate us in ſuch great and rich Poſſeſſions that *the Eye hath not ſeen, the Ear heared, neither hath it entred into the Heart of Man to conceive*, what they are, as the *Apoſtle* ſpeaks. When St. *Paul*, who once ſuffered a Tranſlation, and himſelf gives us a Relation of this his Voyage into the other World, he tells us no more than than this, *That he was caught up into Paradiſe, and that he heard words unutterable, that it was not lawful or poſſible for him to utter*, 2 *Cor.* 12. 4, to 11. The Happineſs of Heaven is ſo great that it cannot be fully known till it be fully enjoyed. It is a remaining Reſt, an inacceſſible Light, freſh and overflowing Pleaſures, and Incorruptible Crown, an Eternal Kingdom, too much for me to utter or you to conceive. But nevertheleſs, if the ſight and full Fruition of God, if the Society of Angels, and Spirits of Juſt Men made perfect, if Everlaſting Songs of Praiſes and Hallelujahs, if Eternal Raptures and Extaſies can be accounted a Supporting and an All-ſufficing Good, all theſe ſerve to extol the All-ſufficiency of Chriſt our Saviour, who can beſtow upon us this raviſhing, ſatisfying Joy and Glory. God is now to us the Spring-head and Fountain of all our Mercies and Comforts, and we lye below at the fall of this Spring, and draw Refreſhments from him only through the Conduit-pipes of Providences and Ordinances, and live upon ſecond-hand Enjoyments, but in Heaven we ſhall be laid cloſe to the Fountain it ſelf, and drink in Divine Communications as they flow immediately from God, without having them deadned and flattened in the Conveyance. Now we behold him through a Glaſs darkly, then we ſhall ſee him Face to Face, ſee him as he is, and know him as we are known by him: And if it cauſeth now ſuch Raptures of Joy in us, when he ſometimes darts in half a glance of his Eye upon the Soul, Oh then! within what bounds can our Joy contain it ſelf, when we ſhall conſtantly fix our Eye upon God, and ſtedfaſtly behold his Face, that Face from which the moſt Glorious Angels, as conſcious of their own unworthineſs to behold, cover and vail their own? If now when God gives us ſome glorious Diſcoveries of himſelf, we are ready to faint and melt down under them, certainly in Heaven when we ſhall lye under the Glorious Rays of the *Deity* beating ſo fully upon us, it is ſo great, that there were no living there did not the ſame God ſtrengthen as well as fill our Capacities. This is that *Beatifical Viſion*, that Heaven of Heavens, that Glory wherein the *Angels* are ſatisfied, that ſight wherein God ſhall beſtow upon up a clearer Eye than that of Faith, and be always preſent with us in a nearer way than that of Comfort. This is that All-ſufficient and All-ſatisfying ſtate which the Lord Jeſus Chriſt can and will bring all his unto: A ſtate of inconceivable and endleſs Felicity far ſurmounting in Glory, whatever our narrow Conceptions can now apprehend, a ſtate wherein we ſhall for ever joyn with Angels in ſinging Praiſes to the *Lamb* who hath Redeemed us with his own Blood, and Manifeſted himſelf to be an All-ſufficien

ſufficient Saviour, able to ſave to the uttermoſt all that come to God by him, purchaſing ſo Great and Glorious an Inheritance for them, and bringing them to the poſſeſſion of it; that is the ſecond Demonſtration.

3. Chriſt's All-ſufficiency to ſave doth appear in this, in that he is able to ſave from the greateſt Miſery, and ſupply the greateſt Wants. There is but one Eſtate of Miſery, out of which Chriſt cannot ſave, and that is a ſtate of Damnation; and yet the Damned Spirits are not finally irrecoverable for want of Intrinſical Value and Satisfactorineſs in Chriſt to deliver them, but becauſe Chriſt never intended to purchaſe Salvation for them; had his Sacrifice been intended for them, as it was for us, and the Means applied to them as well as to us, thoſe Chains of Everlaſting Darkneſs which they are now reſerved in would have dropt off, and they would have been ſnatched as Brands out of the Fire, in which for want of this they muſt Burn for ever. Suppoſe what Eſtate you will ſhort of *Hell*, we are by Chriſt recoverable out of it. I ſhall inſtance in two particulars, wherein the very depth and bottom of our Miſery doth conſiſt.

1. We are by our Sins forfeited to the Juſtice and Vengeance of God, and he that can imagine a greater Miſery than this is, never knew what it was to fall into the Hands of the Living God.

2. We are in the Poſſeſſion of the Devil, and he is that ſtrong Man that Rules with rigour, and unto him we are all naturally become Slaves and Vaſſals. Now when we are thus liable and obnoxious to the Wrath of God as our Judge, and fallen into the Hands of the Devil as our Jaylor, will it not be acknowledged that Chriſt ſaves from the uttermoſt Miſery, if he can reſcue us? Is there any that can deliver us, when both God, and the Devil, and all the Powers both of Heaven and Hell ſet themſelves againſt us? Yes, the Lord Chriſt hath done it already.

1. In reſpect of God, and the Divine Juſtice, to which we ſtood obnoxious, he hath fully ſatisfied and paid down an All-ſufficient Price for our Deliverance; therefore ſaith the *Apoſtle*, 1 Cor. 6. 20. *We are all bought with a Price*, &c. 1 Pet. 1. 8, 9. *The precious Blood of Chriſt*; and this is ſuch a Price as hath diſcharged for us the very utmoſt Farthing of all that we owe to Divine Juſtice. And therefore ſaith God in *Job* 33. 24. *Deliver him from going down into the Pit, I have found a Ranſom*, I have diſcharged him from the guilt of his Sins, and obligation to Puniſhment, I am fully ſatisfied. But though the *Judge* be thus ſatisfied, yet the *Devil* the *Jaylor* he would fain retain the Priſoner, and is reſolved not to part with him upon theſe terms; he hath poſſeſſion of him, and he Rules in him, and over him, and therefore reſcue him who can?

2. Therefore Chriſt ſaves us by Conqueſt and plain Force in reſpect of the *Devil*. After he hath ſatisfied God, he ſubdues *Satan*, and compleats the work of our Redemption. And therefore in *Scripture* we read of the Sufferings of Chriſt by which our Salvation is atchieved under both theſe Notions, as Chriſt paid the Price to God's Juſtice, *Mat.* 20. 28. *He gave his Life a Ranſom for many.* 1 Tim. 2. 6. *He gave himſelf a Ranſom for all.* And as a Victory gained over the Devil. *Through death Chriſt deſtroyed him who had Power of Death, that is the Devil*, Heb. 2. 14. 2 Col. 14. 15. *Blotting out the Hand-writing of Ordinances that was againſt us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his Croſs. And having ſpoiled principalities and powers, he made a ſhew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.* He hath expoſed the *Devil*, and all the Black Hoſt of *Hell*, to Shame and Infamy, in having their prey ſo ſtrangely pluckt from them; and he *Triumphed over them in his Croſs, ver.* 15. And thus he ſaves us by Ranſom in reſpect of God, and by Conqueſt in reſpect of the *Devil*; he ſaves us from the greateſt Miſery imaginable, from the Dungeon of the loweſt Hell. So long as your caſe is not ſo deſperate as to be in Hell, be your Miſery more or leſs, this makes no difference in reſpect of Chriſt, though it calls for greater love and thankfulneſs from you to him for your deliverance. Seeing therefore Chriſt is thus able to ſave us from the utmoſt and greateſt Miſery, it appears that he is an All-ſufficient Saviour.

2. As he is able to ſave us from the greateſt Miſery, ſo he is able to relieve us in our greateſt and moſt preſſing Wants, be they inward or outward, be they Corporal or Spiritual, *My God can abundantly ſupply all your needs, according to the Riches of his Glory by Chriſt Jeſus, Phil.* 4. 19. Is it pardon you need? In Chriſt *we have Redemption through his Blood, the Forgiveneſs of Sins, according to the Riches of his*

Grace, *Eph.* 4. 7. Is it peace with God? We have it with him through Chriſt, *Rom.* 5. 1. *We have peace with God through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* Is it peace of Conſcience? *Why the peace of God which paſſeth all underſtanding ſhall keep your hearts and minds through Chriſt Jeſus*, *Phil.* 4. 7. Indeed Chriſt is ſuch an overflowing Fountain of all Good that fills the empty, ſatisfies the thirſty, and all that rely upon him; *He is able to ſave to the uttermoſt all that come unto God by him.*

4. Another Demonſtration of Chriſt's All-ſufficiency to ſave appears in this, in that he is able to ſave when none elſe can; he appears to ſave thoſe that come to God by him, when neither Man nor Angels dare ſtand up in their behalf, and if they did, they could not relieve or help them, then Chriſt interpoſeth; and as Chriſt alone procures Salvation for us, ſo he alone can apply that Salvation to us: And this he doth more eſpecially at *Two Seaſons*, when all others are but Miſerable Helpers or Comforters to us. As,

1. When the dreadful Terrors of the Almighty ſurround us, when God brandiſhes his Sword over our Heads, when he makes deep Wounds, and inſtead of Balm pours into our raw Conſciences Fire and Brimſtone. Oh! what Saviour can then deliver us? Then when thoſe inſolent Hopes and vain Confidences of Salvation, with which we formerly ſupported our ſelves, then when our own Righteouſneſs, in which we formerly truſted, is as filthy Garments, or like a Searcloth increaſeth our Torments; when all the Pleaſures and Debaucheries of the World that Men have formerly delighted in, is only to them as if a Perſon ſtung with Waſps ſhould apply Honey to aſſwage the ſmart; ſo truly when their Waſpiſh Conſciences ſting them with the guilt of Sin, they ſtick to the Honey, to the ſweet Delights and Pleaſures of the World. But now this Honey is turned into Gall and Wormwood, God and they are Enemies, he hath dipt his Arrows in the Lake which burns for ever, and hath ſhot them all flaming into their Souls, ſo that they are all of them but one Wound, and what relief is there for them? *A wounded Spirit who can bear?* Yet Chriſt bore it upon the Croſs when he cried, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* And he that cured himſelf can alſo cure another. This Blood poured into theſe Wounds is preſent Remedy, and gives preſent Eaſe and Relief. And therefore he deſigns to make peace between God and us, ſo likewiſe between Man and himſelf, giving in that Peace of Conſcience which quiets and appeaſeth, *Iſa.* 61. 1. It is no leſs work to reconcile Man and Conſcience together upon good and warrantable grounds, than to reconcile God and Man together; and it is only Chriſt's All-ſufficiency that can do either.

2. Another Seaſon is, when we ſhall appear before the Tribunal of God at the laſt and terrible Day. What a dreadful ſight will it be to behold and ſee Heaven and Earth all wallowing in Flames, and Angels flying through the Air, and driving whole ſhoals of Men before them to Judgment, the Judge being ſet, the Books opened, God, Conſcience, and the Devil accuſing, and all the World crying out, *Guilty*, *Guilty*, and the Sentence paſſing on them accordingly, and Millions of them dragging to Execution from the Bar where they were Condemned? You cannot then cry to your Honours and Dignities to ſave you, for you muſt all ſtand upon the ſame equal level; it is not your Righteouſneſs can then ſave you; no, the defects of it then ſhall be found part of your Charge. What then is there to ſave you? Your Guilt is manifeſt, your Judge impartial; and if one Sentence is paſt, the Execution is ſpeedy: And certainly now it is time for an All-ſufficient Saviour to appear, when the whole World is burning about them, and Hell under them, God frowning in their very Faces, and the Devil attending them at their Backs ready to hurry them away to Torments. And now when there is no pity to be expected from *Angels* or *Men*, then Chriſt appears to be an *Advocate* to anſwer for his, and ſilence all the Accuſations produced againſt them, and by his Satisfaction and perfect Righteouſneſs he brings them off with ſhouts, and the applauſe of Glorious *Angels*, and *Saints*. And thus it appears he is able to ſave them when none elſe can.

5. And laſtly, *Chriſt is able to ſave to the uttermoſt, in that he is able to ſave thoſe that condemn themſelves, and think their own Salvation a thing impoſſible.* There is a Twofold Judging and Condemning of one's ſelf, one in point of Merit and Deſert, the other in point of Iſſue and Event; the one judgeth himſelf as one now deſerving Condemnation, the other that he muſt ſuffer it; the one as due, the other as unavoidable; now Chriſt ſaves from both theſe, and that gloriouſly.

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1. He ſaves thoſe that judge themſelves worthy of Eternal Death, yea, indeed he ſaves no other, 1 *Cor.* 11. 3. *If we judge our ſelves we ſhall not be judged.* And why is this ſelf-judging ſo neceſſary in order to our being acquitted by God, but only becauſe it is Chriſt's deſign in ſaving Sinners to glorifie his exceeding Great and All-ſufficient Power, and therefore we muſt acknowledge our ſelves to be loſt in our ſelves, that ſo God's Power may be owned to be exceeding great and glorious in ſaving of us.

2. Chriſt can ſave thoſe who do not only Judge themſelves worthy of Eternal Death, but who judge themſelves appointed to it. He can ſave thoſe who think it impoſſible they ſhould be ſaved. And queſtionleſs there is now many a Soul in Heaven, who on Earth cried out, There is no Hope, no Mercy for them, that *Hell* and Wrath was their only Portion. And this ſhews what an All-ſufficient Saviour Chriſt is, who can ſave beyond our Hopes, and contrary to our Expectations. And thus I have arrived at the end of the Demonſtrations of Chriſt's All-ſufficiency to ſave from the greateſt Miſery, and to relieve us in our greateſt and moſt preſſing Wants, he is able to ſave us when none elſe can, and he is able to ſave thoſe that condemn themſelves, and think their own Salvation a thing impoſſible; he is able both to ſave thoſe that think themſelves worthy of Eternal Death, and thoſe that think themſelves appointed to it. Now having thus diſplay'd, though weakly, the All-ſufficiency of Chriſt to ſave, we will proceed to cloſe up the Subject, with ſome brief Application of this Doctrine.

USE I.

This ſhould teach us, *To have moſt high and honourable thoughts of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who is thus All-ſufficient to ſave.* Omnipotency, though it were but to deſtroy us, were juſtly the *Object* of our dread and reverence, but Omnipotency to ſave, deſerves our moſt affectionate eſteem. It ſhould raiſe wonder in us, when we Conſider God's Power and Goodneſs in the Works of Creation; but when we Contemplate the Work of Redemption it ſhould raiſe our wonder to an Ecſtaſie. Chriſt's Almighty Power was not ſo glorious then when he ſpake the *World* out nothing, then when he lifted up the *Sun* into the Firmament, and kindled the *Stars* as ſo many ſhining Torches that dart forth Light upon the World, and extend their Influences to the whole Univerſe, as when he appeared in Fleſh, deſpiſed, and of no account, in the form of a Servant, to accompliſh the wonderful Work of our Redemption. What he did in the former, was by the Aſſociation and Joint-workmanſhip of the other Perſons of the Bleſſed *Trinity*, but in this the whole Work lay upon him. *He trod the Wine-preſs of Father's Wrath alone.* In the former, though he ſhewed his Power to be great, yet he did not put it forth to the uttermoſt; he could have Created more Worlds, and he might have made more of each ſort of Creatures, and theſe far more beautiful and glorious than they are; but in the Work of Redemption Chriſt's Infinite Power is extended to the uttermoſt, his Perſon was Infinite, and his Sufferings were Infinite, one proportionable to the other. His Omnipotency as our Redeemer, is far more glorious than his Omnipotency as our Creator. Chriſt firſt gives the honour of his All-ſufficiency to this end, that for his undertaking ſo great an Employment as the Accompliſhment of the Work of our Redemption, we might honour him in his own Perſon, as we honour the Father in his, *John* 5. 26. Certainly there is good reaſon why we ſhould aſcribe Honour to him from whom we receive Salvation.

USE II.

Is Chriſt an All-ſufficient Saviour? Why do we then rely upon that which is altogether inſufficient? What the Prophet ſaid in another caſe, 2 *Kings* 1. 6, 7. *Is it becauſe there is no God in* Iſrael, *that thou ſendeſt to enquire of* Beelzebub *the God of* Ekron? The ſame may I ſay, Is it becauſe there is none deputed to be a *Saviour*, becauſe there is none appointed, none able to ſave, that Men betake themſelves to falſe Refuges, to broken Reeds to truſt in, that are ſo far from ſupporting, that certainly they will both betray any wound them? It is a moſt ſtrange Folly that moſt Men are guilty of, that when God hath provided them a Saviour to their Hands, one that is able to ſave to the uttermoſt, yet with a great deal of

Toil

Toil and Labour they ſeek to ſet up other Saviours of their own, as if it were juſt reaſon to diſtruſt the Mercy of God, becauſe they have deſerved his Wrath. There is not any of us here, but we have all hopes of Heaven, and of a Bleſſed Eternity, and ſomething we all rely upon as ſufficient to heart us up in it. If I ſhould go firſt to one, and then to another, and put the Queſtion, Do you hope to be ſaved? Where ſits the Perſon that will not ſhew his ſtrong hopes, and almoſt diſdain ſuch a Queſtion ſhould be ask'd him? Yes, would every one ſay, we have all good hopes, and though the moſt periſh, and that few are ſaved, yet we have all hopes that we are of the number of thoſe few. Were but the grounds and reaſons of Mens hopes made viſible, we ſhould find that that which they moſt ſupport themſelves upon, is no better than that mentioned in the Book of *Job*, *To ſay of Gold thou art my hope, and of the fine Gold thou art my confidence:* Some truſt preſumptuouſly to the Mercy of God to be ſaved, and this is the plea of many Ignorant Perſons; here it may be it is a ſecret to thoſe who can pretend more knowledge in the Myſteries of Salvation, that God is merciful and gracious, and that the World is but ſcar'd out of their Wits, when we repreſent God in ſuch furious ſhapes as if he were all Vengeance; his Mercy is infinite, and who would not hope? 'Tis true, but his Juſtice and Severity is as Infinite as his Mercy, why then doſt thou not fear? Muſt God remit the Attribute of his Mercy if he doth not ſave thee? Why thou thy ſelf judgeſt he is Infinite in Mercy, though he hath condemned Thouſands of others, but we will never believe that God which made us will deſtroy us; if this be all, know that the *Devils* have as good a plea as this. Were not they the Workmanſhip of God, were not they more Chryſtal Pieces than thou art? And he that *ſpared not the Angels which fell*, will leaſt of all ſpare thee. Doth not the *Prophet* direct us againſt this plea, *Iſa. v.* 11. *It is a people of no underſtanding, therefore he that made them will not ſave them, and he that formed them will not ſhew them Mercy.*

Queſt. *But how can it conſiſt either with the Goodneſs of God to puniſh momentary Sins? Thoſe that are but as a flaſh, and gone in the twinkling of an Eye, how can he puniſh theſe with Everlaſting Deſtruction?*

Anſw. It is true, the Act of Sin is momentary and tranſient, but yet there is ſomething in Sin that is Permanent and Eternal, and that ariſeth from the guilt of it; God doth not Puniſh for the Act of Sin that is paſt and gone, but for the guilt of it that remains; the black guilt of that Sin which was committed an hundred Years ago, remains ſtill upon the Souls of the Damned, and therefore God juſtly Puniſheth them, and will do ſo Eternally, becauſe all their Eternity of Sufferings can never ſatisfie the offended Juſtice of the Divine Majeſty, theſe Hopes therefore are all vain. Some truſt to their own Righteouſneſs, and ſet up their own good Works and Duties for their All-ſufficient Saviour. There is nothing harder than to perſwade Men to look beyond themſelves for Life. As they have been their own Deſtroyers, ſo they would fain be their own Saviours, and yet what is this but a deluſory Sottiſhneſs? And thoſe are hardlieſt beaten off from relying upon their own Righteouſneſs, who have the feweſt good Works; but this is a weak ground of hope which Men venture their Souls upon for Eternal Happineſs. It is obſervable that the hope of a Hypocrite is compared to a *Spider's Web*, *Job* 8. 4. Spiders Webs, you know, are ſpun out of their own Bowels; when the Spider hath made its Web with much pains, and ſet it ſelf in the midſt of it, it is but a weak and defenceleſs thing, eaſie to be ſwept away; ſo is it with theſe vain hopes of Sinners, they are ſpun out of their own Bowels, out of their good Works and Righteouſneſs, and when they ſet up themſelves in the midſt of them, expecting to catch Heaven in their *Web*, they will find it but a weak and indefenſible thing; for Conviction of Sin will break this Web, if not, Death and Judgment will, and then the Sinner will unexpectedly drop into *Hell*. Now from the Conſideration of all this, it greatly concerns us not to truſt to, or rely upon our own, but Chriſt's Righteouſneſs, leſt we fall into Condemnation. Chriſt hath done Two Things for us as our Saviour;

1. He hath made a full Satisfaction and Expiation of the Guilt of our Sins.
2. He hath procured Acceptation of our Perſons and Performances with God. Now if we truſt to our own Righteouſneſs for either of theſe, we make that our Saviour, and not Chriſt. Examine your ſelves now, and ſearch what it is that you propound to your ſelves when you perform Duties towards God. Do none of you perform

perform Duties to this end, that thereby you may be freed from the guilt of Sin, and pay down a price for your former Tranſgreſſions? When you commit Sin many times, do not you think you will make amends to God by the next Prayer and Confeſſion, and bemoaning your ſelves for it. That which Men rely upon for the ſatisfying of their Conſciences, that they rely upon for the ſatisfying of Divine Juſtice. Now when Conſcience grows vexed and angry, what are the Methods that Men uſe to quiet them? If they can but reckon up the number of their good Works and Duties, they value them inſtead of the Blood of Chriſt.

2. Do none of you rely upon your own Righteouſneſs and good Works, to procure acceptation with God? For mark, upon what account Men hope their Duties ſhall be accepted, upon the ſame they hope themſelves ſhall be accepted. Now put it to the tryal, do not you hope that your Duties ſhall be accepted for their own ſake? True it is, you pray that God would hear and anſwer you for Chriſt's ſake, but yet the generality of Men reſt upon the excellency of their Prayer to make them acceptable; for conſider, have you not different hopes of the acceptation of your Duties, upon your different performance of them? If your Hearts are ſometime drawn out in Prayer, and mightily enlarged, do not you riſe up and ſay with full confidence that your Prayers are accepted with God as a ſweet ſavour, but at other times when your Hearts are more dead and flat, and your Prayers hang heavy upon your Lips, when you can but groan and chatter, then you conclude you are afraid that God doth not regard that Prayer, nor accept of it, this is an evidence that you meaſure the acceptance of your Duties by the worth and excellency of them; the one is dull and ſluggiſh, and that you give over as loſt and vain, the other vigorous and ſprightful, and that you doubt not but it pearceth Heaven, and obtaineth audience with God, never thinking of the Interceſſion of Chriſt, which alone can make them acceptable; if this be the end Men make of performing their Duties, to make them their Chriſts, and rely upon them for Salvation; though it be a means to it, yet it is inſufficient of it ſelf to obtain it.

USE III.

Is Chriſt an All-ſufficient Saviour able to ſave to the uttermoſt? Let us then be perſwaded to come to him, to accept him for our Saviour. Were I now to preſs you to ſome hard and difficult Duty, to the exerciſe of Self-denial and Mortification, to be willing to lay down your Lives for Chriſt, I might rationally ſuſpect that theſe Exhortations ſhould be rejected, unleſs they came with great Power, ſtrong Arguments, and prevalent Motives, but when it is only to accept of that Chriſt who hath laid down his Life for you, and of that Salvation which he hath laid up for you, and tenders to you; certainly ſuch an Exhortation as this carries Argument and Motive enough in it ſelf to prevail; but becauſe Men are ſo wedded to their own Sins, and becauſe they are reſolved againſt their own Happineſs, I ſhall lay down ſome Conſiderations, which if they do not perſwade them to cloſe with Chriſt, may at leaſt convince them how unreaſonably they put away Salvation from themſelves. And here,

1. Conſider, That you all ſtand in moſt abſolute need of an All-ſufficient Saviour. You are loſt beyond all the Power and Skill of Men and Angels to recover you; and God proteſts that he will ſave you no other way but by Chriſt, *Acts* 4. 13. *Neither is there Salvation in any other, for there is none other name given under Heaven.* There is no choice for you, but either *Chriſt* or Eternal Damnation, either the Son of God, or the Wrath of God; you are all under guilt, and there is no other way of Satisfaction to Divine Juſtice, but either his Blood or yours; you now hear theſe things, and poſſibly ſlight them, but that Day and Hour is coming, and will not tarry, when *Death* ſhall ſnatch you away to Judgment. And when you ſhall lift up thoſe hands all flaming at the great Bar, with which you thruſt away Salvation from you. That Chriſt whom you have Scorned and Contemned, as a Merciful Saviour, you will then tremble at as a moſt ſevere and juſt Judge.

2. Conſider, *If you now come in to Chriſt, he is willing and ready to receive you.* He himſelf tells you ſo, *John* 6. 37. *Thoſe that come unto me I will in no wiſe caſt out.* Indeed All-ſufficiency to ſave without willingneſs, ſerves only to increaſe the anguiſh of our ruin and deſtruction. But this may be for our comfort, that Chriſt hath no more power in his Hand to ſave us, than willingneſs in his Heart. It is not indeed

Chriſt's

Chriſt's Power that Deſpairing Souls uſe to object againſt, but his Will. We know, ſay ſuch, that Chriſt is able to ſave us, but how know we that he is willing? Truly his All-ſufficiency gives us good ſecurity of his Will. Hath Chriſt left the warm Boſom of his Father? Hath he undergone no leſs than Infinite Wrath and Sufferings, and all for this end, that he may be an All-ſufficient Saviour? And ſhall we yet doubt after all this, whether he is willing to ſave us or not? Certainly if it ſtood Chriſt in ſo much to procure to himſelf Ability to ſave, we have no reaſon to doubt that ſince he hath obtained that ability, that he ſhould now want a Will to do it: Therefore ſince Chriſt was appointed by the Father to ſave Sinners, and ſince he was fitted with an All-ſufficient Power to effect Salvation, and ſince this All-ſufficiency wants not willingneſs, be perſwaded to accept of him, and be as willing to be ſaved by him as he is willing to ſave you.

3. Conſider, *That though Chriſt be an All-ſufficient Saviour, and able to ſave to the uttermoſt, yet he is not able to ſave thoſe that refuſe and reject him.* A Medicine doth not Cure, becauſe it is compounded of ſuch and ſuch precious Ingredients, though never ſo well ſuited to that Diſtemper, but becauſe it is applied; ſo neither doth Chriſt ſave us, as he is compounded of many precious Ingredients that qualifie and fit him to be an All-ſufficient Saviour, as his *Deity*, *Humanity*, *Unction* of the Holy Spirit, and his own willingneſs, but as received, as believed on, and applied to the Soul by Faith; and therefore whatever he hath done or ſuffered in his Life, Death, or Reſurrection, it will all be but in vain to us, and his Precious Blood will run waſte, if through impenitency and unbelief we reject this All-ſufficient Saviour, and keep at a diſtance from him.

4. And laſtly, Conſider, *If you do not accept of Chriſt and Salvation by him, you will be rejected by him to your greater and ſorer Condemnation.* Think you not that it will heighten your Sin here, and your Miſery hereafter, that when God hath been at ſo much coſt, and ſo much care, to furniſh an All-ſufficient Saviour for you, that you ſhould be found to neglect ſo great Salvation as this is. Think not that the tenders of Chriſt and Salvation which are made to you are indifferent, that though you ſlight and neglect them, that you ſhall be in the ſame condition you were before; no, but the deſpiſing of Chriſt, and the abuſing of Grace, and neglecting of ſo great Salvation, are thoſe things that inſpirit and inflame Hell-fire, and make the never dying Worm to gnaw more cruelly, and will ſink you deeper into that ſcalding Lake that burns with Fire and Brimſtone, where you ſhall be burnt in Streams, and drowned in Flames. It had been better for you that there never had been a Chriſt tendered, Grace exhibited, and Salvation purchaſed for you by Chriſt; if we neglect this Salvation, we are without hope or poſſibility of Recovery for ever. Pray obſerve what the *Apoſtle* ſpeaks after he had been comparing *Chriſt* and *Moſes*, together with the Wrath that ſhould follow upon the deſpiſing of the one, and the deſpiſing of the other, *Heb.* 10. 28, 29. *He that deſpiſed* Moſes's *Law died without mercy under two or three Witneſſes, of how much ſorer puniſhment ſuppoſe ye ſhall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the Blood of the Covenant wherewith he was ſanctified an unholy thing, and hath done deſpite to the Spirit of Grace?* Theſe ſhall not have ſo much Mercy afforded them as to die without Mercy. And thus I have handled this Excellent Portion of Scripture concerning Chriſt's Interceſſion and All-ſufficiency to ſave all that come unto God by him.

THE

THE EXCELLENCY OF Heavenly Treaſures.

SERMON XVIII.

MAT. vi. 20, 21.

But lay up for your ſelves Treaſure in Heaven, where neither moth nor ruſt doth Corrupt, and where Thieves do not break through nor ſteal: For where your Treaſure is, there will your Heart be alſo.

The Introduction.

THere is not a Soul in the World ſo deſtitute and beggarly, but hath ſomewhat that it may call, and doth eſteem, its Treaſure; not only he that hath, as the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks, all that his Heart can wiſh, who graſps in poſſeſſion whatever his Covetouſneſs and Unbounded Deſires graſp in imagination; but he alſo that poſſeſſeth nothing but his own Poverty, that hath no Abundance, but Want and Miſery, ſuch a one whom you would never ſuſpect to be a *Hoarder*, yet hath he that, the hopes and enjoyment of which he counts *Precious* and his *Soul's Treaſure*.

Now, in dangerous and difficult times, what is the *firſt* and *chief* Care of every Man, but ſo to diſpoſe of this his *Treaſure*, that whatever Loſſes he may ſuſtain in other acceſſary good things, that are but Lumber and Utenſils to the *Soul*, yet his *Treaſure* may be ſecured both from Corruption and Violence?

Our Saviour here throws open before our view two Repoſitories or common *Treaſuries*, vaſt ones they are, wherein all the good things that ever any Man in the World enjoyed are laid up, and they are *Earth* and *Heaven*: If you have any *Treaſure*, as certainly every one of you have, it muſt belong to one of theſe two places; you muſt depoſite it either on Earth or in Heaven. "Look now, ſays "Chriſt, take a view of *Earth's Exchequer*, and what ſee you there? Why, there "indeed is the World's *Treaſure*, all that many millions of Men have been ga"thering together, and hoarding up for ſeveral Ages. If now you would have an Inventory of all this Store, St. *John* hath exactly caſt it up in 1 *John* 2. 16. and it amounts to this ſum, *All that is in the world*, ſaith he, *is the luſt of the Fleſh, the luſt of the Eye, and the pride of Life*: That is, there are Pleaſures ſuiting the propenſion of the Fleſh; there are Riches for the greedineſs of the Eye: For, *What*, ſaith the Wiſe Man, *is laid up for the owners thereof, ſave the beholding of them with their Eyes?* And there is Honour and Dignity, that *planetary airy* good thing, that puffs up, that's the *Pride of Life*; and this is the World's All, and that which many Thouſands make their Treaſure. Yea; But, ſaith Chriſt, do not you ſee how ruſty and worm-eaten theſe things are? Do you not ſee what a buſtle there is among the Men of the World to get them? One pulls and hales

 them

them from another, and they are never certain in any Man's poſſeſſion, *moth* and *ruſt corrupt them, and thieves they break through and ſteal*; and therefore, *lay not up your Treaſure here*; there is another Treaſury for you to ſtore up your good things in, and that is in Heaven, a ſure and ſafe place, where no Corruption doth infect, nor no Violence intrude; therefore lay up your Treaſure there: *Lay up your Treaſure in Heaven.* And thus you have the Scope of our Saviour in theſe words.

In the words themſelves you have,

I. A Command or Exhortation; and that is, to *lay up Treaſure in Heaven.*

II. You have the Enforcement of this Command; and that is from a double reaſon.

(1.) From the Security of that *Treaſure* that is laid up in Heaven; it is there ſafe and free from all danger, that it could not be, were it any where elſe depoſited. All Hurt and Danger that can befal a Man's Treaſure, proceeds either,

1. From inward Principles of Corruption, that do of themſelves cauſe decay in it. And thus it is with all *Earthly Treaſures*; they are of themſelves fading and periſhing; Riches periſh with the uſing, they rot out and wear away while we are uſing them; all Earthly *Manna*, the ſweet and luſcious things of this World breed Worms, that eat upon and devour them: All the Riches and Treaſures of the World have *Ruſt*, that attends on them, and conſumes both them and their beauty and ſubſtance; but now Spiritual *Manna* never turns into *Worms*; *Treaſure laid up in Heaven* is never eaten with *Ruſt*; *No*, ſaith Chriſt, *there ruſt doth not corrupt*; that is, they are free and ſafe from all inward Decays and Periſhing, from their own inward Principle and Nature.

And, 2. *Treaſure* may be unſafe, as from an inward Principle, that may corrupt, ſo alſo from outward Accidents, that may conſume them: And thus we ſee oftentimes it comes to paſs. Sometimes,

Firſt, Inſenſibly, through a ſecret blaſtning Curſe of God, waſting them by little and little, and unperceived Decays, that while we hold them in our Hands, and look upon them, then they periſh; and this is here compared to the eating of a Moth; a Moth makes not a ſudden rent in a Garment, but ſpoils it by unſeen degrees: So fares it oftentimes with the things of this World; if they be not torn and rent from us, yet are they *Moth-eaten* Comforts; the *Moth* is got into them, and deſtroys them unperceivably.

And ſometimes, *Secondly*, by ſudden Violence, compared here to Thieves breaking through and ſtealing good things and Treaſure away. An unexpected turn of Providence doth at once many times ſnatch away all that Men here prize and ſet their Hearts on, and then where is their Treaſure? In *Hoſ.* 5. we find God threatning both theſe ways to deſtroy *Ephraim*, in Ver. 12. *I will be unto* Ephraim, ſaith God, *as a moth*; *and to the Houſe of* Judah *as rottenneſs*. That is, the Lord would conſume them ſilently and unperceivably, as a *Moth* eats out in the ſpots of a Garment. And Ver. 14. *I will be unto* Ephraim *as a Lion, and as a young Lion unto the Houſe of* Judah, *and I, even I, will tear and go away; I will take away, and none ſhall reſcue.* That is, I will deſtroy him by a violent and ſudden deſtruction.

But now *Treaſures laid up in Heaven* they are ſecured both from inſenſible Decays, and alſo from ſudden Violence; ſecured both from the corruption of the *Moth*, and from the ſtealing of the *Thief*: It is rich and ſure Treaſure that is laid up there, and now is the time of your laying up: Some few years hence, and it cannot be long firſt, but you ſhall have theſe *Treaſures* opened to you, and you let in, to ſee how rich you are; and you will find it augmented above what you could believe, there is not the leaſt of all that you have laid up, loſt or diminiſhed, and then you will wonder and queſtion with your ſelves who laid up this and that part of your *Treaſure*: You will then ask, Is this Glory mine, and that Glory mine? This Throne and that Brightneſs, this Diamond and thoſe Stars, this Robe and that Sunbeam, all this *precious* and *unconceivable Treaſure*, are they mine? I cannot remember that ever I laid up ſo much and ſuch *precious Treaſure*; my Faith ſometimes pry'd through a creviſe into this *Treaſure*, and it told me, there were great and glorious things ſtored up; and it told me alſo, that they did belong to me; but, O my dim-ſighted Grace, that could not diſcover to me the one half of that Glory wherein I am now loſt and ſwallowed up. Thus a Chriſtian will then admire how he came by ſo much Treaſure, when he comes to the poſſeſſion and enjoyment of it. There

is a Saying in *Plutarch* recorded, of a rich Roman, *Crassus*, That *he did not think that Man rich, that knew all that he had.* Truly, in this Man's account, a Christian is truly rich, he hath laid up more Treasure than himself knows of; but though a Christian knows not how much he hath, yet he shall lose none; it is safe, being laid up in Heaven; every Star is as a Seal set upon the Treasure Door, that none may break in and violate it. And that is the *first Argument*, *Lay up Treasure in Heaven*, because there only it is safe; there only the *Moth* doth not *corrupt*, and *Thieves do not break through and steal.*

(2.) And then Secondly, another inforcing Reason you find in the next Verse, and that is, because by laying up *Treasure* in Heaven, you lay up your *Hearts* also in Heaven; for, *where your Treasure is*, says Christ, *there will your Hearts be also*; and where your Hearts are, there are you. Now what an Argument is this, O Christians! Would you your selves be laid up safely in Heaven before you come to be laid down in your Graves? Would you pre-occupate your own Immortality and Glory? Would you send all your Thoughts, and all your Desires, as Spies into the *Land of Promise*, to discover the Riches and Beauty of it? Then lay up your *Treasure* there, this will center all your *thoughts*, this will fix all your *affections* on it self; and though now you are on Earth, and walk on Earth, yet this will make your Conversation to be in Heaven, if your Treasure be there; it is impossible that you and your Treasure should be at a distance: If your Treasure be on Earth, your Minds will be there also, you will grovel here below, the Serpent's Curse will be upon you, *Upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou Eat all the Days of thy Life.* But if your Treasure be laid up in Heaven, it will attract and draw up your Hearts unto it, and make them Heavenly Hearts as it self is an Heavenly Treasure.

Now all this is backed with another consideration in the beginning of the words, and that is, *Lay up Treasure for your selves in Heaven.* You may indeed lay up Treasure on Earth, but it is a hazard whether it be for your selves: Here Men sweat and toil to get Estates, and *heap up Treasures*, but they *know not who shall enjoy* and possess *them*; they labour all their Days to Purchase a few uncertain Riches, that usually, by that time they purpose to reap the Fruit of them, Death comes, and snatches away their Souls; and the greatest use they can make of them is, only to bequeath them unto others. He only that is Rich towards God, *lays up Treasure for himself*, and lays up those Riches that he needs no Legacy to dispose of them; a Christian is his own Heir, and what himself hath gotten, he himself shall Eternally enjoy and possess. And thus you have the parts of the Text: *Lay up for your selves Treasure in Heaven.*

There is nothing in the words that needs much Explication, I shall therefore only in brief enquire into two things.

First, What is here meant by *Treasure.*

Secondly, What is meant by *laying up this Treasure in Heaven.*

First, What is here meant by *Treasure.*

I *Answer*, It is a *metaphorical* Expression, and denotes to us that which we set the highest rate and value upon, that the getting of which we must endeavour, the enjoyment of which we we most prize, the loss of which we most bemoan: In a word, that which we account as our greatest and best Good, that is our Treasure, be it what it will. *What is meant by Treasure.*

Secondly, The next Enquiry is, what is meant by *laying up this Treasure in Heaven.* *What it is to lay up Treasure in Heaven.*

I *Answer*, It is nothing else but to esteem Heaven, and the things of Heaven thus, to be our Treasure, to rate and value them above all things else, and to look upon them as our Chiefest Good, and accordingly to seek and labour after them.

I might now propound many *Observations* to you, as indeed every word of this precious Scripture is pregnant with them, but I shall only mention one, intending only to insist upon that, and it is this:

Doct. *That Heavenly and Spiritual things, they are and ought to be of the greatest value with every true Christian.* Or thus:

A true Christian doth, and he ought to esteem Heavenly things above all things.

Now what are these Heavenly things but God and Christ, Grace and Glory, Spiritual and Eternal Concernments? These are the choice things of a Christian, what-

ever elſe he may poſſeſs, yet theſe are his Treaſure. See how *Abraham* ſtings *Dives* with a ſad Item of what he made his Treaſure on Earth, in *Luke* 16. 25. *Son*, ſays he, *remember that thou in thy Life-time receivedſt thy good things:* But did not *Abraham* himſelf in his Life-time receive good things alſo? Might not *Dives* have retorted back again? Wert thou not, Father *Abraham*, rich and potent on Earth? Hadſt not thou great Power, and great Poſſeſſions in the World? And muſt I be tormented and thou glorified, when thou hadſt a greater Portion of them than my ſelf? No, the *emphaſis* cuts off this *exception*, *Thou in thy Life-time receivedſt thy good things.* I received good things, but not my good things, not the chiefeſt that I valued; Comforts they were, but not Treaſures; and while I poſſeſſed theſe good things, I ſought after better; and therefore I now poſſeſs and enjoy them alſo. So holy *Aſaph* views this Treaſure that here he had got in a Divine Rapture in *Pſal.* 73. 25. *Whom have I in Heaven but thee? And there is none on Earth that I can deſire beſides thee.* He was ſo far from deſiring any thing above God, that he deſires nothing beſides God. What is there on Earth *that I can deſire beſides thee?* See St. *Paul* alſo in 1 *Corinth.* 6. 2. *I determined to know nothing among you, but Jeſus Chriſt, and him Crucified:* But eſpecially in *Phil.* 3. 8. *Doubtleſs*, ſays he, *I count all things but loſs for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus my Lord, for whom I ſuffer the loſs of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Chriſt.* Obſerve how the Apoſtle doth there contemn all that the World counts its Treaſure, he reckons it but *Dung*, in which a Man may rake long enough before he finds any true Treaſure: Nay, not only *Dung*, but *Loſs*, *in compariſon of Chriſt*; and, what tell you me of loſing all things for him? It is true, I have done ſo, but in doing ſo I have but loſt a Loſs, I am but rid of a Damage; I count all things but Loſs, and I ſuffer the loſs of all things for Chriſt. This is the low and vilifying account that a Child of God makes of every thing that is not his Treaſure; God and Chriſt, and the things of Eternity, are his chief and choice Good, and whatever he hath beſides it, is but *Dung*, but *Loſs*, but a Damage. In the Heart of a carnal Man all things lye in a confuſed order, Heaven below, and Earth atop; Earth ſeems to him to be vaſt and infinite, but Heaven a little inconſiderable ſpot: But now in the Heart of a Child of God every things keeps its natural poſture; there Earth ſinks, as being the dregs of his Thoughts and Cares, but Heaven that ſhines above very bright and Glorious; Earth to him ſeems to be but a little ſpot, as indeed it is, which is ſeldom ſeen or noted by him; but Heaven is as an infinite boundleſs Sea of Mercy, which he is ſtill looking into and admiring of. Thus things keep their natural poſture in the Heart of a Child of God, but they are all diſordered in the Heart of a wicked Man.

But now, to proſecute this farther, I ſhall endeavour to open to you the Riches of this *Heavenly Treaſure*, that it may appear how rationally the Children of God act in valuing this above all things, and in making it their choice Good and chiefeſt Treaſure. And,

1. It is an evident demonſtration of the preciouſneſs of this Treaſure, in that it makes thoſe precious alſo, that are but converſant about it, and therefore certainly it is mighty precious it ſelf; it beſtows a luſtre, excellency, and beauty upon every thing that lyes near it, or that hath any relation to it. I will mention but two things.

(1.) The Deeds of Conveyance, whereby *this Treaſure* is made over to us, and becomes ours, are therefore precious, becauſe they convey ſuch a *Treaſure:* And what are they but the *Promiſes*? Every Promiſe is a Ticket, given us by God, to take up Manſions of Treaſure in Heaven; it is vocal Glory; it is Happineſs in words and ſyllables; it is Eternity couched in a ſentence; and therefore no wonder that the *Apoſtle* ſpeaks ſo Magnificently of them, *Whereby*, ſays he, *are given unto us exceeding great and precious Promiſes.* Tell me therefore, *O Soul!* Didſt thou ever ſee the Glory and Riches that there is in a Promiſe? Wert thou ever raviſhed with that infinite ſweetneſs and deliciouſneſs that thou ſuckeſt from them? Didſt thou ever ſit down amazed at the free and boundleſs Love of God in them that ſpake good to thy Soul, for a great while to come, as *David* ſpeaks? Didſt thou ever find the excellency and preciouſneſs of theſe things? Think then how precious that Glory it ſelf is that fills theſe Promiſes. If a Star be ſo bright and ſparkling, that ſhines only in a borrowed brightneſs, how

how Tranſcendently bright then is the Sun, that lends ſo much light to it? If the Conduit-pipe be ready to burſt through the abundance of Streams that flow from it, how inexhauſtible is the Fountain and Spring-head, that ſupplies this Treaſure? If the Gleanings be ſo Rich and full, what will the Vintage be? The Glory and Happineſs of Heaven is ſo great and boundleſs, that it overflows and ſpills it ſelf abroad in *Promiſes*; and if the overflowing Drops be ſo ſweet, what then will the Ocean it ſelf be? What ſays the Apoſtle in 1 *Pet.* 2. 7. *Unto you that believe, Chriſt is Precious.* How is he now Precious unto Believers, but as he is held forth in a *Promiſe?* That is all the way that he becomes Precious to us now. And will he not be far more Precious to us when we ſhall no more ſtand at the diſtance of a *Promiſe* from him, when we ſhall no more need the Hand of Faith, but ſhall claſp and cling about him in the immediate fruition of him? Will he not be more Precious to us, when all our Hopes ſhall be made good to us in actual preſent poſſeſſion? And therefore if the *Promiſes* be ſo excceding great and precious, it argues certainly, That that *Treaſure* that makes theſe *Promiſes* to be ſo, is wonderfully and infinitely glorious and precious.

(2.) As the Deeds of Conveyance, ſo the very Eye that ſees and views this *Treaſure*, is made Precious by the ſight of it: And what is that Eye but the Eye of Faith? And though it be but weak, yet it is that that by the help of a *Promiſe*, as by a Proſpective-glaſs, we look into Heaven it ſelf, there to ſee that maſs and heaps of Treaſure laid up for the Soul, the Eye of Faith ſees them, the Hand of Faith tells them out: And therefore St. *Peter* calls it Precious Faith, 2 *Pet.* 1. 1. *To them that have obtained like Precious Faith with us.* You may look upon Earthly Treaſure till your Eyes be dazelled, yea, poſſibly till they be weakened and wearied by it, but never will they be made more Rich and Precious by it: But now, by looking upon this *Heavenly Treaſure*, the Eye that ſees it becomes a Jewel it ſelf, *More Precious*, ſaith the ſame Apoſtle, *than the Gold that Periſheth*, 1 *Pet.* 1. 7. And that's the firſt Excellency of this *Heavenly Treaſure:* It is Precious Treaſure in that it makes thoſe things Precious that are but converſant about it, *Precious Faith*, and *Precious Promiſes.*

2. *Heavenly Treaſure is Soul Treaſure*, ſuited to the Soul, and therefore look how much more noble and excellent the Soul is than the Body, ſo much more excellent is *Heavenly Treaſure* than *Earthly Treaſure.* What ſerve theſe things on Earth, but to cloath and feed the Body, and yet for all this the Soul may be naked, and miſerable, and hunger-ſtarved, and want ſuitable Proviſion. Truly, we may lament the condition of the Richeſt Sinners on Earth, and ſay over them in compaſſion, O poor Souls, what Husks and Swines-meat do you give your Souls, while you ſet the whole World before them! For all in the World is no better; there is is nothing in it that you can pick out ſuitable Nouriſhment for them: And therefore Chriſt juſtly brands the *Rich Man* in the Goſpel for an arrant Fool, who when he had ſtopt the Barns with Corn, ſaid to his Soul, *Soul, thou haſt goods laid up for many Years, Eat, Drink, and be Merry.* A Fool indeed, to reckon his Soul's Goods by Barns full! He might as wiſely have boaſted, that he had provided Barns full of Thoughts for his Body, as Barns full of Corn for his Soul: And yet ſuch is the Proviſion that moſt Men make for their Precious Souls. Tell me, Sirs, do you really believe, that this is ſuch Proviſion as your Souls can live upon? Or do you think your Souls need no Proviſion? What muſt your Bodies, that at firſt were kneaded out of the Duſt, and muſt e'er long be crumbled into Duſt again? Muſt theſe Bodies engroſs all your Care how to provide for them, and to pleaſe them, and ſhall your ſpiritual and everlaſting Souls be wholly neglected by you? It is not long hence before your Bodies ſhall never more know a difference between Treaſure and Poverty, between Fulneſs and Hunger, and then what ſerve theſe things for, that with ſo much Pains and Induſtry you have laid up? Truly it is a long Journey into the other World, and *Gold*, and *Silver*, and *Earthly Treaſure*, are too heavy a Portage to be carried with you thither: Thoſe that now make Shipwrack of Faith and a good Conſcience to get them, will e'er it be long make Shipwrack of them alſo; when you come to launch out into Eternity, you ſhall carry nothing with you of your Earthly Treaſure into the other World, unleſs it be the ruſt of it to witneſs againſt you; nothing of your Gold, unleſs it be the guilt of it to condemn you. Theſe are unfit things therefore to be laid

Heavenly Treaſure is Soul Treaſure.

laid up by you as your Soul's Treaſure. But Heavenly Treaſure is ſuitable Treaſure, ſuitable to your Souls, and that in a Twofold reſpect.

I. *Heavenly Treaſures* they are ſuitable to the Nature of your Souls. And,

II. They are ſuitable to the Neceſſities of your Souls.

1. *Heavenly Treaſures* they are ſuitable to the Nature of your Souls. And that in theſe two reſpects.

(1.) They *are Spiritual Treaſures for an immaterial Soul.* And,

(2.) They *are durable Treaſures for an immortal Soul*; and therefore they are ſuitable Treaſures.

1. *Heavenly Treaſures they are Spiritual, and therefore ſuited to a Soul that is of a ſpiritual and immaterial ſubſtance.* Hence the Apoſtle, *Epheſ.* 1. 3. *Bleſſeth God, who hath bleſſed us with all ſpiritual Bleſſings in heavenly things in Chriſt Jeſus.* Truly heavenly things are theſe ſpiritual Bleſſings, refined from all dull and earthly Mixtures. God himſelf, that is the total ſum of all the Treaſures of all the Saints on Earth, he is a Spirit himſelf, his Love and Favour, Intereſt in him, Communion and Fellowſhip with him, they are all ſpiritual and clarified, and chryſtal things, that a carnal Eye cannot ſee, neither can a carnal Judgment value; the moſt ſuitable are they therefore to a Soul that is a Spirit. Of all things belonging to a Man, the Breath of a Man is the *moſt ſubtil*, *inviſible*, and *ſpiritual*; but now the Soul, that is called the *Breath of God* metaphorically, *Gen.* 2. 7. and therefore of a very high degree of ſpiritualneſs. Now bring ſpiritual things to ſpiritual, debaſe not thy ſpiritual and high-born Soul, by matching it to the low and inferiour things of the World; let not thy pure and ſpiritual Soul be unequally yoked with the dregs and droſs of any worldly Enjoyment: GOD and CHRIST, and the things of Eternity, they are ſuitable to the Soul, they are ſpiritual, like thy ſpiritual and better part; and tho' to a carnal Heart theſe ſeem but empty and notional things, yet a Child of a God taſtes more Sweetneſs and Comfort in theſe things, than in whatever the World can *preſent* unto it. The Love of God, the Conſolations of his Spirit, Actings of Grace, Hopes of Glory, the inviſible things, theſe are the true Riches. And then,

Heavenly Treaſure is durable.

2. *Heavenly Treaſure is the only durable Treaſure, and therefore ſuited to an immortal Soul.* The things of this World will not go one ſtep with you beyond this preſent Life; and what a ſad parting hour will that be to the Soul, to go into another World, and to leave all its *Treaſure* behind in this World? How will it protract and linger, and how loth will it be to enter upon ſo great a Journey, without a Treaſure to defray the Charges of it? How ghaſtly will the Soul look back upon thoſe things that it made its Treaſure? What will it ſay? Muſt not I carry this Eſtate and that Treaſure out of the World with me? Muſt we thus part for ever? Yes, *Oh Soul*, for ever; for none of theſe things canſt thou carry with thee. And, Oh what a ſad thing will it be for the poor Soul to be ſet aſhore upon the vaſt Ocean of Eternity, and to have nothing at all to relieve and ſupport it, all its Treaſure being in another World! Well, but now *Heavenly Treaſure* is durable Treaſure; it is current not only in this, but in the other World which is to come; in *Prov.* 8. 18. ſays *Wiſdom* there, *Riches and Honour are with me; yea, durable Riches and Righteouſneſs.* Indeed Righteouſneſs is this durable Riches. When all things in the World ſtare on thee, and thou on them, and ſo take leave of one another eternally, yet then the Love of God, Intereſt in Jeſus Chriſt, his Divine and Heavenly Graces, theſe will then ſtand by thee, and keep thee company, yea, and enter into Heaven, and there abide with thee to all Eternity. It is true, thy Faith, that is now a buſie and active Grace, that like *Moſes* doth here get up to Mount *Piſgah*, and there takes a view of the *Land of Canaan*; muſt it ſelf die before it comes there: Yet this is no leſſening of the Treaſure, though thou doſt loſe thy Faith; for indeed it is not ſo much the loſs of thy Faith, as the ſwallowing of it up, a changing of it into Sight and Viſion: Faith and Fruition they are inconſiſtent one with another; but now all thy other Graces, Love, Joy, and Delight, which are now often eclipſed and faint, and languiſh in their Actings, yet then they ſhall keep an *eternal Jubilee.* Never fear the failing of thy Happineſs: It is true, here the Waters do only bubble, and they may and often do fail, but there thou ſhalt bathe thy ſelf in an infinite Ocean of Delight; there thou ſhalt lye at the Breaſt of an ever-bubbling Fountain of Sweetneſs; God ſhall be eternally there, and thou ſhalt be eternally there; he will be eternally glancing and ſmiling on thee,

and

and thou ſhalt be eternally warming and cheering thy ſelf in that Sunſhine. Therefore think with thy ſelf, if indeed God can be exhauſted, if Heaven it ſelf can be impoveriſh'd, if infinite Riches of Glory can be all ſpent and conſumed, then, and not till then can *thy Treaſure* fail thee; never ſhall one Star of thy Crown twinkle, much leſs ſhall it ever be eclipſed: In 1 *Pet.* 5. 4. *We ſhall receive a Crown of Glory, that fadeth not away*; it ſhall be for ever as glorious, orient, and flouriſhing as it was at its firſt putting on. Indeed, *Eternity* will be the perpetual Beginning of thy Happineſs. And thus now you ſee how ſuitable this Treaſure is to the Nature of the Soul, in that it is Spiritual Treaſure for a Soul that is a Spirit; and it is Durable Treaſure for a Soul that is Immortal.

2. *As Heavenly Treaſure is ſuited to the Nature of the Soul, ſo alſo to the Neceſſities of the Soul.* What is it that the Soul can ſtand in need of, that it cannot be ſupplied withal from hence? Doth it need a Price to redeem it? Here is laid up the precious Blood of Chriſt that was ſhed for the Sins of many. Is it Pardon and Forgiveneſs that it needs? Here is abundant Mercy. Is it Sanctification and Holineſs? Here are Riches of Grace. Is it Joy and Comfort? Here are abundant Conſolations. Is the Soul wretched, and poor, and miſerable, and blind, and naked? Here is Gold to make it Rich; here is white Raiment to cloath it, Eye-ſalve to recover its ſight: Indeed, there is nothing that the Soul can want or deſire, but you may have Supplies for it from your own Treaſure; from that Treaſure that you have laid up in Heaven: See that Rich place, *Phil.* 4. 19. *My God ſhall ſupply all your needs, according to his Riches in Glory by Chriſt Jeſus:* All your Needs, not only your Corporal Needs and Neceſſities, but alſo your Spiritual Neceſſities. Here all *Earthly Treaſures* fall ſhort; the Exigencies of the outward Man they may relieve, but the greateſt abundance of them cannot quiet a troubled Conſcience, nor appeaſe an angry God, nor take off the Guilt of Sin; nor can they redeem the Soul from Eternal Wrath; *No, the Redemption of the Soul is Precious*, yea, too Precious to purchaſed by all theſe things, *and it ceaſeth for ever.* When God frowns upon the Soul, and Conſcience lours, and Hell-fire flaſhes in the Face of a Sinner, how truly poor and miſerable is that Man, that hath no better Support and Comfort than theſe unſuitable things? All the World, as great as now it ſeems to be, will be judged too vile a Price for to procure one Minute's Eaſe. What would the Soul then give for a Saviour, for a ſlighted and diſpiſed Saviour to interpoſe betwixt *It* and *Juſtice?* Believe it, then you will have other Thoughts of the Favour of God, of an Intereſt in Chriſt, and of this Heavenly and Spiritual Treaſure, than now you have. Now, in your Peace and Proſperity, poſſible theſe appear to you to be no better than fancied Treaſures and airy Riches; but when the Days of Sorrow and Darkneſs overtake you, and come upon you; when God ſhall drop into your Souls a little of his Wrath and Diſpleaſure, then it will be in vain to ſeek Eaſe from the World; all your Pleaſures, Treaſures, and Enjoyments here below, they will all tell you it is not in them to relieve you; you may as well ſeek to cure a Wound in your Fleſh, by laying a Plaiſter to your Cloaths; no, it is Grace that can then ſtand you in ſtead, it is that only that can reach the Neceſſities of the Soul, and without this all your Riches and Treaſures they are but dear Vanities, precious Vexations, that will ſtand by, and ſee you periſh, yea, and periſh eternally, but cannot ſupply and help you.

Heavenly Treaſure is ſuitable to the Neceſſities of the Soul.

I come now to a *Third thing*, wherein the Excellency and Riches of this Heavenly Treaſure doth appear, and that is, becauſe they are Satisfying Treaſures, and ſo are not the Treaſures of the World. *Solomon* himſelf, when he had reckon'd up many *Items* for *Honours*, and *Pleaſures*, and *Riches*, yet at the bottom of the Bill, at the foot of the Account, he caſts up the total Sum by two great Cyphers, *All is Vanity and Vexation*, ſaith he; *Vanity* in themſelves, and *Vexation* alſo in the uſe and enjoyment of them: They that make more reckoning of this Treaſure, will be miſtaken in their Account. And is this the Price of thy Sweat and Care? Is this the Price of thy early and late Endeavours? Nay, is this the Price of thy Sins, for which thou deſtroyeſt thy Soul and forgoeſt Eternity? What to hoard up Vanity and Emptineſs, to grow Rich in Vexation? Wilt thou ſtretch thy Conſcience for that which will never fill but Torment thee? Are theſe the great ſtately Nothings that the whole World admires, and runs Mad after? Alas, you may as ſoon graſp your Arms full of Dreams, and hug your

Heavenly Treaſure is ſatisfying.

your own Shadows, as fill up the vaſt and boundleſs Deſires of your Souls with theſe Earthly things, that have ſcarce any proof of their Reality, beſides the Vexation and Torment that they bring with them. Theſe things are to the Soul but as Wind to the Stomach, gripe it they may, but they can never fill nor ſatisfie it. Thoſe that pleaſe themſelves with ſuch Deluſions as theſe are, will tell us, That a round World will not fill up a Triangular Heart, ſtill there will be found ſome corner empty. It is true indeed, you will find *Eſau*, in *Gen.* 23. 9. Seemingly ſatisfied with his preſent Condition, when he tells *Jacob*, *I have enough my Brother:* But this was rather becauſe he was aſhamed to acknowledge his Want, by receiving from a Fugitive, than any real Satisfaction that drew this Speech from him. No, there is ſuch a Paradox in an Earthly Mind that makes it true, that though oftentimes they have too much, yet they never think they have enough: But now, Heavenly Treaſures they are filling and ſatisfying Treaſures; though the World cannot fill up a three-cornered Heart, yet the Trinity can: Though Riches are empty, though Honours and Dignities are flatulent and windy, and Crowns are lined with Troubles, and Scepters are made maſſy with Cares ſet on them; yet *Heavenly Riches* are ſubſtantial, the Crown of Glory and Immortality is lined throughout with the Down of Eternal Contentment and Satisfaction.

Now theſe *Heavenly Treaſures are ſatisfactory in two reſpects.*

Firſt, *They are ſatisfactory in themſelves.* And,

Secondly, *They put ſatisfactorineſs into Earthly Enjoyments.* So that the Soul that poſſeſſeth *Heavenly Treaſure* finds Contentment and Satisfaction in every Condition.

1. *Heavenly Treaſures they are ſatisfactory in themſelves:* He that enjoys them needs look out no where elſe for Happineſs and Contentment.

And *firſt*, The *Treaſures of Grace are thus ſatisfactory*, where there is the light and evidence of Aſſurance, to tell the Soul how Rich it is. Grace indeed is this Treaſure, that may ſometimes lye deep hid in the Heart: When the Soul is in the dark, under ſome gloomy Fears, or in a ſtate of Deſertion, it doth not then know that it hath ſuch a Treaſure, and therefore it cannot receive Contentment and Satisfaction from it. But when the Spirit of God darts in a Beam of evidencing Light into the Dark Vault, this *Rich Treaſure* diſcovers it ſelf by its own ſhining. Now this ſhine of *Heavenly Treaſure* is Aſſurance, and when the Spirit darts in a Beam of Light to diſcover it in the Heart, when it ſees how Rich it is in Love, in Faith, in Hope, and in all other Precious Graces of the Spirit, it cannot ſufficiently prize and value its own Eſtate. It's true indeed, a Gracious Heart never thinks it hath enough, ſtill it is craving and labouring after more; ſtill it complains, that its Graces are too weak, and thoſe weak ones too few: But yet this holy Covetouſneſs carries no Tormenting, Perplexing Anxiety and Vexation with it, while it complains of the *Poverty* of its Graces, yet it prizeth them above all the World, and thinks its Eſtate to be infinitely bleſſed and happy, if it hath but any degree of Aſſurance; and though he be but poor and deſpicable in the World, yet ask him whether he would change Conditions with the greateſt and the richeſt Sinner on Earth, he will tell you no; he values his preſent Eſtate above Ten thouſand Worlds; nay, he would not loſe the leaſt degree, nor the leaſt filling of his Graces, for whatever Enjoyments a poor World can proffer him. Such Satisfactorineſs there is in the *Treaſures of Grace*; and well may it be ſo, for Grace with Aſſurance is no leſs than Heaven let down into the Soul: And therefore it is Remarkable in *Heb.* 10. 34. *Knowing in your ſelves*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *that in Heaven you have a better, and a more enduring ſubſtance*; ſo our Tranſlation renders it, but in the *Original* it is, *Know, that in your ſelves ye have a better and more enduring ſubſtance in Heaven.* Thoſe that are aſſured of the Truth of their own Graces, have a Heaven in themſelves, a better and a more enduring ſubſtance in themſelves; thoſe Diſcoveries of God, that ſweet Peace and Tranquility of Soul, thoſe overflowing Joys of the Holy Ghoſt, that *Heaven* it ſelf is never able to beſtow other kind of Happineſs than this is, though there they ſhall have it in fuller degrees and meaſure.

2. *The Treaſures of Glory are infinitely ſatisfactory:* If there be ſo much in Grace, that is, but the Earneſt Penny, how much more abundant ſatisfaction is there in Glory, that is the Inheritance it ſelf? In *Pſal.* 17. 15. *When I awake, I*

ſhall

ſhall be ſatisfied with thy likeneſs. When I awake; that is, when I awake in Glory, after the ſhort ſlumber of Death, then I ſhall be ſatisfied with the likeneſs and ſimilitude of God.

Conſider here,

(1.) The true Reaſon of the Vanity and Unſatisfactorineſs of all *Earthly things*, it is, becauſe none of them are ſo good as the Soul is, nor none of them are ſo great, as to be able to fill up the vaſt Capacity of the Soul: The Soul it is like a wide Gulf; throw in Pleaſures, and Profits, and Honour, nay the whole World, yet there is a vaſt hollowneſs in the Soul ſtill, that can never be filled up by theſe things. Your Souls are of a noble and excellent Being, and, excepting Angels, they are the top and flower of the Creation, and therefore it is a debaſement of them to cleave to any thing here that is worſe than it ſelf. Now ſo long as all things here below are *leſs* than the Soul, and *worſe* than the *Soul*, the Soul cannot poſſibly receive ſatisfaction and contentment in them. But God now is infinitely great, and therefore he can fill the Soul; and God is alſo infinitely good, and therefore he can ſatisfie the Soul, ſo that it ſhall not deſire any thing above, or beſides him.

(2.) Conſider, the Soul is to be made happy with the ſame Happineſs wherewith God himſelf is to be for ever Bleſſed; and muſt not this be infinitely ſatisfactory? Wherein doth God's infinite Bleſſedneſs conſiſt? Is it not in the cloſe, near, intimate and immediate enjoyment and fruition of Himſelf? Is not God himſelf his own Happineſs? Why this alſo is the Happineſs of the Saints, a cloſe, intimate, and immediate enjoyment of God. Enlarge then, *O Soul*, ſpread forth thy ſelf wide, make room for thine own Glory, thou art to be made Happy with the ſame Happineſs that God himſelf is bleſſed with; he is bleſſed in the eternal enjoyment of himſelf, and thou ſhalt be bleſſed with the eternal enjoyment of God alſo. Enlarge then, *O Soul*, ſpread forth thy ſelf wide, ſtretch out thy Deſires as wide as Heaven it ſelf, for the God of Heaven will fill them. And is not here now enough to ſatisfie? Certainly that Soul muſt be very neceſſitous, that an infinite God and an infinite Good cannot fill up and ſatisfie. And thus you ſee Heavenly Treaſures are ſatisfactory in themſelves.

3. *As they are ſatisfactory in themſelves, ſo they make Earthly Comforts and Enjoyments to be ſatisfactory alſo.* That Soul that hath laid up and made ſure of *Heavenly Treaſure*, finds Satisfaction and Contentment in every outward condition. He that enjoys moſt of Heaven, enjoys moſt of Earth, though others may poſſeſs more than he; and what he hath not, Contentment makes him not to want. What ſays the *Apoſtle* in *Phil.* 4. 11. *I have learn'd, in whatever ſtate I am, therewith to be content.* And what can any Man have more? If the Lord afford him but a little of theſe things, he is content; and if he encreaſeth them too much, he can be but content. O what a bleſſed condition is this, that exempts a Man from a poſſibility of being under Affliction, as to outward things! Thus it will be with you, if you have laid up your Treaſure in Heaven; it will ſatisfie you, and make every outward condition ſatisfactory alſo, and that for two Reaſons.

Firſt, *It will beget in you mean and ſlight thoughts of all things here below.* You will rate them no higher than the *Apoſtle* doth, but *Loſs* and *Dung*; and will any Man be diſcontented or troubled what befalls ſuch things, what becomes of his Loſſes, and of his Dung and Droſs? Suppoſe a ſweeping ſhower ſhould upon a ſudden fall, and waſh away the looſe Duſt that lyes upon your Ground, would you count this a loſs of your Land? Would any of you be troubled at this, as being bereaved of part of Eſtate? Truly, to a Child of God all the things of the World are no other, and if a tempeſt of *Providence* ſuddenly ſweeps them away, he is not troubled at it; he counts it no loſs of his Inheritance, the Duſt only is waſhed away, but the Land is ſafe ſtill: Truly there is none in the World abound more with Superfluities than a *Saint* doth: Take a wicked Man, upon whom all the ſtore and abundance of the World doth empty themſelves, upon whom Riches, and Honours, and Pleaſures flow in, in a full Tide, and all unburthen themſelves into his Boſom; yet, poor Man, he hath no more than he needs; and it's no wonder that he calls them by great Names, this thing a *Crown*, and that thing a *Kingdom* and *Treaſure*. Alas, theſe poor Deceits are all that he hath to pleaſe himſelf with, to call little things by great and ſwelling Names. But now a *Saint*, that hath nothing but Food and Raiment, even they are Superfluities, whilſt God and Chriſt is his; and if God

caſts in more to him, he values them as Mercies, but not as his Treaſure; or if God call them back again, he looks upon them not as a *Loſs*, but as a *Riddance*. If you make a thouſand Cyphers, yet they amount to nothing; add a Figure of One to theſe, ſtill they ſtand but for One. Such are the things of the World to a Child of God, all Worldly Enjoyments are but as ſo many Cyphers in his Accompt; he reckons only upon one God, and therefore he is at a point how God deals with him as to theſe things; if he gives, or if he takes away, he ſays, *Bleſſed be the name of the Lord*. Thus, Beloved, if you have laid up your Treaſure in Heaven, you will have but mean and ſlight thoughts of all other Things beſides.

Secondly, *Treaſure laid up in Heaven will make all things ſatisfactory to you, becauſe every condition that you are in will be to your advantage.* Nay, you will look upon any condition that you are in as a condition of Love: Every Mercy that is beſtowed upon you is a Love-token ſent you by a gracious Father. The Soul that once can ſay, *God is mine*, will be able to ſay, *This Comfort and that Mercy was given me from the love of God; I have is Heart with it: I obſerved the Countenance of my Father, and I ſaw him ſmile upon my Soul when He gave it me.* Nay, are you deprived of theſe Enjoyments, it is from Love, and it ſhall be for your advantage; God ſaw that they lay too near your Heart, and juſtled him farther from his Seat and Throne, and he would not ſuffer you to make ſo bad an exchange, as to quit Heavenly things for Earthly: He takes theſe from thee, that ſo he may take thee off them, and wean thy Heart from them, and that he may ſtrengthen thy Faith and Dependance on himſelf, that he may enflame thy Affections after him, and to exerciſe thy Patience and Humility in the want of them; nay, he then gives in the cleareſt, and brighteſt, and fulleſt Diſcoveries of himſelf, and of his Love in Chriſt to the Soul; what advantageous Loſſes therefore, O Chriſtian, doſt thou ſuſtain! Yea, to uſe the Apoſtle's Phraſe, thou haſt *but gained in this Harm* and *Loſs*. And therefore in every ſtate and condition a Chriſtian, that hath laid up his Treaſure in Heaven, may well be content and ſatisfied, for all is to his advantage and gain, whatever it be. And ſo much for the Third particular.

4. *Treaſure laid up in Heaven will ſecure to you the enjoyment of all Earthly Comforts ſo far forth as they ſhall be for your good.* This depends upon the latter part of the former particular. Our *Saviour* hath paſſed his word for it in *Mat.* 6. 33. *Seek firſt the kingdom of God, and the righteouſneſs thereof, and all theſe things ſhall be added to you.* Firſt ſeek the Kingdom of Heaven, that is, lay up firſt your Treaſure in Heaven, make ſure of Heavenly Riches firſt, and then all theſe things ſhall be added to you. When the great Bargain is concluded in Heaven, betwixt God and the Soul, God never ſtands upon theſe petty things of Earth, but throws them in, as vantage and overplus, into the bargain: Yea, and as Chriſt hath paſſed his word, ſo God hath given you a Pawn, that ſo it ſhall be in *Rom.* 8. 32. *He that ſpared not his own Son, but hath given him up for us all, how ſhall he not with him alſo freely give us all things?* Is the Heir of all things ours, and can there be any thing that ſhall not be ours alſo? Hath God freely given you his Son, and will he think much to give you other things, which are of no value and eſteem, in compariſon of that great Gift Jeſus Chriſt? Hath he given thee *hidden Manna*, Angels Food? Hath he cloathed thee with the Robes of Chriſt's Righteouſneſs, and ſhalt thou want Food and Rayment? Are not theſe things convenient for thee? Or, doth God prize Worldly things at a higher rate than the things of Heaven? Thou canſt not think God doth ſo, for thou thy ſelf doſt not prize them ſo: Or, doth God ſo much diſregard them, as to take no regard to ſupply your outward Concernments? *No*, ſays Chriſt, *your heavenly Father knoweth that you have need of all theſe things.* God doth take ſpecial notice and regard of all your wants, he knows you have need of theſe things. Thou needſt not, O Chriſtian, therefore envy the Grandees and Potentates of the Earth, that ruſtle and make a noiſe with their Greatneſs; believe it, were it for thy good thou ſhouldſt be exalted up to their pitch, and they ſhould be brought down to lick the Duſt of thy Feet. Conſider but theſe two things.

Mat. 6. 32.

Firſt, *All Earthly things are to be accounted good or evil, only as they concern our eternal ſtate and condition.* You will greatly be deceived, if you look upon things as they appear in themſelves; then you will call Proſperity, and Riches, and Worldly Abundance, Good Things; and Want, and Poverty, and Affliction, Evil things, if you account and eſteem them as they appear in themſelves. But now, conſider

consider these things as they relate to *Eternity*, and then Poverty may be a Mercy, and Riches a Judgment; God may bless thee by Afflictions, and curse thee by Prosperity; He may bestow more upon thee in suffering thee to want these things, than if He did give all the World's Abundance to thee: It may be *Prosperity* may puff up thy Soul, and make it grow more estranged from God, *Adversity* may humble thee, and bring thy Soul nearer unto God, and so conduce more to the eternal good of thy Soul: *Adversity* in this case is good, and not *Prosperity*. This present Life is nothing but a preparation for, and a tendency to *Eternity*; all that we here do, or receive, or suffer, is in order to Eternity, and therefore all must be measured by it. That is good that tends to our everlasting Happiness, be it Want or Misery: Whatever it be that encreases our Grace, that augments the Stock of our Heavenly Treasure; if it promotes the everlasting Salvation of our Souls, that alone is to be esteemed by us as good. What dull Folly is it for Men to roll and wallow in the Profits and Pleasures of this World, and hug them as good things, when indeed they are only *Snares* and *Traps* to their Souls, and are only given to fat them for the day of Slaughter, and may every Moment deliver them up to an Eternity of Torments, which will fearfully be heightned and enraged by the Enjoyment of these things that they account good things? *Abraham* tells *Dives*, That *in his life-time he received good things*, and *Lazarus evil things*. A strange dispensation of God to bestow good things upon a hated *Dives*, and to inflict evil things upon a beloved *Lazarus!* But yet read on, *Luke* 16. 25. *But now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.* O, never call *Dives*'s Purple and delicious Fare *Good Things*, these end in Torment: Never call *Lazarus*'s Sores and Rags *Evil Things*, for these end in everlasting Comfort. No, might *Dives* have replied with Horror, when I was cloathed with *Purple and fine Linnen*, I then received *Evil Things*, O cursed be all my Pomp and Bravery; I see now the end of my Purple, it was but to wrap me up in redder Flames; my sumptuous Fare served only to make the *never-dying Worm* the more to feed on me; O, happy was the Poverty of *Lazarus*, for he awaked in Ease and Happiness, and now every Sore is turned into a Star; then was he truly Happy, and not I, though I thought my self so; for though I received an abundant measure of Worldly things, yet received I no good things. This, within a while, will be the Judgment of all of you, when you come to be stated in an unalterable condition to all Eternity; Oh, therefore be perswaded to pass the same Judgment upon them now.

Secondly, Consider this; *If God deny any Comfort or Enjoyment to his People, he therefore denies it, because it is not good for them*; because it will not conduce to their Eternal Happiness, which is the only Rule and Measure of Earthly things. In *Psal.* 84. last. *The Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he with-hold from them that walk uprightly. No good thing:* If any thing be withheld, you may conclude on it, that it is no good thing, but it is either prejudicial or inconsistent to Grace or Glory had God bestowed it upon thee, and wilt thou thy self be content to abate the least degree of Grace or Glory, for the greatest accumulation of Worldly Enjoyments? If thou wouldst, thou never yet madest Grace or Glory thy Treasure. In *Psal.* 68. 19. says the *Psalmist* there, speaking of God's Mercies, *Blessed be God, that daily loadeth us with his Benefits.* The People of God are still complaining that they are loaded with Miseries and Afflictions, there is as much of these laid on them as possibly they can bear; but how few are there, that take notice how God loads them with his Benefits! In *Exod.* 16. 18. *He that gathered much had nothing over: And that gathered little had no lack.* So is it with the Children of God: He that hath more of these outward Comforts, he hath but his load; and he that hath less his load too, every one as much as they can bear: And what he hath not, God witholds, lest it should hurt him, lest it should break him instead of adorning him. Every Vessel cannot bear up with so much *Sail* as another, and therefore God will keep it from topling over. There is nothing that a Child of God hath not, but if he had it, for the present it would be worse with him than *now* it is; and therefore, so much as you do now wish were added to your present Condition, so much you do virtually wish were taken off from your present Grace, and from your future Glory, because God doth most wisely and exactly proportion these things here, so as that they may be most conducible and serviceable to your true Happiness after.

SERMON XIX.

MAT. vi. 20, 21.

But lay up for your ſelves Treaſures in Heaven, where neither moth nor ruſt doth Corrupt, and where Thieves do not break through nor ſteal: For where your Treaſure is, there will your Heart be alſo.

I Come now to enquire, whence it is that the Children of God make Heaven and Heavenly Things their Treaſure and Chief Good: We ſee that our Saviour doth here diſtinguiſh them from earthly and ungodly Men by this Character, *One lays up on Earth, and the other in Heaven.* He that lays up his Treaſure on Earth, he is an earthly ungodly Man; he that lays up his Treaſure in Heaven, he is the true Chriſtian.

I. Now here firſt take notice that, *That which makes any thing dear and precious, that which makes any thing to be a Treaſure to the Soul, is the ſuitableneſs and ſubſervency of it to that Self that is in a Man. Self*, it is the great Rater of all our *Treaſure*, the value of it is reckon'd according to this Standard; when Heaven, and Earth, and all things are laid before a Man, *Self* comes in, and views them all, and ſees what is uſeful for it, and accordingly ſets a price upon it; and all things are ſlighted, and nothing is current with the Soul, but as *Self* hath ſtamped and printed its own Image upon it: And therefore in *Luke* 12. 21. you find this expreſſion, *So is he that lays up Treaſure for himſelf.* If any Man lays up *Treaſure*, he lays it up for himſelf. Whatever may preſerve *Self*, whatever may anſwer the Propenſions and Inclinations of *Self*, whatever may promote the Cauſe and Intereſt of *Self*, that is a Man's Treaſure, and nothing elſe.

II. *Carnal and Unregenerate Self rates Earth and Earthly things as its Treaſure, becauſe there is a ſuitableneſs and proportion in the one to the other.* Earthly Treaſure for an Earthly Self: And therefore the Apoſtle tells, 1 *Cor.* 6. 13. *Meat is for the belly, and the belly for meat*; that is, they are ſuited each to other; ſo are Earthly things ſuited to Carnal Self, the things of this World to a Worldly Mind, and a Worldly Mind to the things of this World; Carnal Self reliſhes no other things; bring ſpiritual things to him, he taſtes no more ſweetneſs in them, than in the white of an Egg: You may as well pleaſe a Brute Beaſt, by whiſpering into his Ears the deep Diſcourſes of Reaſon, as you can a Carnal Man by the Diſcoveries of God and Chriſt: Talk to him of the World, and of Carnal Concernments, his Ears taſtes and reliſhes ſuch Diſcourſe as this is, and the reaſon is, becauſe theſe things are accommodated and ſuited to that carnal and unregenerate Self that is in Man. The Apoſtle tells us, *All that is of the World is the luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eye, and the pride of life.* That is Pleaſure, Profit, and Honour; theſe three are the Trinity of a Wicked Man, and carnal and unregenerate Self is this Trinity in Unity; all center in this, to pleaſe and maintain carnal Self, as all its Intereſt, and all its Concernments; therefore this is made by wicked Men their Treaſure.

III. *In the Soul's Converſion unto God, upon that great change that is made in a Man's ſelf, there will alſo be another rate and value ſet upon things than formerly there was.* Converſion it is the great ſhipwrack of the Old Man, and all his Goods.

1. *In Converſion there is a great change made in Self.* The Apoſtle in *Rom.* 7. 17. tells us, *It was no more he, but ſin that dwelt in him.* Formerly, before his Converſion, "It was I that breathed out Threatnings, I perſecuted the Church, I raged "and was mad againſt them, ſtill it was I my ſelf that acted then, but ſince my "great change, it is not I that am-guilty, no, not ſo much as of Infirmities; no, "it is not I that fail in the performance of what is good, *not I, but ſin that dwelleth in* "*me.* So that in Converſion there is a mighty change paſſeth upon Self; ſo that a Man may ſay it is not he but Sin, that body of Corruption that dwelleth in him.

It

It is true, in a regenerate Man there remains much of Corruption, and of the old Self; but yet Grace being the ſupream prevailing Principle, it will be that that gives the ſelf to a Man, and that that which before was a Man's ſelf, and was loved, now is become a Traytor, and Rebel, and Enemy to that new ſelf that is wrought in a Chriſtian by Regeneration.

2. *Man's Self being changed, his Treaſure muſt alſo neceſſarily be changed.* The new Regenerate Self cannot ſubſiſt and live upon its old Treaſure, all is but Husks and Swines meat to the Soul, now that it is begotten anew, and born of God, *the ſeed of God dwelleth in it*; and therefore now it looks after that, that is conformable to its Divine Original and Conſtitution. What the Apoſtle preſſeth the *Coloſſians* to, in *Col.* 3. 1. *If ye be Riſen with Chriſt, ſeek thoſe things that are above.* Truly, it is the neceſſary practice of every Heaven-born Soul, whoever is born again, whoever is Riſen with Chriſt, will infallibly ſeek the things that are above, he will do it: There is a natural inſtinct in the *New Creature*, that carries it out naturally to *Spiritual* and *Heavenly Objects*. As the Infant that is new-born doth by inſtinct ſeek after the Breaſt, though it never before received Nouriſhment that way; ſo the new-born Chriſtian, that hath imprinted upon it the *Divine Nature*, hath ſuch an impulſe and inſtinct in it, that naturally moves it to *Spiritual Objects*, as the only ſuitable Nouriſhment and Good for the Soul. And therefore, to intimate the Tenderneſs of this new Infancy, the Apoſtle tells us, *As new-born Babes deſire the ſincere milk of the word.* The new-born Babe receives Nouriſhment no longer from the Navel; and ſo the new-born Chriſtian no longer creeps upon his Belly, and licks the Duſt of the Earth; but feeds upon and deſires the ſincere Milk of the World. *That that is born of the ſpirit is ſpirit*, and therefore will long and breathe after that which is ſpiritual, becauſe it is ſpiritual, and bears a proportion to its own Being. In *John* 6. 63. ſays Chriſt there, *The words that I ſpeak they are ſpirit and they are life*; that is, they are able to maintain you in life that you may live upon them as ſuſtenance: Why ſo? Becauſe they are they are Spirit and Life, they are ſpiritual Words ſuited to a ſpiritual Soul, to a Soul that is born again of the Spirit, and therefore fit to nouriſh you, and ſuch as will keep you alive. Look, as the *Angels* live, ſo lives a Chriſtan's ſpiritual part; it is the ſame Good that is common to both, and that which they both deſire, embrace, and twine about. Can you bribe an *Angel* now by all the Profits of the World? Can you effeminate him by all the Pleaſures of the World? Can you elevate and puff him up by all the Honours and Dignities of the World? No, all theſe things are below his Nature, and he cannot deſcend to them, they are not ſuitable to him, he lives in his God, and Eternally ſuns himſelf in the light of the Beams of his Countenance. So lives the New Creature alſo: It is ſpiritual, and therefore claſps only about ſpiritual things: The World bears no more affinity and proportion to the ſpiritual part of a Chriſtian, than it doth to Angels; but bring God the Father of Spirits, and here both *Angels* and it cling about the Divine Eſſence, and neſtle themſelves about him for ever, and fill and ſatisfie themſelves in him: Here is Meat ſuitable to their Natures, a ſpiritual God for ſpiritual things. Indeed, ſometimes the carnal part may throw in ſo much Earth and Rubbiſh, that may for a time bury the New Creature under it; but when it is in its own element, it never ceaſeth heaving and working, till it hath got above Earth, and got into the enjoyment of its God again. So then, becauſe the *Soul* is not ſelf-ſufficient, becauſe it is an indigent Creature, therefore it muſt have the addition of ſome other Good to it, to eke out and ſupply its Defects. And becauſe the indigent and neceſſitated *Soul* hath in Regeneration a ſupernatural Principle implanted in it, therefore ſpiritual and heavenly Objects only comply and ſuit with it: Theſe therefore are the Treaſure of the the *Soul*, and you ſee whence it is that the *Soul* doth account heavenly and ſpiritual things to be its Treaſure, becauſe ſuited to that heavenly and ſpiritual Principle that is implanted in the *Soul* in Converſion. Now theſe things are its Treaſure.

1. *God himſelf.* So God tells out, and gives himſelf unto *Abraham*, *Gen.* 15. 1. *I am thy ſhield, and they exceeding great reward.* So *David* reckons up to you what a large and great Eſtate he had in the poſſeſſion and enjoyment of God, in *Pſal.* 16. 5, 6. *The Lord is the Portion of my inheritance, and of my cup: Thou maintaineſt my lot.*

2. *Jeſus Chriſt is its Treaſure alſo. Buy of me Gold tried in the fire, that thou maiſt*

be

be Rich, *Rev.* 13. 18. His Blood, his Righteouſneſs, his Merit, they are an inexhauſtible Treaſure, and all becomes ours, upon which we may live and ſubſiſt; *In him are hid all the Treaſures of wiſdom, and knowledge:* But what is this to us? Yes, theſe Treaſures of Wiſdom that are hid in him, are made over unto us alſo: 1 *Cor.* 1. 30. *He is made of God unto us wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption.* O how Rich is a true Chriſtian, that hath ſuch a Treaſury, and ſuch a Treaſure as Chriſt is to be his Treaſure! You find, *Heb.* 11. 26. That *Moſes eſteemed the reproach of Chriſt greater Treaſure than all the Riches of* Egypt. Certainly it the Reproach of Chriſt be ſuch a Treaſure, what then is Chriſt himſelf, and all thoſe glorious Benefits that do accrew unto the Soul in and by him?

3. *The Promiſes alſo are a Chriſtian's Treaſure.* They are the *Veins* wherein this Gold runs, the *Mines* wherein this unſearchable Treaſure is; and the Work of Faith upon the Promiſes, is to ſtamp this Golden Ore into ready Money for the preſent neceſſity of the Soul; ſo Faith lives on the Promiſes.

4. And laſtly, *A Chriſtian's Graces alſo are his Treaſure.* Yea, though *we have this Treaſure in earthen Veſſels*, yet is it heavenly and precious Treaſure; yea, though there be much Droſs mixed with this Gold, yet ſtill it is precious Faith, rich Love, firm Hope, tryed Patience, yea, every Grace that ſhines in a Chriſtian is Glorious; the Crown of Grace, as well as the Crown of Glory, hath not a ſparkle in it, but what is more Precious than the World it ſelf. Theſe now are a Chriſtian's Treaſure.

I come now to make ſome improvement of this, to bring down what hath been ſaid to ſome practical Uſe. And,

Uſe 1. *Firſt* then, *Haſt thou ſo Rich a Treaſure laid up in Heaven then?* O Chriſtian! *be conſcious of thine own worth: Henceforth know thy ſelf to be no contemptible Perſon.* Shall worldly Men ruffle, and brave it, and think none comparable to them, only becauſe their *Heap of Dung* is bigger than another's? And ſhalt thou be low and abject-ſpirited, that hath God himſelf for thy Portion, and Chriſt for thy Husband, and the whole Number of Stars told down to thee for thy Dowry? Indeed, if you will value your ſelves according to the World's eſtimation of you, then you are no better than the *Droſs and Dung of the World*, and *the Off-ſcouring of all things.* But ſee how the *Scripture* accounts of poor, perſecuted, depiſed Chriſtians, *Heb.* 11. 29. *They wandred up and down in ſheep-skins and goat-skins, being deſtitute, afflicted, tormented.* A ſtrange Generation of deſpicable Perſons! But ſays the Holy Ghoſt, *of whom the World was not worthy.* And how doth *David* prize them, and call them, *the excellent ones of the Earth*, Pſal. 16. 3. *My delight is in the Saints, and in the excellent ones of the Earth!* Therefore now, O Chriſtian, begin to know thy ſelf, know what great Relations thou haſt, thou art no leſs than the Son of a Great King: Know thy great Poſſeſſions, thou haſt no leſs at preſent, than the Love and Favour of God, and every thing thou haſt, thou haſt it with a Bleſſing; yea, though thou haſt nothing in the World beſides Afflictions, yet thou haſt that Nothing with a Bleſſing, and thou rather enjoyeſt than ſuffereſt thoſe Afflictions that lye upon thee: Know thy great Reverſions alſo; that art an *Heir of Glory*, a *Co-hier with Jeſus Chriſt*, and what he hath purchaſed for himſelf, he hath alſo purchaſed for thee; and thou in due time ſhalt be inſtated into that Inheritance, whereof Jeſus Chriſt is Heir, and thou alſo ſhalt be Co-heir. Wilt thou now, who haſt ſo vaſt a Treaſure as this amounts to, go drooping and diſconſolate, as a helpleſs and hopeleſs Perſon, when thou wanteſt nothing leſs than to pity thoſe that ſcorn thee? Let the World know, that a Chriſtian hath Self-ſufficiency, and that at all times, and that he can live plentifully and ſplendidly upon his own Stock: Let the World know and ſee this by thy Converſation. It was a noble and gallant Speech of St. *Paul*, when he ſtood in Bonds and Fetters before King *Agrippa*, who ſate upon the Judgment-Seat to Sentence him, *Would to God*, ſays he, *that thou wert ſuch a one as I am.* What! ſuch a Priſoner as thou art? A ſtrange Complement for a Priſoner to uſe to a Judge, yet you ſee how he values himſelf; he was not dazled with *Agrippa*'s Crown and Pomp, and all that Fancy that he came with into the Judgment-Hall, for he ſaid not, *Would I were as thou art*, but, *Would to God thou wert ſuch a one as I am*, and then thou wouldſt be truly Happy. This is the Value that every true Chriſtian ſhould ſet upon himſelf, when

when he is aſſured of the Truth of his Graces: He ſhould not count any Man in the World better than himſelf; this is to Honour Grace.

Uſe 2. And *Secondly*, *Let the World hence learn alſo to beware how they deſpiſe the meaneſt of God's Children.* Men are apt to eſteem of others according to their viſible Eſtate in the things of this World; and if here they be low and poor, they trample upon them as vile and inconſiderable; but let ſuch know, that every one of theſe ſlighted and diſpiſed ones is a great and rich Perſon; they are rich towards God, they are God's Jewels and peculiar Treaſure, and God alſo is their Treaſure and Portion for evermore. It is Wealth, I confeſs, that makes all the noiſe and buſtle in the World, and challenges all Honour as due to it ſelf alone: Says *Solomon*, *The rich Man hath many Friends.* Well, let Reſpect go by Wealth, we are content to go and ſtand by this Tryal. *Solomon* tells us, *the Heart of the Wicked is little worth*; it is of no Price or Value, and ſhall his Eſtate be of worth and value, when his Heart is not? The pooreſt Chriſtian may vye Eſtates with all the World: Let the World drop down Millions of Gold and Silver, boundleſs Revenues, and Crowns and Scepters, a Poor contemptible Chriſtian comes and lays down one God againſt all theſe, and beggars them; and ſhall this great and mighty Chriſtian be contemned and ſlighted? You do not know him now, but hereafter you ſhall ſee him ſitting on a Throne cloathed with Robes of Glory and awful Majeſty, daunting the Grandees of the World, who ſhall then ſtand ſhivering before him, while he boldly ſets his Hand to the Sentence of their Damnation, and ſends them to Hell with a ſhout: How will they with Horrour then cry out, Is this that poor and deſpicable Creature that we mocked and deſpiſed? Behold, now he is exalted, and we are thrown down to Hell. Certainly you will have other eſteem and opinions of Men at the laſt and great Day, than now you have; thoſe that are honourable now, will be deſpicable; and thoſe that are deſpicable now, will be truly honourable, if they belong to Chriſt.

Uſe 3. *Thirdly*, This *might alſo ſerve to diſcharge thunder in the faces of all thoſe who are ſo far from laying up Treaſure in Heaven, that they lay up Treaſure in Hell.* Such Treaſures as theſe are, the Apoſtle ſpeaks of in *Rom.* 2. 5. *Who after the hardneſs and impenitency of their Hearts Treaſure up unto themſelves Wrath againſt the Day of Wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.* Such who ſin as though the *Ephah* of their Iniquities would never be full enough, and the heap of their Sins never great enough; let theſe know, that when they have done treaſuring up of Sin, then God will begin to empty the Treaſures of his Wrath and Indignation upon them: Every Sin they commit, God ſets down ſo much Wrath upon their Scores, and he will be ſure to pay them all at the laſt Day to the full.

Uſe 4. *Laſtly*, Which is the Uſe I principally intend, and that is for *Examination*, and I can but enter upon it now: Let us now put it to the enquiry, *What is it that we make our Treaſure?* What is it that that we account our Good things? Our Saviour, I told you, hereby diſtinguiſhes between Wicked Men and the Children of God; the one lays up his *Treaſure in Heaven*, the other on *Earth*; and therefore the Query is, What is thy Treaſure? It is of great weight and moment. Now becauſe uſually a Man's Treaſure is kept hid and ſecret, therefore we muſt the more inquiſitively enter into the ſearch of it, and before the ranſack be throughly made, few Men, I fear, will be found rich and ſubſtantial Men; but more eſpecially thoſe that glitter moſt in the World will be found to be but poor and deſpicable Creatures.

1. Therefore take that *Character* that our Saviour gives in the Text, *Where your Treaſure is, there will your Hearts be alſo.* Put it now to the Queſtion, Where are your Hearts? Truly, Man's Heart is not in his own keeping, no, but it will go along with his Treaſure, and *where that is this will be alſo:* And therefore ſays the Prophet, ſpeaking of them that made Worldly things their Treaſure; *Their Hearts*, ſays he, *run after their Covetouſneſs.* Worldly Poſſeſſions were their Treaſure, and their Hearts did run after them in covetous Deſires of them. The Worldling ſeals up his Heart in the ſame Bag with his Treaſure, and a Child of God ſends his Heart to Heaven before him, where it lyes as a precious *depoſitum* among all the reſt of his Treaſure, and when he comes to Heaven, there he finds his Heart among all thoſe precious things that he ſhall enjoy. That which thy Heart is moſt buſied about, and moſt taken up with, that is thy Treaſure: Dive down now into the bot-

Where our Hearts are, there is our Treaſure.

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tom of thy Heart, and ſee how the muſings and imaginations thereof do work: Are they chained only to the things of this World? Do they only trudge to and fro, every one of them loaden only with Burdens of Earth? And when they come thronging about thee, do they buzz nothing in thine Ears but intelligence, either from ſome baſe luſt, or ſome worldly profit? If this be the conſtant and only Employment of thy Thoughts, aſſure thy ſelf thy *Treaſure* is not laid up in *Heaven*, no, nor on *Earth*, but, which is worſe, it is laid up in *Hell*. The Thoughts of a Child of God are ſtill taking wing, and flying upward towards Heaven; and every one of them carries up his Heart richly fraught with Divine Grace; one Thought is laden with the actings of Faith, another with the actings of Hope, another with the actings of Love; and they never leave aſcending till they are got into the preſence of God, and lay their rich Treaſure in his Boſom; and God again fills them with *Heavenly Treaſure*, and bids one Thought carry a Smile to the Soul, and tells the Soul how dear it is to him; by another Thought he conveys Strength, and by another Comfort, and ſends all away laden with precious Treaſure to the Soul. If your Thoughts traffick only in the World, your *Treaſure* is there; if in Heaven, then your *Treaſure* is in Heaven.

Object. 1. *But you will ſay, How can we judge of our Treaſure by our Thoughts? Is not the far greater ſwarm of every Man's Thoughts vain and ſinful?*

Anſw. I anſwer, It is true they are ſo; ſome are vain and ſinful, ſome are idle and impertinent, ſome are worldly, and ſome are wicked, and few, comparatively, are the holy and ſpiritual Thoughts that any Man ſends up to Heaven. We muſt not therefore judge by the crowd or numerouſneſs of our Thoughts, but by the entertainment they find in our Affections, by the ſtay and abode they make in our Hearts. In *Jer.* 4. 14. *How long ſhall vain thoughts lodge within you?* It is not what the ſudden flaſhings of our Thoughts are, (though that indeed ſhould deeply humble us) but mark what it is that they Heart fixes and dwells upon, what Flowers theſe intellectual Bees, thy Thoughts ſuck moſt ſweetneſs and honey from. When thy Thoughts have been foraging abroad, and bring home ſome Sin, and preſent it before thee, doth thy Heart riſe againſt it, and ſhut it out of doors, and doſt thou ſhut thy Heart upon it? But when thy Thoughts bring home God and Chriſt, and the things of Heaven and Eternity in their Arms, do thy Affections claſp and twine about them? Doth thy Heart enlarge and expatiate to entertain them? Doſt thou give up thy ſelf in full ſtrength and latitude to ſuch *Heavenly Thoughts* as theſe are? This is a good ſign thy *Treaſure* is laid us in Heaven, becauſe thou art ſo much there thy ſelf.

Obj. 2. *But will others again ſay, My thoughts are neceſſarily taken up with the World, my Calling devours them, ſo that I have no opportunity to ſequeſter my ſelf for Heavenly Meditation; muſt I therefore be excluded from having my* Treaſure in Heaven, *becauſe my thoughts are neceſſarily employed in the World?*

Anſ. I anſwer, *Firſt*, Thoughts of all things in the World are moſt free: There is no Man's Calling doth ſo confine him, but were his Heart and his Affections heavenly and ſpiritual, his Thoughts would force a paſſage thro' the crowd of worldly buſineſſes to Heaven: Ejaculations are ſwift Meſſengers, that need not much time to deliver their errand, or much time to return again to the Soul: You may point your Earthly Employments with Heavenly Meditations, as Men do their Writings with Stops, ever now and then ſending up a Thought unto Heaven; and ſuch pauſes are no hindrance to your Earthly Affairs.

Secondly, It is the property of Grace and Holineſs, when there are no actual explicite Thoughts of God, then to be habitually in the Fear of God, poſſeſſing the Heart, and overawing it, that it ſhall not do any thing that is ſinful, or misbecoming a Chriſtian. And therefore ſays the *Wiſe Man* excellently, *Prov.* 23. 3. *Be thou in the fear of the Lord all the Day long.* Whatever buſineſs you have, the *fear of the Lord* may conſtantly abide, overawe and poſſeſs your Heart.

Thirdly, Obſerve how your Thoughts work when you have vacancy and remiſſion from your Employments. Are they ſpiritual then? Do they betake themſelves to God? Do they lock up themſelves in their *Heavenly Treaſure?* Doſt thou ſpiritually improve the times of thy leiſure? *David* called to mind *his Songs in the night, and his Spirit made diligent ſearch*; when he awaked he was ever with God; he ſlept with God in his Thoughts, and he awaked with God again in his Thoughts. Whatever Employments a Man hath, he have ſome time of leiſure. When now you have been drudging

drudging in the World, and have gotten a little vacancy and freedom from it, doſt thou ſpend that little time in the thoughts of God, and of the things of Eternity? Or doth the World, and the things of the World, interpoſe and take up thy Thoughts? If ſo, how canſt thou ſay thy Treaſure is there, when thy Thoughts and thy Heart is never there? As *Dalilah* ſaid unto *Sampſon*, *How canſt thou ſay that thou loveſt me, when thy heart is not towards me?* So how canſt thou ſay that *thy treaſure is in Heaven*, when thy *heart and thy thoughts are not there?*

SERMON XX.

MAT. vi. 20, 21.

But lay up for your ſelves Treaſures in Heaven, where neither moth nor ruſt doth Corrupt, and where Thieves do not break through nor ſteal: For where your Treaſure is, there will your Heart be alſo.

I Come to a ſecond mark, whereby you may know where your Treaſure is, and that is this; *that which bears the chief ſway and command in a Man's Affections, that is a Man's Treaſure.*

That which bears the greateſt ſway in a Man's Affections, that is his Treaſure.

Affections are the Wings of the Soul that carry it forth to its ſeveral Objects, and theſe move to nothing more ſwiftly, ſtrongly, and conſtantly, then to what is the *Soul's Treaſure*; when your Souls now take theſe Wings and fly abroad, follow them, and ſee what it is upon which they light. As the *Eagle* will hover over the *Carkaſs*, ſo the *Affections* will be ſtill hovering over the *Soul's Treaſure*: See now whether it is your Deſire and Love, your Joy and Delight, do carry you forth: Is it only to the Things of this World? Certainly if theſe Wings be clotted only with Mire and Dirt, if they only flutter up and down the Surface of the Earth and mount up no higher, your *Treaſure* is not an *Heavenly Treaſure*; the *Affections* of the Children of God ſtill aſcend upwards, and bear up their Hearts with them till they lodge in that *Divine Boſom* where firſt they were inkindled: I need not tell thoſe *happy Ones* what it is to have their Hearts ſo extended in love to God, and the Things of God, as to cauſe a kind of loſs, pain, and torture; what it is to have that Joy ſpringing up in the Soul that is unutterable! Yea, ſuch unſupportable Joys as have melted them into *Extaſies*; how infinitely would they now diſdain that any *Soul* ſhould be ſo groſly fooliſh as to preferr the World before, or equalize it with *God*; Ten thouſand Worlds is not ſo much to them as one momentary Glimpſe of God in Communion with him; nay, they think their Happineſs ſo great, that though they do believe, yet they cannot conceive how it ſhould be more and greater in Heaven it ſelf: O then the Soul claps it Wings, and fain would it take its flight and be gone; it breathes, and breaks, and pants after God: See what an Agony holy *David* was in, *Pſalm* 42. 1, 2. *As the Heart panteth after the Water-brooks, ſo panteth my Soul after thee, O God; my Soul thirſteth for God, for the living God; when ſhall I come and appear before God!* Indeed the whole *Pſalm* is the moſt mournful and pathetical compoſure in all the *Scripture*, of a Heart that beats and throbs after God, with vehement Love and Deſire after the enjoying of him; and whence was this, but becauſe God was the Portion and Treaſure of his Soul? He was *the health of his countenance, and his God*, Verſe 11. Whereſoever God, and the Things of God, are made the *Soul's Treaſure*, there will be proportionable Affections drawn out to theſe Things. Never was it known that a Treaſure wanted Affections.

Object. *But alas*, may ſome ſay, *I fear then that I have no ſhare in this heavenly Treaſure; never was I ſo ſtrongly affected with the Diſcoveries of God and Chriſt, and the*

Things of Heaven; never was I so taken and ravished, as with some temporal Mercies and Enjoyments; I could never feel such transportations of Spirit in communion with God as you speak of, no such ravishments of Love, nor such meltings and vehemency of Desires to the Things of Heaven, as I have often found to the Concernments and in the Enjoyments of the World; never do I remember that I rejoyced so vehemently in God, as in some new unexpected Mercy, or that ever I mourned so bitterly for sinning against God, or for the hiding of the light of God's Countenance from me, as I have done for some cross outward Providence: And how then can I say, my Treasure is laid up in Heaven, since earth, and the things of earth, have the sway and pre-eminency in my Affections? This may possibly trouble some.

Answ. To this therefore I answer, That there are two Things by which the Predominancy and Sway of a Man's Affections may be judged.

First, *By their violent passionateness:* And secondly, *By their judicious valuation and esteem:* Thou complain'st that earth and earthly Things have the predominancy and sway in thy Affections, but look what sort of Affections are they; are they only thy Fondlings, thy violent and passionate Affections? This may be so, and yet heavenly Things be thy *Treasure:* Many time so it is, that what is superior in these, may be inferior, nay, almost contemptible in thy rational and judicious Affections; Men may be fond of those Persons for whom they have not such solid and judicious Affections as they have for others. So is it here, a Christian's fondness may be more to the Things of this World, when yet his judicious Affections may be far more to the things of Heaven. But how shall we try this?

First, Observe, *As you must not judge of your value and esteem of earthly things by your passionate Affections to them; so neither must you judge of your valuing heavenly things by your speculative Judgment of them.* It is not enough, when you compare Heavenly things with Earthly, barely to pronounce Heavenly things to be infinitely better, and more desirable than Earthly: Truly every Man's Conscience tells him thus much. There is no Man, whoever he be, that thinks of Heaven, but is withal verily perswaded that it is infinitely more Glorious than Earth is; and that the enjoyment of God, a Crown of Life and Immortality, is infinitely more to be preferred than all the Trash and Trifles here below: And there is no Worldling, who when his Conscience beckons him aside, and whispers these things in his Ears, but is convinced, and assents unto these things as Truths; and yet this Man's Treasure is not therefore laid up in Heaven, because he judges, in his speculative Judgment, that Heavenly things are better than Earthly. This is to say they are better, and to judge them so, but not to esteem and value them so. And therefore,

Secondly, The *true valuation of Heavenly things as the* Soul's Treasure, *lyes in the practical part of the Soul.* Valuation, it is a practical thing: I cannot be said to value an *Object*, unless that esteem hath some influence upon my actions, as relating to that *Object*; either it will put me upon Endeavours to obtain it, or stir up Care in me to keep it. Mark that place in St. *Peter*, 1 *Pet.* 2. 7. *To you that believe he is precious, but to them who are disobedient he is a rock of offence.* In the 6th Verse he tells us, Christ was precious in himself, *I lye in* Sion *a corner stone elect and precious.* In the 4th Verse he tells us, he was precious to God, *chosen of God, and precious.* And in the 7th Verse he comes to shew what esteem Men had of him; *To believers*, saith he, *he is also precious; but to them who are disobedient he is a rock of offence.* What is the reason, when he opposeth Wicked Men to Believers, he calls them *disobedient persons*, and not rather *Unbelievers?* The reason is, because we must not look to Mens outward acknowledgment, whereby they judge what is precious to them; for all will so pronounce God, and Christ, and the things of Heaven, in their speculative Judgment; they will pass this sentencee, but you must look to their Practice, and see what influence this valuation hath there: And thus Christ is not precious to Unbelievers, because that esteem they have of him doth not enforce them to obedience to him. Examine therefore which hath most influence into your Life and Practice: Whether your *passionate Affections* for the things of this Life, or your *judicious* and *deliberate Affections* for the things of Heaven; for thereby you may in part guess what is your Treasure. A small Torrent runs very violently, and makes a loud noise, yet hath not that strength in it that a River hath, though it move silently: So it is with the Affections of a Child of God; though they may run out violently towards the things of the World, yet have they

they not that ſtrength in them as is in his ſober Affections for the things of Heaven. How violent ſoever your Affections be to temporal Mercies, ſuppoſe Friends, Children, Eſtate, or the like, yet if you do value and eſteem Heavenly things as your Treaſure, this valuation and eſteem will have the ſway and pre-eminency in two things eſpecially.

1. *It will enforce the Soul to uſe more diligence and care to encreaſe its ſpiritual Treaſure, than to encreaſe any temporal good thing whatever.* That is a Man's Treaſue, to which he is ſtill adding and throwing one precious things after another; nor will he ever think it can be too full and too rich: And therefore you have that expreſſion in 2 *Pet.* 1. 4, 5. *Add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godlineſs, and to godlineſs brotherly kindneſs, and to brotherly kindneſs charity.* See how the Apoſtle ſtrings up theſe Pearls. Now what is it you are moſt careful and induſtrious to add unto? Truly that which moſt Men make their Buſineſs, is to *add houſe to houſe, and land to land, that their names may dwell alone upon the earth.* Suppoſe we lived in *Solomon*'s time, when Silver and Gold was as common as Stones in the Street, if one ſhould ſpend all his time in gathering up of Straws and Feathers, could you in reaſon think that he he made God his Treaſure? Yet this is the fooliſh and buſie care of worldly Men, that though they might gather up that which is far more pre- than *Gold* and *Silver*, yet they rather employ themſelves in picking up Straws and Feathers, and think with them to build their own Neſt. But now there is a holy Covetouſneſs in a Child of God, that makes him ſtill to be gathering up of Heavenly Riches, ſtill he is adding Grace to Grace: And though he thinks, to be the meaneſt Chriſtian in the World is more worth than the World, yet he would not be content to be the meaneſt. As to outward reſpects, he is well contented to keep his ſtation wherein Providence hath ſet him; if he ſtand at a ſtay in Worldly Enjoyments, it is no great trouble to him: But he cannot bear a ſtanding at a ſtay in Grace, there he muſt be growing, and thriving, and going forward: Let his Affections be ſet never ſo eagerly upon his outward Comforts, yet he is not ſo eager to encreaſe them as he is his Heavenly Treaſure. And that it is ſo, appears in two things.

Firſt, *In that he ſets an higher price upon opportunities, for the encreaſing of his Heavenly Treaſure, than upon any other ſeaſons and opportunities whatever.* O what gain and enriching doth he make on a Market-day for his Soul! Sabbaths to him are precious, Ordinances to him are precious; why? But becauſe in them he ſees the Glory of Chriſt diſplay'd, and the fulneſs of the Promiſes unfolded, becauſe by them his Faith is ſtrengthned, his Love is enflamed, his Hope is confirmed, he goes far more wealthy from them than he came to them; and therefore it is an Argument that he labours to encreaſe his *Heavenly Treaſure*, becauſe he ſets an higher price and value upon Opportunities, to encreaſe that Treaſure, than he doth upon any other whatever.

Secondly, *It appears, in that he is willing to ſtand at a ſtint in outward Enjoyments, but he cannot bear a ſtint in Grace.* He cannot live upon a ſet allowance there; let God deal how he pleaſeth with him in outward things, let him reduce him to a morſel of Bread, and to a Cup of Water, it is enough; ſo he gives him but a *Benjamin*'s *Portion* in himſelf, let him ſeize upon all his Temporals, and take them away: If ſo be he doth but inſtate him in a great poſſeſſion of Spirituals, he is content; My Body, ſays he, can ſubſiſt with a little, but my Soul cannot: O my ſpiritual charges and expences are great, and multiply upon me daily: I have many ſtrong Temptations to be reſiſted, and many prevailing Corruptions to be mortified, and many holy and ſpiritual Duties to be performed, and ſhall I be able to defray all this with no better a ſupply? My preſent Stock is not able to maintain it. Still he is complaining, that he hath too little to maintain him in his work, that he may be ſuch a *Chriſtian* as he aims at, and would be; and therefore he cries out, *Lord*, though I thank thee for what I do poſſeſs, yet he ſtill craves more of himſelf, thou art Infinite, and what is itto enjoy a little of an Infinite God? More of thy Son, he is All-ſufficient: And what is it to have an In-ſufficient Portion in an All-ſufficient Saviour? More of thy Grace, that is free: And, what is it to enjoy a limited Portion of unlimited and boundleſs Grace? This is the property of Heavenly Riches, that they make them that have them ſtill to be covetous after

more: The Worldling he adds heap to heap, and the Chriſtian he adds Grace to Grace, and one degree of Grace to another, and thinks he hath attained to nothing, till he hath attained ſo far, as that there is nothing farther for to be attained; and therefore he goes on labouring after more, till he doth inſenſibly ripen into Glory, and hath nothing more for him to deſire. If you value Heavenly things now as your *Treaſure*, you will ſtill be adding to this *Treaſure*, growing every day richer than other towards God.

And then ſecondly; *If you do practically value and eſteem Heavenly things as your Soul's Treaſure, you will ſooner part with all other Comforts and Enjoyments, than with this.* It may be you cannot ſay that ever you felt ſuch Pangs of Joy and Delight in the enjoyment of God, as you have done in ſome outward Mercy. You never felt ſuch comfort in ſpiritual Mercies, as you have in ſome outward Comforts that providentially were beſtowed upon you; and therefore you have cauſe to fear that your Treaſure is here below, and not above. But this is ſtill to judge by the paſſionateneſs of our Affections, that is as a diſturbed Water that cannot reflect your Face aright. If you would judge truly, then put this Queſtion to your Soul; *Soul*, now that thou doſt ſo vehemently delight in this Comfort, and in that Enjoyment, which hadſt thou rather part with, this delightful Comfort, or thy God? Certainly a Child of God would have a holy indignation againſt himſelf, ſhould he but debate the Queſtion: O, will he ſay, though God take every thing from me but himſelf, yet he leaves me enough to make me Happy; and in the enjoyment of other things, I were truly miſerable, could I be made ſo by their loſs. A *Saint*'s rational Affections conſiſting in the due valuation and eſteem of Heavenly things, will triumph over his more eager and paſſionate Affections to the things of the World. Think with thy ſelf now what is deareſt to thee in the World, and then ſet God and Heaven in the balance againſt them, and then thou ſhalt ſee, though Earthly Comforts may engroſs too much of thy Affections, and lye near thy Heart, yet thou ſhalt ſee, that God and Heavenly things ſtill have the greateſt ſway and predominancy in thy Affections, if thou doſt truly value them. And ſo for the commiſſion of a Sin, it may be ſome outward Affliction may coſt thee more paſſionate Grief and Tears than the commiſſion of Sin hath done: Thou never moarneſt, it may be, ſo bitterly for thy offending of God, as thou haſt done for God's afflicting of thee; and this thou lookeſt upon as a bad ſign, that thy Affections are not ſo much to the Honour of God, as to outward Comforts and Proſperity; yea, but let me ask thee, Hadſt thou rather fall into the ſame Affliction, or commit the ſame Sin again? Certainly, if thou art a Saint, thou wilt ſoon reſolve the Queſtion: No Miſery or Plague ſo great as Sin is; and though it be my Folly thus paſſionately to lament under this Croſs and Affliction, yet I had rather bear it, yea, I had rather bear whatever God can lay on me, than knowingly to commit the leaſt Sin againſt my God. This is the Judgment of a Child of God; and therefore *Job* makes it the Character of an Hypocrite, That *he chuſeth Iniquity rather than Affliction.* And ſo much for the Second Mark or Character.

In the Third place, *See what it is that you moſt truſt unto and live upon; when all other things fail you, that certainly is your Treaſure.* Men uſually reſerve their Treaſure to be their ſupport at the laſt pinch and extremity. See the Caſe of *Aſaph*, *Pſal.* 73. 26. *My fleſh and my heart faileth.* And muſt not he therefore fail? Hath he any thing elſe to ſupport him? Yes, now comes in relief from his Treaſure, *But God is the ſtrength of my heart, and my portion for ever:* He is my Treaſure, a Treaſure that will never fail me, and that never can be ſpent; He is *my portion for ever.* And thus every Child of God will when other things fail him, when other Props are taken from under him, he will then ſupport himſelf from his God, that is his portion for ever. *Michael* had a true notion of God, though falſly applied to *Idols*, *You have taken away my Gods, and what have I more?* Take from a Saint all Worldly Comforts, and all Earthly Enjoyments, and if you ask him, what hath he more? He can truly ſay, Yes, ſtill I have more than I loſt, I have my God left me ſtill: But were it poſſible that his God ſhould be taken from him, then indeed what hath he more? He hath nothing then left him to ſupport him, and to live upon. Can you therefore in all your Diſtreſſes find Relief and Comfort in your God? Can you, when all Props fail you, betake your ſelves to him, and find enough in him to ſupport

port and bear up our selves, when you have *nothing in the World* to *depend* upon? Can you then find *enough in him* to live comfortably and splendidly? If so, it is a sign God is your *Treasure:* When all other things fail, God comes in as the relief and support of that Soul, that makes him to be his *Treasure.*

Lastly, *Look not only what it is you value in it self, but that by which, and according to which, you value both your selves and others; that is your Treasure.* And here I shall lay down two things.

First, *If the Soul hath Assurance, and knows beyond all doubt and fallibility, that Heavenly Treasure is his, he will value himself according to that Treasure. Would to God,* says the Apostle to King *Agrippa, that thou wert such a one as I am.* And so 1 *Cor.* 15. 10. when he had spoken of himself in the 9th Verse. *I am the least of all the Apostles, not meet and worthy to be called an Apostle;* there he values himself as in himself: But yet in the 20th Verse, *By the grace of God I am what I am.* And what was that? Why, says he, *This grace received I not in vain, for I laboured more abundantly than they all.* Low was his esteem of himself, considered in himself, *less than the least of all the Apostles:* But considering himself in respect of Grace, *By Grace,* says he, *I am what I am;* and I am such a one also as have received Grace to labour more than all of them. And so, *Jerem.* 5. 23. *Let not the wise Man glory in his Wisdom, nor the mighty Man in his Strength, nor the rich Man in his Riches.* He excludes all boasting from themselves, *But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he knoweth me that I am the Lord.* Let him value and esteem of himself according to that. Now do you not prize your selves by any outward Privileges or worldly Advantages? Do you not think your selves Some-body, because you have Riches and Estates, or the like? You account your selves nothing worth, more than what you are in respect of Grace, more than what you are in respect of your Interest in God, and in that Heavenly Treasure and Riches? This is a sign that you do indeed make Heavenly things to be your Treasure, when you rate your selves so much worth as you have of that Treasure.

Secondly, *If the Soul want Assurance, and so cannot value it self according to its interest in that Heavenly Treasure; if it cannot see its Right and Title to this Heavenly Treasure, then it values others according to their Interest in that Treasure.* It is not according to their Estates or Honour in the World, but according to what they have of Christ, and God, and Heavenly things. A Child of God, that values Heavenly things as his Treasure, will value the Men that have this Treasure and this Riches.

SERMON XXI.

MAT. vi. 20, 21.

But lay up for your selves Treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth Corrupt, and where Thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your Treasure is, there will your Heart be also.

SEveral Characters have been laid before you, for the Examination of your selves, whether you do value Heaven and Heavenly Things as your *Treasure.* If now by those Characters you have taken an account of your Estate, you either find your selves rich in this *Heavenly Treasure,* or not; if you cannot say God and Christ, and the great and glorious Things of Eternity as yours; if you doubt that Heaven is not your Exchequer, and of all that rich and precious Treasure it contains, there is nothing that you can call yours, let me then direct you to a twofold Word of Exhortation.

First, *That above all gettings, you would chiefly labour to get a Portion in this Heavenly Treasure.* And, Secondly,

Secondly, *That you would never rest satisfied, till you have got a full Assurance that this Treasure is yours, and that you are enriched by it.* The One is to them that are indeed poor, but think themselves rich and encreased in Goods, and stand in need of nothing. The other is to them that are indeed rich, but yet do think themselves poor and miserable.

First, *To them that have no share in this Heavenly Treasure:* Is there such an infinite mass of riches exposed not to sale, but to gift, Riches inestimable, invaluable, and unsearchable; such Riches that he who would worthily describe them, must first suffer a translation, and learn the Tongue of an *Angel* to speak whole God at every word; and shall not this stir up and quicken your desires to get these Riches? What, Sirs, is there not a Covetous Person among you all? Is there not one that cares how to be Rich? Is Wealth grown such a vile and contemptible thing with you, as to stand in need of other Exhortations and Motives besides it self, to commend it to your Acceptance? No, certainly Riches have not lost their Allurements; nor have Men lost their Covetousness: If I should tell you this Day of rich Purchases and large Donations, and of gainful Bargains, and the speediest and easiest way to grow great in the World, and of invaluable Treasures that you might have for fetching; how would most Mens Ears drink in such golden Eloquence as this is? O, *where*, and *how*, would be the question of all of you? Why, what then is the reason, that when we set before you the glorious Excellencies of this *Heavenly Treasure*, the least dust and filings of which is enough to bankrupt all that the World calls *precious*; it gives no less than Crowns, Robes and Scepters, *God*, and *Christ*, and *Glory*, and *Immortality?* What is the reason that Mens Hearts generally are so frozen and cold towards these things? Why are they not covetous and earnest in seeking after these things? Why, truly, the grand comprehensive Reason is flat *Atheism*; so many as are careless of this *Heavenly Treasure*, so many *Atheists* are there in the World. St. *Paul* hath told us, That he that is covetous of Earthly things is an *Idolater*; I may tell you, he that is not covetous after Heavenly things he is a *flat Atheist*. But now more particularly;

Atheism a great cause of Mens neglecting of heavenly Treasure.

First, *Men are not throughly convinced that there is indeed such a* Treasure, *or that this* Treasure *is so rich, and so precious and glorious as it is described.* And why is this, but because it is *hidden Treasure?* Here thy see what Pomp and Advantages Earthly Riches bring with them; but they never saw the State that an *Angel* keeps, they never saw the Glory of the *Spirits of just Men made perfect:* They never saw the Court and Attendance of the *Eternal King:* They have heard indeed mighty and strange Things concerning all these, but what shall we do if they prove but Dreams and Fancies? And why then should they trouble themselves about Uncertainties? Possibly they are such as are described, possibly they are not: Truly these are Mens *Atheistical Principles*; and though Men dare not own and profess it, yet this is at the bottom of all that *deadness* and *indifferency* that is in most Men to the Things of Heaven. Now although the bare possibility of the truth of these Glorious Things, and the little danger there is in attempting to obtaim them; though this might prevail with rational Men to put them upon earnest Endeavours after them, yet carnal Desires and earthly Affections striking in with these Loose, Atheistical and Carnal Opinions concerning the certainty of these glorious Discoveries, they sway them so powerfully to Earthly things, that all their Thoughts, and Care, and Contrivances are laid out upon them, to the neglect, yea, to the contempt of heavenly and spiritual Things: In *Psalm* 14. 1. *The Fool hath said in his heart, There is no God:* It was but in his Heart, it was but a thin film of a thought that scarce arrived at the form of a Conception; yet see how this hath influence into his Life; *they are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doth good:* O beware therefore that you never entertain a thought in the least-wise derogatory to the *infinite Glory of Heaven*; doubting, or unworthy thoughts of *Heaven*, will insensibly make you careless in your Endeavours after it: Be therefore firm and unshaken in this belief, That *Heavenly Glory* is unsearchable, That *Heavenly Riches* are invaluable; yea, believe that whatever belongs to *Heaven*, is before and beyond all that is here below; the more the *Eye*, though but of an *historical Faith*, discovers and sees of these things, the more will the *Hand* labour and be diligent in the obtaining of them.

Secondly, Another reason why Men do not labour after this Heavenly Treasure, is, *because they are not throughly convinced that they stand in need of this* Heavenly Trea-

Treaſure: They ſay with the Church, *Revel.* 3. 17. *That they are rich, and encreaſed in goods, and ſtand in need of nothing; and know not that they are poor, and wretched, and miſerable, and blind, and naked.* They know it not, and therefore they care not for looking after this *Heavenly Treaſure*; they do not ſee their need of Grace to ſanctifie them, their need of Mercy to juſtifie them, their need of the Promiſes to ſupport them, and their need of Chriſt to ſave them: Who is it that cries out, they are undone, eternally undone without theſe things? Who is it that is ſenſible of theſe things? They think a little of theſe things will go far, and what they have already is enough: And it is altogether as hard to make theſe Men diſcontented with the poverty of their Spiritual Condition, as it is to make them contented with the abundance and fulneſs of their Temporal Condition. O that Men were but once awakened to ſee the neceſſity that they ſtand in of this *Heavenly Treaſure*: But how ſhould they be awakened? Conſider,

Firſt, *The great Coſt and Expence you muſt be at if you will be ſaved.* It is true, if you reſolve to periſh, as poor as now you are, yet you are too rich a Prey for the *Devil*; but if you intend *Happineſs* and your own *Salvation*, you muſt have a large and rich Stock to trade withal; a poor and beggarly Profeſſor will never ſet up in Chriſtianity; No, *Salvation* is a coſtly Thing; there are many powerful Corruptions muſt be ſubdued, many divine Graces muſt be acted, many holy Duties muſt be performed; and what have you to bear out all this Charge with? See that Expreſſion, *Titus* 3. v. 8. *That they be careful to maintain good works.* Such good Works he means as are conducible to Salvation; to maintain ſuch good Works is ſo great a Charge, as will beggar all the ability of Nature, if you have not a *Heavenly Treaſure* to defray it; you cannot by the power of Nature, and all natural Endowments, maintain good Works. Are they able to act *Faith*, and *Love*, and *Patience*, and *Humility*, and *Self-denial?* I know it is both eaſie and pleaſant to think and hope you ſhall be ſaved: But ſit down firſt, and conſider what it will coſt you; can your preſent Stock carry you through *good and evil Report*, through *Reproaches and Afflictions*? Will it carry you through all? If not, will you yet ſay, *You are rich, and encreaſed in goods, and ſtand in need of nothing?* Be convinced therefore that you are poor and inſufficient Creatures, and that you ſtand in need of abundance of Supply from this *Heavenly Treaſure*, to diſcharge this Coſt and Expences that you muſt be at if ever you will be ſaved.

Secondly, *Conſider alſo the deſperate Debts you have contracted with the Juſtice of God, and the deep Arrears you are run into with the Wrath and Vengeance of God; and how do you think to clear your Account without a vaſt and infinite* Treaſure *to defray it?* Suppoſe God ſhould take every Sinner this Day before him by the Throat, and ſay to him, *Wretch, pay me what thou oweſt me.* I will give thee no longer time, Pay me, or rot Eternally in Priſon, Pay thee, Lord, why, what is that I owe thee? Why,

Firſt, *Thou oweſt me huge and vaſt Sums for all the temporal Mercies thou enjoyeſt.* Thou vaunteſt it in the World as though none were ſo great as thou art; yea, but thou haſt paid for nothing that thou haſt; here is ſo much upon the account for thy Eſtate, and ſo much for Credit and Reputation, ſo much for Protection and Preſervation, yea, for thy Life and Soul, yea, thou oweſt me for all; pay me now for all theſe, yea, and the utmoſt Farthing too for all theſe Debts, or elſe lye for ever in Hell. O that wordly-minded Men would but ſeriouſly conſider, that there is none of the good Things that they now enjoy that are upon free-coſt; there muſt and will certainly come an after-reckoning, and then perhaps they will ſay, it is one of the worſt Bargains they made in their whole Lives, when they were content to grow rich, when this after-reckoning comes, and God ſhall call them them to pay for all their Mercies and Enjoyments that he lent them.

And ſecondly, *Thou oweſt God for many Thouſands of Sins and Provocations againſt him, which thou muſt make recompence and ſatisfaction for:* And therefore Sins are called Debts; *forgive us our Debts.* And how many Thouſand Talents art thou thus indebted to God? Every Sin is a Talent of Lead for its Weight to ſink the Soul deep into *Hell*; but it is a Talent of Gold for its Price and Satisfaction; God's Law is tranſgreſſed, and how canſt thou recompence it? His Wrath is provoked, and how canſt thou atone it? Thy Soul is forfeited to endleſs Torments, and how canſt thou redeem it? *The redemption of the Soul is precious, and*

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it ceaseth for ever. Tell me now, *O Sinner*, art thou rich enough in thy self to discharge all these Debts? Canst thou pay of God to the full for every Mercy thou hast received? Canst thou satisfie him to the full for every Sin thou hast committed? Dost thou think still now that thou hast no need of a *Treasure* to discharge all these? Possibly by this time thou art convinced thou stand'st it need of a *Treasure*, but it may be thou thinkest there is none rich enough to do all this: Truly there is none but the Treasure of the *infinite Merit of Christ*, who for those that believe on him hath paid off all their Score; that neither God's Mercies, nor yet their own Sins shall ever be charged upon them to their condemnation; they can plead, Lord, here is a full Price, the precious Blood of thine own Son; it was indeed thine own free Grace that bestowed Him upon us, who is such a boundless Treasure; but being instated in that, we do no longer desire to deal with thee upon terms of Grace, but upon most severe, rigorous, and strict Justice; what Mercies we have had, they were purchased for us by this Price; what Sins we have committed, they were satisfied for us by this Expiation: And therefore we stand acquitted in Law. Thus may those that have a part in this *Heavenly Treasure* make up their Accounts with a great deal of Confidence: When others that have nothing to discharge their Debts withal, shall be cast into Prison, whence they shall never return. Be convinced therefore of the absolute need and necessity that you stand in of this Heavenly Treasure.

Thirdly, *Another reason why no more labour after this* Heavenly Treasure, *is, because there are so few Men that are willing to go upon trust.* Truly the Riches of a Child of God are in believing, in trusting, and therefore we have that Expression, *Jam.* 2. 5. *The poor of this world rich in faith.* Now to be rich in Faith only, the World counts a fantastick kind of Riches, they had rather be rich in present Possessions, they know not the mystery of growing rich by believing, and having nothing: Now the People of God go on trust for their Treasure, and that two ways.

First, *Their Treasure are invisible*, in 2 *Cor.* 4. v. 18. *We look not on the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen.* The greatest part of what a Christian doth enjoy, lyes in Invisibles, in the Love of God, in Interest in him, in Communion and Fellowship with him, in the Actings of Faith, and Dependance upon him. Now tell an earthly carnal Man of such a *Treasure* as this is, he wonders where lyes the Glory and Excellency of it; he sees not God, nor Christ, he sees not that sweet Communion and Intercourse that there is betwixt God and the Soul; the Things of the World he sees, the Pomp, and Glory, and Splendor of the Earth, these are *Objects* of his Sense, they are sensible Things: And therefore these are Things that do affect him, but he prizes not invisible Things, because out of sight, out of mind.

Secondly, *Their Treasure is not only invisible, but future; it is to come:* It is but little that a Saint enjoys for the present, his great Estate lyes in Hope, and in Reversion; now he lives it may be upon Glimpses and half Smiles, and very resented Communications of God unto his Soul: He hath only enough to make him to know what that Inheritance is that he expects; and where it not that his Faith tells him sometimes how rich and glorious it is, truly he could not live and subsist upon his present Incomes: Now there is a body of Sin and Death that keeps him low and mean in his actual Enjoyments; these keep in nonage, and barr him from the possession of his Estate; yea, but when this old Man dies, then there falls to him a large and glorious Inheritance, then he is instated into the present possession of all his Hopes, and then he can live as much by sight and sense, as the Men of the World now do. Now this doth not affect earthly Men, they have somewhat for the present, and they care not for the future; the World is in their Hands, but Heaven is afar of; Eternity is looked upon by them as it is that which shall never end, so it shall never begin with them; and so foolish Creatures, while they are pleasing themselves with Empty Enjoyments here below, Eternity comes upon them unexpected, and they unprovided for it: And that's a third Reason.

Fourthly, *Few Men are willing to come up to the price of this Heavenly Treasure.* Why, what is the Price, you will say? Truly it is nothing less than all, *Matth.* 13. 46. where our Saviour speaking of the wise Merchant, says, *That when had found the Pearl of great Price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it.* Now though

though hereby is not required actual renouncing of all, but only a disposition of Heart to part with all, when they stand either in competition with, or opposition to these Heavenly Things; though this only be required: Yet Men's Affections are so glued to the World, and the Follies and Vanities here below, that they count this a hard Bargain, and they had rather forego God, and Christ, and the great and glorious Things of Eternity, than to buy them at so dear a rate, as to be willing to part with them all for Heavenly Things.

You see now what hinders Men from making Heavenly Things their *Treasure*; beware now that these Things be not charged upon you as your practical Errour at the last Day: Let me tell you, it will be sad and dreadful for you to see poor despicable Saints let into the full possession of this *Treasure*, which here they believed, and hoped, and longed for; and you your selves for cleaving to these vain and worldly Enjoyments, to be shut out in Eternal Torments; what Horrour and Dread will this cause within you? Thus much for the first Branch of this Exhortation, Labour to get these Heavenly Things to be your *Treasure*.

Secondly, The other branch is, *Never rest satisfied without a full Assurance that this Heavenly Treasure is yours; that you have a share in it, and a right to it.* Consider,

First, *Without this Assurance you can never live Comfortably*; for though it be sufficient for your eternal Safety and Security, that God is your Treasure, and your exceeding great Reward; yet it will not be sufficient for your present Comfort, unless you know and apprehend him so to be.

And then, Secondly, *Without this Assurance you can neither live generously, and as it becomes a Christian:* That is, you cannot live above the World without it, nor above the Fears and Flatteries, above the Frowns and Fawnings of the World, unless you have assurance that God is your Treasure. A Christian that knows God is his Portion, he can do thus, he can rejoyce in Tribulation, and triumph in Afflictions, and live splendidly upon his God, though all the things of this World fail him. In *Habbak.* 3. 17. *Though the Fig-Tree should not Blossom, neither Fruit be in the Vine, the labour of the Olive should fail: Though the Flock should be cut off from the Fold, and there should be no Herd in the Stall:* What then? Must not he languish and perish with other Men too? No: *Yet will I rejoyce in the Lord, and joy in the God of my Salvation.* What is the reason there is so much base compliance, and cringing, and servileness to every humour of Men, but only because Men have no Assurance of any Treasure, but what may be taken away from them by Men? I need not tell you what Times we are now fallen into; they are perillous Times, wherein nothing is worth the making sure; nay, indeed nothing can possibly be made sure: We see changes and vicissitudes upon every thing, and therefore make that sure that alone can be made sure, and that is God, and Heavenly, and Spiritual Things: And then, *Though the Earth be removed, and the Mountains hurled into the midst of the Sea; though the Waters roar, and the Mountains shake; yet God will be our Refuge and Strength, a very present help in time of Trouble*, Psalm. 46. 1, 2, 3.

Now to those that have had this full Assurance, I shall only speak two words briefly.

1. *Live upon your Treasure, by Faith fetch in Supplies from it for all your Exigencies and Necessities*; yea, live at a far higher rate than what the Men of the World can do, that so they may be convinced, that the poorest Christian hath greater sufficiency in himself than all the World besides; that the World may be convinced, that a Christian hath more in God than the greatest Worldling can have in all his worldly Possessions.

2. *Take heed of wasting and spending this Treasure.* Indeed, the main Stock cannot nor shall not be spent; yet take heed of diminishing the Heap, be still adding rather than wasting of it; truly Sin will both waste your Treasure, and blot your Evidences, and darken that Knowledge and Assurance that you have that this Treasure is yours.

I have but one word more, and that is to exhort you to lay up your *Earthly Treasures in Heaven*; you cannot lay them up in a safer place.

But you will say, *How may that be done?*

Why, if you lay them out for the Honour and Glory of God, and in his Service, you shall thereby lay them up in Heaven; this is the way to carry

Earth to Heaven, yea, to make Earthly Comforts and Enjoyments to tend upon you farther than the Grave. We ſay commonly, *Theſe things will go no farther than the Grave with us, there we muſt part with them*; no, lay up theſe Earthly Things in Heaven, by employing them for the Honour and Glory of God, and they ſhall and will go farther with you than the Grave; and though you brought nothing with you into the World, yet you ſhall carry them out of the World with you. See that, *Rev.* 13. 14. *Their works follow them*, they enter into Heaven with them. And *Mat.* 16. 19. *Make your ſelves friends of the mammon of unrighteouſneſs, that when ye fail they may receive you into everlaſting habitations. Mammon of unrighteouſneſs*, that is, Earthly Enjoyments, ſo called, becauſe uſually abuſed to unrighteouſneſs. *Make you friends of them*; that is, ſo lay them out for the glory of God, and the good of others, *that when you fail*, that is, when you die, you may be received into *everlaſting Habitations*, that is, into everlaſting Glory.

And thus I have finiſhed this Subject of laying up Treaſure in Heaven. The Lord make what hath been ſpoken profitable to your Souls.

SERMON XXII.

ON THE *NATIVITY of our LORD* JESUS CHRIST.

LUKE ii. 13, 14.

And ſuddenly there was with the Angel a multitude of the heavenly Hoſt, praiſing God, and ſaying, Glory to God in the higheſt, and on Earth Peace, Good-will towards Men.

IN this Chapter we have a moſt wonderful Hiſtory of the *Nativity* of the Son of God; and it is deſcribed both by the mean entertainment that *Earth*, and the glorious attendance that *Heaven* afforded him. His own appearance was but deſpicable, but the appearance of his Retinue was moſt magnificent and aſtoniſhing. He that was the *Ancient of Days*, became an helpleſs *Infant*. He that was the *Light of the Sun*, comes into the World in the *Darkneſs of the Night*. He who came that he might lay us in the Boſom of the Father, is himſelf laid in the Manger of a Stable. The Inn is full, and *Joſeph* the Carpenter, and *Mary*, though *big with God*, muſt take up with a *Stable*, and lay her Bleſſed burthen among Beaſts and Horſes, far more hoſpitable than their Owners: But though he be meanly welcomed on *Earth*, yet *Heaven* makes abundant amends for all: A company of induſtrious *Shepherds* lying all Night in the Fields by their Flocks, while they are watching their *Sheep*, they themſelves find their own *Shepherds*: Whilſt they thought of no Apparition, but of ſome ravenous Beaſts to devour their *Herd*; and *Angel* is winged away with ſo great ſwiftneſs, that he ſcatters light round about the place, and tells them of the *Birth of Chriſt*; but then he bids them ſearch for him in a ſtrange place, telling them, They ſhould find the Lord of Life and Glory in an *Inn*, and a ſtrange circumſtance, that an Holy *Angel* ſhould call the ſhameful debaſement of the King of Heaven *Tydings of great Joy*, and make it the matter of his *Jubilee*, and triumph upon the delivery of his Meſſage! The Text tells us, *There was with the Angel a multitude of the Heavenly*

venly Hoſt; that is, of *Angels*, thoſe *Heavenly Courtiers*, leaving the glorious Palace of Heaven; as well they might, when their King lay here below. And then they ſecond him with this joyful Acclamation, *Glory to God in the higheſt, and on earth Peace and Good-will towards Men.*

In theſe words there is contain'd whatſoever God or Man can deſire: What *Jotham*, in the Parable, ſpake concerning the *Vine*, *Judges* 9. 13. is certainly true of this Text, *It cheareth God and Man.* God knoweth no higher deſign than his own Glory, and Chriſt coming into the World was for the accompliſhment of that; and Man can deſire no greater Happineſs than what follows, *Peace* and *Good-will*; and both theſe are born into the World together with Chriſt. Now, by this *Peace on Earth*, may be meant either mutually from Men to Men, that upon Chriſt's Birth Men ſhould be at Peace one with another. So Hiſtory informs us, That about this time *Janus*'s *Temple* was ſhut up, and the whole World was at *Peace*. *Florus* the *Roman Hiſtorian* records, That then there was either a *Peace* or *Truce* in the whole World: And indeed, it was but fit that the War ſhould ceaſe, when the *Prince of Peace* was born. Or elſe it may be meant of Peace and Good-will from GOD to Man. Now *Peace* is not ſo much as *Good-will*, for where there are not open Acts of Hoſtility, yet there may be ſecret Grudges and Diſpleaſure. All Sinners ſtand in a double State of diſtance to God; the one of oppoſition and defiance, the other of alienation and eſtrangement. Peace deſtroys the one, and Good-will the other. And in the Text God by his *Angel* proclaims both to the World, *Peace* to *reconcile them*, and *Good-will* to *endear them*, and both in the *Lord Jeſus Chriſt*. And ſo accordingly let us take notice,

I. By whom this Heavenly Anthem is Sung.
II. What are the Contents of it.

For the firſt; It is ſaid, That *an innumerable Company of the Heavenly Hoſt praiſed God.* And we may well wonder what ſhould occaſion ſuch mighty Expreſſions of Joy in thoſe Bleſſed Spirits. Is it a time of *Joy*, when the Great God is introducing himſelf into our Fleſh; when he is *abaſing* himſelf to *Duſt* and *Aſhes*; when the *Infinite God* is retiring, and *ſhrinking up himſelf into a ſmall Worm?* Is it a time of Joy with them, when the brightneſs of the *Deity* (from whoſe Reflections only they borrow all their ſhining and luſtre) is now eclipſed in a frail Body. Strange, that they ſhould make this *Day* of *Heaven's Humilitation*, their Feſtival and Day of Thankſgiving! Yet poſſibly we may give a threefold account of it.

1. *The Holy Angels rejoyced at the birth of Chriſt, becauſe it gave them occaſion to teſtifie their deepeſt Humility and Subjection.* To be ſubject to Chriſt whilſt he ſate upon the Throne of his Kingdom, arrayed with unapproachable Light, comptrolling all the Powers of Heaven with a beck, it was no more than his dreadful Majeſty and his Infinite Glory exacted from them: But to be ſubject to him in a *Cratch*, as well as on the *Throne*, when he had, as it were, hid his Beams, and made himſelf recluſe in the Humane Nature; for the Angels are ſubject to him when as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *Heb.* 2. 8. *We ſee not yet all things put under him:* This was not Obedience only, but in a ſenſe it was a Condeſcenſion. Some of the *Schoolmen*, thoſe buſie Pryers into all the Secrets of Heaven, think that *Pride* which tumbled the *Apoſtate Angels* out of Heaven, was their diſdaining to ſerve Chriſt in his ſtate of exinanition and abaſement, which they then by *Revelation* knew would certainly come to paſs in the fulneſs of time; and that the reſt of their Fellow-*Angels* preſerv'd their Station, by profeſſing their cheerful willingneſs to be common Servants to the *Mediator*, when he himſelf ſhould appear in the form of a Servant. Now in the time of their Tryal, their *King*, whoſe infinite Eſſence gilds all the Univerſe, doth now lye howſed in a *Stable*, cradled in a *Manger*; there he lyes under all the Diſhonours of Men, obſcure in his Birth, and ſhortly muſt be expoſed to Hardſhips, to the Aſſaults of the Devil, to buffetings and cruel ſcourgings, and at laſt die as a *Malefactor*. This is that *Stone of ſtumbling* which hath long lain in the way both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*; this is the Scandal of the *Croſs* which their Pride would never ſtoop to: This is the *fooliſhneſs* of the *Goſpel* which the Wiſdom of the *World* did deride. What? For God to command them to *believe* in ſuch a contemptible Perſon as *Jeſus of Nazareth:* What were this but to deſtroy their Reaſon, that he might ſave their Souls. They ſcorn to own him in his *meanneſs* for their *Saviour*, whom yet the *Glorious Angels*

ſcorn not to own even in his *meaneſt*, for their *Lord* and *King*; and therefore we find how ready they are to wait upon him in the greateſt inſtance of his *abaſement*. When he was in the *Wilderneſs* among howling Beaſts tempted by the *Devil*, that *Roaring Lion*, it is ſaid, then *Angels Miniſtred unto him*, Matth. 4. 11. When he was in an *Agony*, and the heavy ſenſe of *God's Wrath* ſqueez'd from him large Drops of *bloody Sweat*, an *Angel*, it is ſaid, *ſtrengthned him*, Luke 22. 43. And now the time is come, wherein thy may expreſs their Fidelity and Obedience in the loweſt eſtate of their *Lord*. And this is the firſt Reaſon, why the *holy Angels* rejoyced at the *Birth of Chriſt*, becauſe now they have an Opportunity of expreſſing their Humility and Subjection to their *Lord* and *King*.

Secondly, *The Angels rejoyced at the Birth of Chriſt, becauſe the Confirmation of that Bleſſed Eſtate of Grace and Glory wherein they now ſtand, depended upon his Incarnation.* God upon Chriſt's undertaking the great Work of his *Mediatorſhip*, made over to him the whole World, as it were, by *Deed of Gift*, Matth. 28. 18. *All power* (ſaith Chriſt) *is given to me in Heaven and in Earth.* The Government of all Creatures is laid upon his Shoulders: And therefore if their be ſo great a multitude of *Holy Angels* preſerv'd in their bliſsful ſtate beyond all danger of Apoſtaſie, it muſt only be aſcrib'd to *Chriſt* as *God-Man*. Hence he is ſtyl'd, *Col.* 2. 10. *The head of all principality and power.* They are Members of Chriſt as well as we are; they are united to him by *Love*, as we are by *Faith*; they are part of the Church of Chriſt as well as we; they are Glorified Saints triumphing in Heaven, we militant on the Earth, and aſpiring thither, *Epheſ.* 1. 10. It is ſaid, *God gathers together in one all things in Chriſt, both which are in Heaven, and which are on Earth, even in him.* We and they are ſheltered together under the ſame Vail of Chriſt's Fleſh: And as the Saints on Earth derive from Chriſt the Grace of Preſervance, which keeps them from drawing back to Perdition; ſo alſo do the Angels in Heaven. Once when the great God hurled the *Apoſtate Spirits* down into the *burning Lake*, their own Wills were then *mutable*, and their Eſtate too; they might have conſpir'd in the ſame Rebellion, and partaked of the ſame Deſtruction; but that (it is probable) the *Meditator* interpoſed to ſecure and confirm them, and therefore they rejoyced at the *Birth of Chriſt*, wherein they ſaw the *Godhead* actually united to the Humane Nature, ſince the *Merit* of this *Union* long before that prevail'd for their happy perſeverance.

Thirdly, *The holy Angels rejoyced at the Birth of Chriſt, from the fragrant deſire they have of Man's Salvation.* Many Thrones in Heaven are vacant, God hath expell'd thence many Legions of *Devils*: And it is the fancy of ſome, that the number of thoſe who ſhall be ſaved, is equal to the Number of the *fallen Angels*, as if they were appointed by God to ſucceed in their Places and Dignities. Now the *Angels* have an earneſt deſire to have theſe Rooms filled, and to have more Members added to their *Heavenly Corporation*. Hence we find *Luke* 15. 10. *There is joy in the preſence of the Angels of God over one Sinner that Repents.* The news of a Sinner's Converſation is entertain'd with Applauſe, it makes a Feſtival in Heaven, that now there is made another *Man* a *free Denizen* of that *Holy City*: And if they thus rejoyce at the Converſion of a Sinner, needs muſt they rejoyce at the *Incarnation of a Saviour*, ſince this is the Root and Foundation of our Converſion, of our Hope, and of all our Happineſs. Thus you ſee the Reaſons why the *Holy Angels* rejoyced ſo exceedingly at the *Birth of Chriſt*. That is the *firſt Particular* propounded, by whom this Joy is proclaim'd, namely, *A multitude of the Heavenly Hoſt*. I might likewiſe have added, that the *Angels* rejoyced at the *Birth of Chriſt*, becauſe there is laid in it the great and wonderful Deſign of *God's Glory*; but that falls into the *Second General*, and that is, What this *Angelical Song* contains in it? It is ſet down in three moſt amiable and excellent Things, *Glory*, *Peace*, and *Good-will*, which are here applied to their ſeveral *Objects*; *Glory to God*, *Peace on Earth*, and *Good-will towards Men*.

To begin with the Firſt, *God's Glory*; now God's Glory is of two ſorts, *Eſſential*, and *Declarative*; God's Eſſential Glory, is nothing elſe but the *Infinite Perfections of his own Nature*; it is a Conſtellation of all his *unconceivable Attributes*, of *Wiſdom*, *Power*, *Holineſs*, and the like, into his own ever bleſſed *Eſſence*: And thus God was from all Eternity, before ever there was Creature made to admire him, he was infinitely *Glorious* in himſelf.

Secondly, There is a *Declarative Glory of God*, which is nothing elſe but that viſible

visible Splendour and Lustre, which reflects from the *Essential Glory*, upon the notice and intimation that the Creatures have of it. Thus we are said, *to give Glory to God*; not that we can contribute any thing to him, and set any Jewels in his Crown, which did not shine there before; but when we observe and admire those *bright Corruscations* of his *Attributes*, which appear in several ways that God takes to express them: Then we Glorifie God, when we admire those Strictures of God's *Essential Glory*, which appear in his *Attributes*. So here when the *Angel* Sung, *Glory to God in the highest*; the meaning is, Let Heaven and Earth behold with Admiration, and acknowledge those *Attributes* of God, which now shine forth in the *Incarnation of his Son*.

From the Words thus open'd, let me observe; that,

Doct. *The abasing Nativity of Jesus Christ, is the highest Advancement of God's Glory.*

This is a strange *Riddle* to Humane Reason, which is apt to judge it a most prepposterous course for God to raise his Glory out of the Humiliation and Abasement, yea out of the very Ruines of his Son. What if God had thrown open the Gates of Heaven, and given all the World a Prospect into that Heavenly and Glorious Palace, there to have seen the Throne of Majesty, and his glittering Attendants, *Ten thousand flaming Spirits ready to execute his Will*; *Cherubims and Seraphims flying as swift as Lightning within those boundless Roofs*: Would not this have been more expressive of God's Glory, then thus to cloister it up and immure the *Deity* in *Clay*; to expose Him who was God, to the Miseries of wretched Man, to an ignoble and cursed Death; The *Cratch* in which he lay, and the *Cross* on which he hung, were not high Places of any Glorious appearance.

Thus may Carnal Reason urge upon this score: The *Apostle* in 1 *Tim.* 3. 16. speaking of the *Incarnation of Christ*, calls it the *Mystery of Godliness*. It is a *Riddle*, and a mysterious one, not only how it should be, that the Eternal and Infinite God should unite himself in oneness of Person with frail and despicable Flesh: It is not only a Wonder *How*, but *Why* it should be done. Now to give you some account of this, I shall briefly in a few Particulars shew you how much Glory to God redounds hereby.

First, *In the Birth of Christ, God glorified the Riches of his Infinite Wisdom*, This was a Contrivance that would never have entered into the Hearts either of *Men* or *Angels*. Heaven at this very Day stands astonished at it; *Angels* are continually looking into it, and confess their Understandings infinitely too short to fathom it, 1 *Cor.* 1. 24. Christ is call'd the *Wisdom of God*. He is first the *Essential Wisdom of God*, as he is the Second Person of the *ever blessed Trinity*. He is the *Intellectual World* that was in the beginning *with God*, and was also *God himself*. He was likewise the *Declarative Wisdom of God*, as Mediator, *God-Man*, united in one Person. Let us a little put the difficult Case concerning *Man's Salvation*, that withal we may see whether it was not *Infinite Wisdom*. *Justice* and *Mercy* laying their different Claims for *sinful Men*, *Severe Justice* pleads the *Law* and the *Curse*, by which the Souls of Sinners are forfeited to *Vengeance*; therefore challengeth the Malefactors, and is ready to drag them away to Execution. *Mercy* interposeth, and pleads, That if the rigorous Demands of *Justice* be heard, it must lie an obscure and an unregarded *Attribute* in God's Essence for ever: It alone must be excluded, when all the rest had their share and portion; the Case is infinitely difficult; *Call a Bench of Angels* to debate the Case: When all is said, we find no way to accommodate this Difference; it is beyond their reach, how to satisfie *Justice* in the punishment of Sinners, and yet to gratifie *Mercy* in their Pardon. Here now in this gravelling Case, is the *Wonderful Wisdom of God* seen, *Justice* demands that *Man* should Die; saith *God*, My *Son* will become *Man*, and die under thy hands: Seize upon him and pursue him, through all the *Plagues* and *Curses* that my *Law* threatens, only there satisfie thy self on the Surety; my *Mercy* shall forgive and save the Principal. Think what a Shout and Applause *Heaven* gave at the Decision of this great Controversie. O, the *Infiniteness* of thy *Wisdom*, that couldst contrive Means to reconcile such different Interests, and twist thy *Glory* with them both. O, its delightful for Reason to lose it self in such a divine Meditation; for it is an unfordable Deep for the Soul to enter into: It utterly swallows up all our Apprehensions: We never find our selves at such a ravishing Ecstasie of Loss, as when we trace out the Intrigues and admirable ways of our Recovery.

Secondly,

Secondly, *The Birth of Chriſt glorified the Almighty Power of God.* It was his *Infinite Power* that ſpread abroad the Heavens, that poiz'd the Earth in the midſt of the Air; and it would be a glorious expreſſion of Power, if God ſhould draw up this Globe of the Earth to the Heavens; or if he ſhould let down the Conclave of Heaven to Earth: This God hath done in the miraculous *Birth of Chriſt*, he hath joyned *Heaven* and *Earth* together, he hath made an unſeparable Union between them, he hath cauſed Heaven and Earth to meet in the midway; He hath raiſed *Earth* to *Heaven*, and ſtooped *Heaven* to *Earth*. It is an Effect of the *Almighty Power of God*, to unite himſelf to *Humane Nature*, to *frail Fleſh*: This was to put forth his *Power* only, to make himſelf weak. Is it not *Almighty Power*, that the infinite unconceiveable *Godhead* ſhould unite to it ſelf *Duſt* and *Aſhes*, and be ſo cloſely united that it ſhould grow into one and the ſame Perſon; the Glory of God's Power is hereby exceedingly advanced.

Thirdy, *By the Birth of Chriſt, God glorified the Severity of his Juſtice.* His Son muſt rather take fleſh and die, than that this *Attribute* ſhould remain unſatisfied.

And ſo ſtrict was God, that when he found but the Imputation of Sin upon his Son, *Juſtice* Arreſts him; and indeed by this courſe the *Juſtice* of God was more fully ſatisfied, than if it had ſeized upon the Offenders themſelves: For they are but finite, and cannot bear the utmoſt ſeverity and infliction of *Divine Wrath and Vengeance*. This the Son of God can and hath done, who by virtue of the *Divine Nature* underwent it all, and came triumphantly from under it all. So that God glorified the *Attribute* of his *Juſtice* more by ſending *Jeſus Chriſt* into the World, to undergo the Execution of that Wrath that was due to Sinners, than if he had taken particular Vengeance upon Sinners, and ſent away every Soul of them to *Hell*.

Fourthly, *By the Birth of Chriſt the* Truth *and* Veracity *of God is eminently glorified*, by fulfilling many *Promiſes* and *Predictions* which were made concerning the ſending of Chriſt into the World: That *primitive Promiſe*, Gen. 3. *That the Seed of the Woman ſhould break the Serpant's Head*, which lay for many Ages latent under *Types* and *Figures*, at the *Birth of Chriſt* it broke forth into accompliſhment; All thoſe *Prophecies*, all thoſe *Ceremonial Reſemblances*, which through the over-ſhadowing of the *Holy Ghoſt* went big with a *Saviour:* Now they had gone out their full time, were ſafely delivered, and the *Veracity* of God gave them all their expected Iſſue in his Birth: So we have it, *Gal.* 4. 4. *But when the fulneſs of time was come, God ſent forth his Son*, &c.

Fifthy, I might add, That *hereby the Infinite Love and Pity of God is eminently glorified:* But this falling into another part of my Text, *God's Good-will towards Men*, I ſhall make a tranſition thither, and leave this Conſideration, of the *Glory that God acquires to himſelf by the Incarnation of his Son Chriſt*, under theſe Particulars.

And ſo I ſhall proceed to the *Infinite Love* and *Good-will* that God hath ſhewn towards *Men*. Now I am entering upon a *Theam* enough to puzzle and nonplus not only our Expreſſions, but our Apprehenſions too; not only our Apprehenſions, but even our Admiration it ſelf. But, O Lord! We can neither keep ſilence, nor ſpeak out thy *Love*; it is ſo Great and ſo Infinite, that it arreſts our Thoughts, and cramps our Tongues, and leaves us no Relief, but that expreſſion of the Apoſtle; *O the depth of the Riches both of the Wiſdom and Knowledge of God*, &c. Rom. 11. 33. O the boundleſs Dimenſions of the *Love of God*, which paſſeth knowledge. If the *Angels* that ſang this Song; *Peace on Earth, Good-will towards Men*, ſhould themſelves be queſtioned, how *great Good-will*, even they muſt faulter and ſtammer in it, they are continually prying into it, and there is infinitely more in it than they have ſeen, and yet they ſee infinitely more than they can relate. And what do we here then this Day? What is that I attempt, or you expect? Haſte home therefore, O Chriſtians, yield up your ſelves to be ſwallowed up with the Thoughts and Meditations of that which we cannot comprehend. And that I may give you ſome Hints for your Meditations to fix on, I ſhall endeavour to illuſtrate the *Great and Infinite Love of God in ſending Chriſt into the World* from theſe Conſiderations: Firſt,

From
1. *The Perſon that was ſent.*
2. *The manner and circumſtances of this ſending.*
3. *The Perſons to whom he was ſent.*
4. *The unſpeakable Benefits that do redound to Men by this free Gift of God.*

In

In all theſe, *God's Good-will towards Men* is admirably Glorious, as I ſhall demonſtrate to you.

Firſt, If you conſider the *Perſon ſent*; this will exalt the *Goodneſs of God* towards us: And who is it? Is he an *Angel?* Truly, if he were, herein *Divine Love* doth infinitely advance it ſelf, that God ſhould ſpare one of his own *Retinue* from his Attendance on him, to give ſuch a glorious Servant as an *Angel* is, for the Redemption of ſuch a rebellious Worm as *Man*! But who is not aſtoniſhed? It was not an *Angel*, but the *LORD* of *Angels*; not a *Servant*, but a *Son*, is by the Father himſelf pluck'd from his own Boſom, and ſent with this Meſſage; *Haſte, haſte to the Earth, for there are thouſands of ſinful and wretched Creatures, ſinning themſelves to Hell, and muſt for ever fall under the ſtrokes of my dreadful Juſtice; ſtep thou between them and it, receive thou my Wrath thy ſelf, do thou ſatisfie my Juſtice, and die thou thy ſelf to ſave them.*

When God tried *Abraham*'s Obedience, he aggravates his Command by many piercing words, that muſt needs go to the Heart of a tender Father, *Gen* 22. 2. *Take now thy Son, thine only Son whom thou loveſt, and get thee into the Land of* Moriah, *and offer up their for a Burnt-Offering upon one of the Mountains that I will ſhew thee*, &c. This heightned *Abraham*'s *Obedience*, that notwithſtanding all theſe Aggravations, yet he was willing to Sacrifice his beloved Son upon God's Command. Truly, in the very ſame manner, God heightens and illuſtrates his own Love towards us, He takes his Son, his only Son, the Son of his *Eternal Love*, and delights and offers him up as a Sacrifice for the Sins of Men: And this greatly extols the *Love of God*. That,

Firſt, God lay under no neceſſity of *Saving us at all:* As nothing accrued to him by our Happineſs, ſo nothing could have been diminiſhed from his *Eſſential Glory*, by our *Eternal Miſery*.

Secondly, But as ſome affirm, God lay under no neceſſity of *Saving us* in ſo chargeable a manner, by the *Death of his Son*, but that he might have freed us from *Death* by the *abſolute Prerogative* of his *pardoning Grace and Mercy*, without ſhedding of the *Blood of Chriſt*. And do you think in Heaven we ſhould ever have complained for want of Love in God to us, though he had brought us thither at a cheaper Rate than now he doth; but this, though it might have been ſufficient for our *Salvation*, yet was it not ſufficient for *God's Deſign*, in the manifeſtation of the *Riches* and *Glory* of his great Love to us; and therefore God will not go the ſavingeſt way to work, in compaſſing of our *Salvation*; but that way which ſhall be moſt for the inhancing of his Love to us.

Is it not greater Love in God towards us to part with Chriſt out of Heaven, to break and bruiſe him, to make his *Soul an Offering for Sin*, and his *Blood a Ranſom for Sinners*; than if he had only, without any further Circumſtances, beckened us up to Heaven?

This therefore muſt be the Method, *Divine Wiſdom* will take, becauſe *Divine Love* dictates it to be the moſt advantageous to commend his *Love* to Sinners. *O, the ſupererogating Mercy of God*, that is not only contented to do what is barely ſufficient for our *Salvation*, but over and above adds what may be moſt expreſſive of his own Love and Affections to us, *John* 3. 16. *God ſo loved the World*, &c. God ſo loved the World. How? What, ſo as to ſave it only? No, but he ſo loved it, as he gave his only begotten Son to Save it, *What, thy Son, Lord, thine only Son! Why, the deſtruction of the whole World is not a thing ſo conſiderable, as one Sigh, one Groan, one Tear or one Drop of Blood from that only Son of thine, whom thou gaveſt to Save the World.* But however, God is reſolved notwithſtanding, that not only a Sigh, Groan, or Tear; but the Life of his Son alſo ſhall go, rather as a manifeſtation of his Love to Sinners, than for any abſolute antecedent neceſſity of ſuch a *Sacrifice:* And that is one thing wherein this *Love* and *Good-will* of God to Men appears, in that he gave them his only Son out of his own Boſom for their Salvation.

Secondly, Conſider *the Manner and Circumſtances of Chriſt's coming into the World*; and then alſo it will appear further, That there is in God an *Infinite Love and Good-will towards Men*. And here I ſhall treat of theſe two Things:

1. *That Chriſt was ſent as from the Father Freely.*
2. *And, as to Himſelf, ignominiouſly.*

And both theſe do contribute much to the Exalting of the *Infinite Love of God* towards fallen Man.

First,

First, *God's Love is exalted, in that he ſent his only Son freely.* If *Men* and *Devils* had joined their Forces, and made an Aſſault upon Heaven; yet they could never have plucked the Son of God's Love from his Eternal Embraces. That World which he had given to Chriſt, which afterwards had power to Aſſault, Kill, and Crucifie him: Yet before he was given, they had no power to bring him into the World. But God thinks it not enough, that this great Gift comes from him freely and without compulſion; but he puts it a ſtrain higher, and he gives *Chriſt* freely to us.

First, *Freely in oppoſition to all deſert*; not only without, but againſt all merit and deſert in us.

Certainly *Man* could no more merit *Chriſt* out of *Heaven*, than he could have merited *Heaven* without *Chriſt*.

When God out of his *Infinite Wiſdom* foreſaw that we would deſpiſe and reject his Son; firſt, ſpill his *Blood*, and then trample upon it: Did he ſo hate his Son, as to account this Demeanour of ours meritorious of him? Since we cannot merit the leaſt good, how then could we merit ſo great a *Gift* as *Chriſt?* Nay, which is more to the Glory of *God's free Good-will*, he beſtowed *Chriſt* upon us, not only without any merit of ours; but without any merit of his alſo. It is *Free Grace* that endows us with any *Spiritual*, with any *Eternal Bleſſing*. *Free Grace* doth Sanctifie our Hearts, and Save our Souls. Yet all this *Chriſt* hath *purchaſed* for us by the *Price of his own Death:* He is the *Merit of Eternal Salvation for us*; yet it is *Free Grace* in beſtowing it upon us. God will have a *Price* paid him down for all other things of leſs value, that he may thereby ſet forth his own *Bounty*, in parting with the *greateſt Gift*, his *own Son*, without Price; *Chriſt* merited all other things for us, but the greateſt of all he never merited for us, that is, *himſelf*. God hath put *Heaven* and *Glory*, and the *everlaſting enjoyment of himſelf* upon *Sale*, as it were, that ſo this *great Gift of his Son* may appear truly *eſtimable*, and his *Bounty abſolute* and *infinite:* But though he gives all things beſides *Chriſt*, upon the account of *Chriſt's Merits*, yet he gives *Chriſt* freely without any intervening Merit.

Secondly, *God's Love is free in the Gift of Chriſt, in that he prevents not only our Deſerts, but our Deſires.* Begging of Alms takes not off from the Charity and Bounty of the *Donor*; yet God is not willing to have his *Bounty* ſo much *fore-ſtalled*, as our requeſting of it. As for the good things of *Grace* and *Glory*, the moſt importunate Suiters are uſually the beſt Speeders. *Ask, and you ſhall receive; ſeek, and you ſhall find; knock, and it ſhall be opened:* But in the giving of Chriſt to the World, *He was found of them that ſought him not.* And in all this was the Deſign of *Love*, laid in the *Heart* of God from all Eternity, before ever there were either *Prayers* or *Tongues* to utter them. This was a Deſign of Infinite Contrivance, that could never enter into our Hearts, or the Hearts of *Angels* to conceive it, that it ſhould be poſſible; and what we could not conceive in our Thoughts and Hearts, we could not beg with our Mouths: But God out of his own Good-will to us, prevents both our *Works* and our *Words*; both the *Merit of our Hands*, and the *Requeſt of our Mouths*, and freely beſtows his *own Son* to be our *Saviour*, without either our deſerving, or deſiring of him.

Secondly, *As Chriſt was given freely, in reſpect of God*; *ſo very* ignominiouſly *in reſpect of himſelf.* And this inhanceth the exceeding Greatneſs of the Love of God towards us; He was degraded in his *Birth*, perſecuted in his *Life*, and accurſed in his *Death:* And that he ſhould thus deal with the Son of his Love; that he ſhould abaſe and afflict him, only to ſhew his Love to us: It ſeems at the firſt bluſh to intimate, That God preferred ſuch Worms as we are, before the Son of his Boſom.

And here let us firſt conſider, *Chriſt in his Birth*; and here, What was it to be born of the *Royal Line and Stock of* David; but that Family was now fallen and grown to decay, when the *Hier Apparent* of that *Royal Family*, was *Joſeph*, who was forced for the ſuſtaining of his Life to turn *Mechanick*; yet this Family he chooſeth to be a Member of, not when it was Victorious and Triumphant, but when it was ſunk low, and did expire: He alſo chooſeth out a mean poor *Virgin* to become his Mother; ſhe is thought but a fit Match for a Carpenter: And when ſhe is grown with him big too, that is not without ſome ſuſpicion; and when ſhe was in Travail, none did ſo much regard the Entreaties of *Joſeph*, nor the Groans and Pangs of *Mary*, as to afford her a better Room than a *Stable*, where ſhe her ſelf

was

was both *Mother* and *Nurſe*, and inſtead of a *Cradle*, rocked *Chriſt* in a *Manger*; and though her Heart yearned, yet ſhe had no ſofter Pillow to lay under him, than Straw or Hay. Nor,

Secondly, *Doth his Life repaire the meanneſs of his Birth:* No, He is a *Man of Sorrows, acquainted with Griefs* from firſt to laſt; He becomes ſubject to his Parents, he puts himſelf under the dominion of his own Creatures; He follows his Father's Occupation, *Mark* 6. 3. *Is not this the Carpenter?* As in ſcorn, they ſaid, *He that formed the Heavens and the Earth, learns himſelf to make Houſes.* There was nothing of outward Pomp or Grandeur in his Life; *Iſa.* 53. 2. *He hath no form nor comelineſs, and when we ſhall ſee him, there is no beauty that we ſhould deſire him,* ſaith the *Prophet.* He was maintained by the *Alms* of a few poor well-diſpoſed Women; tempted by the *Devil*, perſecuted by the *Jews*, betrayed by his own *Followers.* This was the courſe of his *Life.* And,

Thirdly, Then if you conſider his *Death*, that was *ſhameful, bloody*, and *accurſed:* We ſee him on the *Croſs* hanging on the ſoarneſs of his Hands and Feet; We ſee him pierced to the Heart by a *Ruffian Soldier*; We ſee him crowned with *Thorns*, and the *precious Blood* trickling from the *Head*, to meet thoſe other Rivers that were running from his *Side* and *Feet:* We ſee him forſaken of his *Diſciples*; and what is more, we hear him complaining of being forſaken of God too. *O bleſſed Saviour! What Eyes can refrain from weeping? What Heart from bleeding? Is this the entertainment that the World gives to thee the deareſt Pledge that God hath or can ſend? Is this thy welcom to it? Is this thy departure out of it? Shall we mock and ſcourge, crucifie, pierce, and murder thee? And wilt thou by all theſe Outrages committed againſt thy ſelf, accompliſh our Salvation? O victorious Love! That can pardon when abuſed, and exalt us by being abaſed, glorifie us by being deſpiſed?* Yet God will have it ſo, that his *Good-will* may be commended by the Affronts, and by the Indignites that peeviſh *Mankind* puts upon it.

Thirdly, *The infinite Good-will of God, in ſending Jeſus Chriſt into the World, appears to be glorious and great, if you conſider the Perſon to whom he was ſent.* The fallen *Angels* ſtood in as much need of a *Saviour*, as we, and *Chriſt* was as well able to *ſave them*, as to *ſave us*; and they would have ſerved God with more inlarged Capacities than we can poſſibly do: But however, as ſoon as thoſe *Glorious Spirits* ſinned, God threw them down to *Hell*, where they are ſhackled up in Chains of maſſie Darkneſs for ever, never to have any Releaſe: *O moſt dreadful Severity towards them! O unſpeakable Love towards us!* God paſſeth by the *Angels*, and recovers vile *Mankind*, and raiſeth them up out of the Duſt, that they might fill up thoſe void places of the *Angels*, that left their *firſt ſtation.* This is that which makes the *Devil* rage, and this is that which makes that *Old Serpent* to gnaw his Tongue with anguiſh, that he ſhould be caſt down from Heaven like Lightning, and ſuch vile Worms as Men are advanced to his Place and Honour. Truly, nothing puts a greater Accent upon *Love*, than when it is laid out upon thoſe which are moſt unworthy, with a purpoſe thereby to make them worthy.

Thus is the *Love of God* in ſending *Chriſt* expreſſed; he comes and find us *unworthy*, and he comes that he might make us *worthy.* Now here,

Firſt conſider, *This Love is pitched upon loathſom and deformed Creatures, that ſo it might make them comely and beautiful.* And this advanceth the *free Love of God*, in ſending *Chriſt* into the World. You may ſee an elegant Compariſon of *Man* in the ſtate of Nature, *Ezek.* 16. 5, 6. where the *Prophet* compares him to a *poor forſaken Infant, ſwathed in his own black and clottered Blood, all raw and ulcerated, caſt into the open Field, helpleſs for its weakneſs, and loathſom for its deformity, whoſe very Mouth was choaked up in the filth in which it wallows.* This is the very *Emblem* of that Condition that we our ſelves are in, in our *natural* and *unregenerate ſtate*; we were caſt out to the loathing of our *perſons*, and we had rolled our ſelves in our own *filth*, and *impotent*, that we cannot help our ſelves; ſo choaked up with our own blood, that we cannot ask it of God. A *leperous perſon* that ſucks his own Sores, and hath nothing to feed on but the Corruption that iſſues thence, is not a more ruthful and a more piteous Spectacle than a Man is by *nature* in his *unregenerate condition*, whoſe *Soul* is all *Wounds* and *Bruiſes*, and *putrefied Sores*, and our *Food* nothing elſe but *rottenneſs* and *ſtench* that breaks out from us.

Thus I have repreſented a ſad and wretched *Spectacle* before your Eyes. Whoſe *Bowels* would not *yearn* to read this Deſcription that the *Prophet* makes, and which

I have briefly opened to you! Why now is there any thing of Amiableneſs or Lovelineſs in ſuch an *Object* as this is, that God ſhould part with his Son out of his own Boſom? Yet ſaith God in the Eighth Verſe, *Now when I paſſed by thee, and looked upon thee; behold, thy time was the time of love, and I ſpread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedneſs: And then I waſhed thee with water, yea, I throughly waſhed away thy blood from thee.* Nay further, our Condition was ſuch as the Prophet *Iſaiah* deſcribes it to be, *Iſa.* 1. 6. *From the ſole of the foot, even unto the head, there is no ſoundneſs*, &c. *but wounds and bruiſes, and putreſying ſores.* Sores that deformed us, Sores that would have deſtroyed us. Now that God ſhould ſend his *bleſſed* and *well-beloved Son*, the *Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, to bind up and cure, nay to kiſs the Sores of ſuch deformed Creatures as we are, doth not this ſpeak his *infinite Love* to us?

Secondly, *This Love is not only pitched upon deformed Creatures, but alſo upon froward, peeviſh, and rebellious Creatures.* Of all things in the World, nothing ſooner provokes God's Will, than a ſlighting, and contempt of Love: Now God foreſaw how Men would ſlight his Son, yet notwithſtanding he ſends him; *He came to his own, and his own received him not*, I might enlarge in the Hiſtory of our *Provocations*, *Affronts*, and *Injuries*; all which God foreſaw out of his own *Infinite Wiſdom:* And yet notwithſtanding all, his *Good-will* prevailed to ſend *Jeſus Chriſt*, whom he knew would be ſcorned and rejected by them to whom he was ſent.

Fourthly and laſtly, I might be large in illuſtrating *this Good-will of God, in ſending* Jeſus Chriſt *into the World, is drawn from thoſe many great Benefits that by* Chriſt's *coming, we are made partakers of.* Should I inſtance in Temporal Things, that would be an abatement to this Love of God to us, and the Purchace of Chriſt, whereby we receive *Pardon of Sin, Reconciliation of our Perſons, Acceptation with God, Sanctification, Adoption, hope of Glory here, and poſſeſſion of Glory hereafter:* All in and through Jeſus Chriſt. But I ſhall not inſiſt upon theſe, but proceed to make ſome ſhort Application.

Uſe. You have heard ſomewhat, (though infinitely ſhort) of the *Good-will of God*, in ſending *Jeſus Chriſt* into the World: Do not you believe it to be true? Why elſo do you Solemnize this as a *Day of Joy?* Well them, beware that you do not fruſtrate *God's Good-will* towards you, in giving Chriſt to you, by your Debaucheries and Prophaneneſs on this *good Day*, which you Celebrate as a Memorial of that great Gift. Believe it, (and it's ſad to conſider;) As *Chriſt*'s *Birth* hath been the cauſe of the Salvation of many a Soul; ſo it may be feared that *Chriſtmas* hath been the Damnation of many a Soul: What through *Rioting*, *Drunkeneſs*, *Revelling*, *Gaming*, and ſuch like Exceſſes, the Name of Chriſt hath been greatly diſhonoured, under a pretence of honouring his *Birth.* I have heard a Story of a *Turkiſh Ambaſſadour* long reſiding in one of the greateſt Courts in *Chriſtendom*; when he returned home to his Maſter, he was by him examined, what Cuſtoms the *Chriſtians* obſerve? He made this Anſwer; That for *Twelves Days* in the Year, all the *Chriſtians* ran mad. His Obſervation was but too true, and too much to the diſparagement of the *Chriſtian Religion:* And we may well queſtion, whether there be not more Wickedneſs committed in many places theſe *Twelve Days*, than in the other *Twelve Months* after. What, Sirs, do you think that Chriſt came into the World only to give you an occaſion to Eat unto Gluttony, and to Drink unto Drunkenneſs? Are not theſe ſome of the Sins which he came into the World to deſtroy? And will you make his coming into the World to Patronize them? Obſerve then a Day, but take the *Apoſtle's Direction*; *He that obſerveth a Day, let him obſerve it to the Lord.* It is his Rule to obſerve it with a holy Heart, with ſpiritual Meditation, with heavenly Affections. This is the only way to reap the Benefit of *God's Good-will*, in ſending *Chriſt* into the World, and this is the only way to aſcribe *Glory to God* for his *Good-will* towards *Men.*

SER-

SERMON XXIII.

THE
Bleſſedneſs of them that die in the LORD.

REV. xiv. 13.

And I heard a voice from Heaven, ſaying unto me, Write, Bleſſed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth; yea, ſaith the Spirit, that they may reſt from their labours, and their works do follow them.

NATURE hath impreſſed in us ſuch horrid and dreadful Notions of *Death*, and repreſented its Viſage ſo wan and ghaſtly, that though nothing is more certain than that we muſt all dye, yet nothing is more difficult than to perſwade Men to dye willingly. The *Philoſophers* ranſack'd the whole Magazine of Reaſon, and have put into our Hands all the Weapons that may help to embolden us to encounter this *King of Terrors*; yet, by their great Preparations, inſtead of diminiſhing its Dread, they have made it appear more fearful: And indeed, whatſoever ſpecious Arguments Reaſon can produce, they are rather for Pomp than for Uſe. There is not any thing in the ſage *Philoſophers* for the *contempt of Death*, that they offer to the World, but if rationally examined, will prove no ſolid ground of Peace in a dying Hour: All that is inculcated by them, is either concerning the neceſſity of Dying, or freedom by it from the Care and Trouble of this Life; or laſtly, the Hope of a future Reward. Now, what is it to tell us, that *Death* is the common Lot of all; and that every compounded Being hath thoſe fatal *Principles* in it that will certainly work its diſſolution; and therefore it becomes the *Reaſon* and *Spirits* of Men to entertain the *Fate* under which they fall, with a *Conſtancy* unmoveable? Alaſs! what *Comfort* is this, ſeeing the inevitableneſs is a thing that renders it ſo *terrible*; whereas that Freedom it gives us from the Cares and Troubles of this Life, is but like the change of a *Fever* into a *Lethargy*, that brings ſuch a gloomy quietneſs, wherein, as there is no ſenſe of Torment, neither is there of Eaſe? Indeed, what they ſpeak of a future *Reward* is dry, or mean and ſordid, in compariſon of that ſolid Joy that God hath promiſed to us in his Word; yet could Reaſon alone make our Right to it certain and evident, it would be a ſtrong ſupport againſt the Fear of *Death*, and a ſoveraign Antidote againſt its invenom'd Sting: But Reaſon hath prepared places of *Puniſhment* as well as *Bliſs*: And beſides, the Conſciences of all Men have diſcover'd to them that Guilt, of which their Reaſon can never diſcover an Expiation; and ſo, inſtead of arming them againſt the Fear of *Death*, Reaſon redoubleth its *Terrors*, by proving us *Tranſgreſſors* of the Law of Nature.

You ſee then, that the beſt Support which *Reaſon* can give, is not Death-proof. The laſt *Encounter* that all muſt maintain againſt that laſt Enemy, is too rough and boiſterous for ſuch *Arguments* as theſe to make good. If Mens Conſolations are no better, it will fare with them as with cunning *Fencers* in a confuſed *Battel*, that will ſoon put by all their *artificial Deſigns*. Indeed, that which can make Men meet *Death* with undaunted boldneſs, muſt be ſomething below *Reaſon*, *Raſhneſs*, or *Human Boldneſs*; and ſomething above *Reaſon*, as Divine Grace and Revelation. Therefore our Bleſſed Apoſtle ſeeing the Calamities, Perſecutions, and Martyrdoms that befel the Church, that as it was planted by the Blood of Chriſt, ſo it was to be encreaſed by the Blood of his own Members, that he might encourage them with unſhaken Reſolution to encounter with their many *Deaths*; he fetcheth not his Arguments from the faint and gloomy Diſcourſes of *Reaſon*, but

from the infallible Teſtimony of *Divine Revelation*, *I heard a voice from Heaven, ſaying unto me, Write, Bleſſed are the dead which die in the Lord.* But leſt this ſhould be challenged by all, and ſo made a Bleſſing as univerſal as their Mortality, the *Apoſtle* enters a *Caveat* againſt the moſt part of the World, and limits this Bleſſing to them that *die in the Lord*; that is, either to thoſe that *die for the Lord*, (and ſo the Phraſe may import ſuffering Martyrdom for the Name and Profeſſion of *Chriſt*) and wade through their own Blood to that Heaven which the Lord hath opened to them by His. Or elſe they who die in the true Faith of Chriſt, united to him as Members of his Body-myſtical. And indeed, if we conſider the Terrors of a *Natural Death*, but much more the Terrors of *Martyrdom*, it is no more but needful to have the Bleſſing ſpoken of under ſuch a doleful State, confirmed to us by the Teſtimony of a Heavenly Voice. Think of the ſevere Preparations of dying and languiſhing Diſeaſes, the reflect toſſings, Fire in the Spirits, inceſſant Groans, and the echoing back again from weeping Friends, the quivering Limbs, diſtorted Eyes, fallen Jaws, the Agonies of the Soul, and the working of it ſelf from the Earth oppreſſing of it, and darting it ſelf from under the Body by which it is faſten'd to the Earth. Think what it is, after ſo many diſorders of the Soul engaging themſelves, being taken from its deareſt Companion, the earthly part left by Death as a Spectacle to its deareſt Relations, and to be by them delivered up as a Prey to the ſtink of Worms and Rottenneſs. Would any one believe, that ſuch a ſtate as this is to be Bleſſed, without a voice from Heaven aſſuring of it? Thoſe whom God highly Honours, every Limb of whoſe Body is a Scene of a Trajedy, upon whom the enraged Perſecutors have made an Experiment of their Wit in new-found Cruelties, when it lay all mangled and weltering in its own gore, under the moſt exquiſite Torments that Men could entail; would you think them in a bleſſed Condition? Why, as their Sufferings were beyond what Human Nature could bear; ſo alſo was their Support from thoſe ſtrong Conſolations of God, (let down into their Souls, whereby they tired out their Tormenters, deſpiſing Death, not accepting of Deliverance, through the aſſurance of an *Heavenly Revelation*) beyond the apprehenſions of *Human Reaſon*.

This Bleſſing of theirs is branched out in two particulars:

I. *Reſt from their Labours.*
II. *Their Works do follow them.*

I. To begin with the firſt, their *Reſt from their Labours.*

1. *They reſt from the Turmoils and Vexations of this Life.* This Life is nothing but a huddle of Buſineſs, a ſwarm of Employments, having more of the Sting than the Honey in it. If we be rich in the World, this makes us ſpread wider, and ſtand the fairer mark for Trouble. If we are in a high degree in the World, that only ſatisfies our Intereſt, and gives every *Croſs* and *Affliction* an advantage to wound us in many *Concernments*. If we are mean and low, as it expoſeth us to the *Contempt* and *Injury* of others, ſo it engageth us to reſcue our ſelves from their preſſures and power, and by our Sweat and Pains we loſe the Comforts of Life, only to gain the Conveniencies of it. Even thoſe petty inconſiderable Enjoyments, that are but for the bare ſuſtentation of Life, cauſe ſuch Care and Trouble, ſuch aking Hearts and weary Heads, that they turn our Bread into Stones, and our Fiſh into Scorpions. If we have much *Buſineſs* in the *World*, our Calling becomes a Temptation and a Burthen to us: If we have none, we become Burthens to our ſelves and others. God hath wrought Vexation upon every Condition, if Providence create not Trouble for us, our own Folly will. We all, like *Spiders*, ſpend our Time and Care to weave a Webb out of our own Bowels; and we ſpend more to get a Prey, than that Prey, when taken, will again repay us. If any Flaw be in our Deſigns, if any Croſs that intervenes doth break them, then they become a Vexation and a Diſcontent unto us. Thus hath Man made himſelf a *Drudge* to that over which God hath made him a *Lord*. The Sweat of *Adam*'s Brow ſtreams along with us, and the Curſe with it; and though we toyl in the World, yet it brings forth nothing but *Thorns* and *Briars* that pierce us through with many Sorrows: But *Death* will ſhortly lay us to Bed in our Graves, where (as *Job* ſpeaks) *the weary are at reſt*, Job 3. 17. and all our Cares, Sorrows, and Troubles will vaniſh as ſoon as our Heads touch that Pillow: *There is no work, no device in the Grave, whither thou art going*; that is a deep repoſe and ſweet retirement,

ment, where we ſhall have none of the *Afflictions* nor *Troubles* of this Life to interrupt us. And the Soul being regardleſs of the poor *Concernments* here in its paſſage to Heaven, ſhakes off from its Wings that *Mire* and *Dirt* wherewith it was clogged here in converſing with Earthly things, and aſſociates it ſelf with a whole Ring of *Angels*, *Patriarchs*, *Saints*, and *the Spirits of juſt Men made perfect*, and there keeps an Eternal Feſtival.

2. *They reſt from all the Sorrows and Sufferings of this Life.* What is our Life, but a Bubble? Our Sighs are the Air, and our Tears the Water that make it. The firſt poſſeſſion which we take of the World is by crying; and there is nothing we hold by a ſurer Tenure than our Grief. Tears are the Inheritance of our Eyes; either our *Sufferings* or our *Sins* call for them: And nothing can *dry them* up but the Duſt of the *Grave*. Sometimes we loſe our dear Friends and Relations, the *Tribute* we owe to their *Memories* muſt be paid down by *Tears*. Sometimes their ungodly Practices torment us, when by their Debaucheries they haſte their own Intereſt in our Hopes. Sometimes compaſſion to other Mens Sufferings calls for our Sorrow, as if we had not Grief enough in our own Bowels, but we muſt call for *Foreign Succours* to angment them. Our many Diſeaſes waſte us, and our grinding Pains break us, and indeed they were more intolerable, but that they haſten on that *Death* that will put a *period to all our Miſeries*. We ſhall not then concern our ſelves in our *groans* for the loſs of our dear Friends nor for the evil courſes or calamities of others. It concerns us nothing than what *ſtinking Breath* blaſts our good Name, nor what *unworthy Foot* treads upon our Grave: *Here* a little Pain moleſts us, *There* whole Limbs ſometimes fall down and crumble into Duſt, without diſturbing that *quiet Reſt* that buries all the Sorrows of this Life in a profound oblivion; and our Souls ſhall aſcend to that place of perfect Joy, where neither Sorrow nor Suffering durſt yet appear.

3. *They ſhall reſt from the Labours that a corrupt and ſinful Heart put them to.* And this is that which indeed makes it ſuch a bleſſed Reſt, where our *Corruptions* ſhall at once ceaſe to act, and ceaſe to be. The only thing that makes God's Commands and Services ſo difficult and grievous, is the *Remainder of Sin* that ſtill cleaves to us, that both *deadens* our *Hearts* to what is good, and makes us averſe to it. But *Death* will ſhortly give us Reſt from theſe.

Firſt, *We ſhall reſt from all the Labours that we take with a heavy and dull Heart in the ways of God.* We ſtand in need now of much *Quickening Grace* to act and excite theſe lumps of Lead that lie in our Breaſts: We are continually tugging at them to get them a little further, and raiſe them up a little higher towards Heaven. And it is the great diſquietment of our Lives that we find theſe Hearts of ours ſo heartleſs and liſtleſs to what is Holy and Spiritual: But it will not be long e're we ſhall *reſt from this Labour*. We are now like Birds of heavy bodies, that are too weighty for their Wings, that when they would be ſoaring towards *Heaven*, can but run fluttering up and down upon the ſurface of the Earth: Yet theſe *Earthly Cloggs* ſhall ſhortly drop off, we ſhall be all Wing, free from that *dulneſs*, *diſtraction*, and *wearineſs* that now afflicts us: When your *Affections* ſhall be always intent, and not languiſhing, always *burning* and not *waſting*; and every motion of your Souls ſhall ſhoot themſelves to God as quick as *Lightning*, and yet as conſtant as the *Sun-beams*. You that are out-ſtript by the weakeſt Chriſtian here, ſhall there be able to keep pace with the *Angels* themſelves.

Secondly, *We ſhall reſt from the Labours we take with an averſe and oppoſite Heart.* There is that reluctancy in the Carnal Part to what is *Holy* and *Spiritual*, that we cannot bring our ſelves to the performance of Duty without much *Grief* and *Conflict*, the *Fleſh* luſting againſt the *Spirit*, and the *Spirit* againſt the *Fleſh*: And when God calls for Spiritual Thoughts and Holy Affections, the corruptions of our fleſhly Hearts ſend up noiſome Vapours that corrupt and infect the Good we do: This is that which makes the Work toylſome, but it ſhall not be long e're that which hinders ſhall be removed; and, though we are now under a ſad neceſſity of ſinning: So then we ſhall be under a bleſſed neceſſity of ſerving God, and find no more trouble therein than we do in thoſe Actions that we cannot but do. This is that Reſt which we ſhall ſhortly enjoy from the Turmoils and Vexations of this Life; a Reſt from the Sorrows and Sufferings of this Life; a Reſt from the Labours that a corrupt Heart puts us to.

Now, that this Reſt might not ſeem only to be a meer negative thing, a meer indolency

indolency and freedom from Pain and Labour, ſuch as a meer Beaſt enjoys, and far from being that conſummated Bleſſing which thoſe that *die in the Lord* enjoy, my Text ſubjoins, *their Works ſhall follow them.* Now, this may be underſtood firſt of the Works themſelves, *they follow* them to Heaven, and are there performed by them in Glory, the ſame Works end in Earth, and enter into Heaven with them: As they were performed here *weakly* and *imperfectly*, ſo there they ſhall be performed with a moſt abſolute perfection: Therefore whatever hath been ſpoken of this Reſt, it muſt not be underſtood as if the glorified *Saints* and *Angels* were unactive, and enjoyed in Heaven only a *long Vacation*, and lying down to *reſt upon ſweet flowry Banks* in pleaſant ſhadowy *Groves*, and without Fear and Care laughed away an *Eternity*. No, no, their Reſt is *operative*, they are continually bleſſing and praiſing of God, and aſcribing *Honour* and *Glory* to him that ſits upon the Throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever, continually beholding and admiring God, rejoycing in him, and in one another's mutual Happineſs. This is that Work of Heaven that ſhall never grow toylſome nor grievous to them.

II. *Their works ſhall follow them*; that is, the Reward of their Works. This is ſo great, *that neither Eye hath ſeen, nor Ear hath heard, neither hath it enter'd into the Heart of Man to conceive, what the Lord hath prepared for thoſe that Love him.* If *Paul* was now to Preach to you, and encourage you againſt the *Fear* of *Death*, from the conſideration of that Infinite Glory and Reward that is laid up for them after Death.

Poſſibly you would expect that he who had ſuffered a Tranſlation ſhould at his return make ſome relation of it, diſcovering to you what the *Riches* and *Glory* of that place was: And yet when he purpoſely relates this his Voyage in the *other World*, he tells us no more than this, That he *was caught up into Paradiſe, and that he heard Words unutterable, that it is not lawful for a Man to utter*, 2 Cor. 12. 4. to the 11. Verſe. It is ſo great, that it cannot be fully known till it be fully enjoyed.

The Scripture ſeems to labour for Expreſſions to ſet forth the *greatneſs* of it; it is called *a remaining Reſt, inacceſſible Light, freſh and overflowing Pleaſures, an incorruptible Inheritance, a Kingdom that cannot be ſhaken.* To ſpeak thus in general of that Heavenly Glory, would be more accommodate to the greatneſs of the *Subject*; but yet it would be more encouragement and ſatisfaction to treat of it in particular, ſo far as our *Conceptions* will reach to it. No this unſpeakable *Happineſs* doth *chiefly* conſiſt in theſe things.

Firſt, *In the immediate Viſion and Fruition of God, the Soul's chiefeſt and moſt ſatisfying good.* God is now to us the Spring-head of our Mercies and Comforts; but we lie below at the fall of the Spring, and draw Refreſhments from him, only through the Conduit-pipes of Providences and Ordinances, and live upon ſecond-hand Enjoyments: But in Heaven we ſhall lie cloſe to the Fountain it ſelf, and ſhall drink in *Divine Communications*, as they flow immediately from God, without having them deadened and flattened in the Conveyance. Now we behold God through a Glaſs darkly, in Heaven we *ſhall ſee him Face to Face, and know him as we are known.* And if it cauſeth now ſuch Raptures of Joy in us, when God ſometimes darts in but half a Glance of his Eye upon the Soul; O then, within what bounds can our Joy contain it ſelf, when we ſhall conſtantly fix our Eyes upon him, and ſtedfaſtly behold his Face, that Face from which the moſt *Glorious Angels*, as conſcious of their own unworthineſs to behold, do cover and veil their own? Now when God gives us ſome Glorious Diſcoveries of himſelf, we are ready to faint and melt down under them. Certainly in Heaven, when we ſhall lie under the Glorious Rays of the *Deity*, beating ſo fully upon us; It is ſo great, that there were no living there, did not the ſame God ſtrengthen as well as fill our Capacities. This is that *Beatifical Viſion* that *Heaven of Heavens*, that *Glory* wherein the *Angels* are ſatisfied in the ſight of; wherein God ſhall beſtow upon us a *clearer Eye* than that of *Faith*, and be always preſent with us in a nearer way than that of Comfort.

Secondly, *The Happineſs of Heaven conſiſteth in the Society that the Saints converſe with for ever:* And they are *Holy Angels*, and the *Spirits of juſt Men made perfect.* Here on Earth the *Angels* are given for our *Guardians*, in Heaven for our *Companions.* And though we are the *Adopted*, and they the *natural Children of God's great Family*, yet ſhall

ſhall they rejoyce with us, that we who were Strangers, are taken in to be Heirs with them of that Eſtate of which their rebellious Brethren were diſinherited. As for the *Glorified Saints*, what numerous Troops of *Apoſtles*, *Prophets*, and *holy Martyrs* ſhall we converſe with, and poſſibly know them all by Name? The *Diſciples* at the *Transfiguration* of Chriſt, knew *Moſes* and *Elias*, and poſſibly it was by Revelation; and ſo it may be in Heaven.

Thirdly, *The Happineſs of Heaven conſiſts in the work that we ſhall be there employed in to Eternity. Their Works ſhall follow them*, and they ſhall follow them as part of their Reward. Now on Earth we look upon the Works of Holineſs as our Task and Burthen, yet in Heaven we ſhall look upon them as our Joy. *Delight* ſprings only from two things, the one is the proportionableneſs of the *Object* to our *Capacities*; the other is the proportionableneſs of *Actions* to our *Faculties*. Now this proportion is the moſt exact in Heaven, therefore *there* is the chiefeſt Delight. Now in Heaven our *Capacities* ſhall become Heavenly and Spiritual, and therefore only ſpiritual and heavenly Objects ſuit with and delight our *Faculties*. It ſhall be then as natural to us to do the Will of God, as now it is to the moſt wicked Sinner to diſobey him: And indeed the *quality* of the Work that we ſhall there do, is ſuch as muſt needs affect us with infinite Delight. Here on Earth God calls a Chriſtian to the ſevere Duties of *Mortification*, *Self-denial*, and *taking up the Croſs*; but the Works of Heaven they are all ſmooth, conſiſting only in theſe two things, *Love*, and *expreſſion of Love and Praiſe*; this is the Work of Heaven. Here an *Angel* ſings to a *Saint*, and there a *Saint* to an *Angel*, *Bleſſing, and Honour, and Glory, and Power be to him that ſits on the Throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever*: All joining in one common Quire and heavenly Echoing, and ſinging *Hallelujahs* to Eternity.

Fourthly, *The Saints Happineſs conſiſts in that additional Glory that ſhall for ever reſt upon their Bodies.* And this ſhall certainly follow them, though God take a Day for the payment of it. This is it which makes them compleat; this they ſhall have alſo in the *Great Day*, as a reward of their Works. Now here, though the expectation of this Glory be much more comfortable than the enquiry into it can be certain; yet becauſe divers things are generally granted, and piouſly believed, I ſhall briefly propound them to you. The Glory of the *Body* in Heaven is held generally to conſiſt in theſe things:

1. In its *Integrity*.
2. *Spirituality* of it.

Firſt, *It ſhall be raiſed an entire perfect Body.* Every Member ſhall become ſuch as may be moſt ſerviceable to the uſe of the *Soul*, and as it may be moſt capable of the acceſs of Glory; and tho' many of them loſe their Offices, yet ſtill they retain their Places. When we ſhall be diſcharged from the Neceſſities of Life, our Members ſhall be diſcharged from thoſe troubleſom Offices, yet ſhall they not therefore ceaſe to be neceſſary, tho' they are diſcharged of their Offices, yet they are reſerved for the *Judge*'s Sentence; they ſhall be then free from all the conſequences of Sin, and from all the fore-runners of Death that here we are incident unto from all outward Decays, Aches, Weakneſſes, from Pain and Diſeaſes, Corruptions and Diſtempers; they are *ſown in Corruption, they are raiſed in Incorruption; they are ſown in Weakneſs, but they are raiſed in Power; ſown in Diſhonour, and raiſed in Glory*, 1 *Cor.* 15. latter end. And therefore as *Tertullian* ſpeaks, *If God ſhould not raiſe Men entire, then He ſhould not raiſe them up from the dead; for, if any part be not raiſed, we are as to that part ſtill dead.* And therefore God raiſeth them up entirely and fully from thoſe Decays we are here ſubject to.

Secondly, *The Glory of the Body conſiſts chiefly in its Spirituality.* Not that our Bodies ſhall be changed into ſpiritual Subſtances, but only they ſhall be endowed with ſpiritual Qualities, and they are three.

(1.) *The Bodies of the Saints in Heaven ſhall ſhine with a bright and dazling light; they ſhall ſhine as the brightneſs of the Firmament, and as the Stars, for ever and ever*, *Dan.* 12. 3. And this it's thought ſhall proceed from its approximation to God and immediate communion with him. As *Moſes*'s Face by long converſing with God did ſo ſhine, that the *Iſraelites* were dazled ſo, as they could not behold him. And partly this will be from the radiancy of the Soul's Glory, that being ſo great, will then diffuſe and ſpill its ſelf abroad upon the Body. A cheerful Heart makes

a cheerful Countenance; and truly a glorious Soul will put a Glory upon the Body alſo, which ſhall then be made more capable to receive every impreſſion from the Soul.

(2.) *The Body ſhall be endowed with Impaſſibility*, neither ſubject to Decays within, nor Injuries without; nor ſtand in any need of thoſe ſupports of Reſt, Sleep, and Food, whereby they are ſuſtained in Life.

Thirdly, *They ſhall be endowed with wonderful Agility*, moving to and fro, and they will command without any difficulty or wearineſs, poſſibly they ſhall be able to keep pace with the *Angels* themſelves in their motion: And indeed this Agility is but requiſite in ſo ſpacious a place as Heaven. Why now, if we add to theſe the regulation of the Affections, and the perfect operation of the Senſes, the corporal ſight of the Body of Jeſus Chriſt, which we may bodily approach, and with *Thomas* put our Hands into the print of the Nails, and our Fingers into his ſide, by this we may well conclude, that our Souls cannot well conceive what our Bodies ſhall be then.

Thus I have given you, as it were, a Map of the Heavenly *Canaan*: But as it is with other Maps, ſo it is here, every thing is repreſented much leſs, and far ſhort of what it is in reality; but it will be no great miſtake when we come to Heaven, if we find things far more and better than they were repreſented.

Uſe 1. If then they that die in the Lord have ſuch an ample Reward to follow them, *This ſhould firſt engage them to a holy Life.* Think you that thoſe which ſpend their time in lofty Vanity and impertinent ſinful Pleaſures in this World, can have any other but a doleful Cataſtrophe? What Works have they to follow them, but ſuch a will drag them down to Torments? Think you then that a parting Prayer, a ſlight *Lord have mercy*, when you are juſt going out of the World, that theſe will be judged enough to break through the numberleſs crowd of your Sins, and waft your Souls over into everlaſting Bleſſedneſs? Believe it, ſuch as have been your firſt, ſuch ſhall be your final ſtate. Hazard not therefore your precious and immortal Souls upon the treacherous Reſolutions of a *Sick-bed*; and think not that a charitable *Legacy* will compound with God for a ſinful Life. The way to Heaven will be ſo obſtructed by your former Guilt, that theſe your late Good Works cannot follow you: Then a Man reſigns up his Soul with confidence into the Hands of God; when he can reflect upon a well-ſpent Life, and appeal to God with *Hezekiah*, *Remember, O Lord, how I have walked before thee in truth and ſincerity, and done that which is righteous in thy ſight.* All other things will be but miſerable Comforts in a dying hour, and will then vaniſh and diſappear. The *Rich Man*'s Bags will not *follow* him to the Tribunal, to bribe his impartial Judge; nor the *Honourable Man*'s Greatneſs give him a more favourable Audience at the laſt Judgment: Nor ſhall the *Orator*'s Eloquence then *follow* him, to cover over a bad Cauſe; but he ſhall certainly miſcarry, if he hath not made ſure of a more powerful *Advocate* to plead for him.

Theſe things will leave the poor Soul in its *greateſt Agonies* and *Deſpare*, and then it will appear, That deſpiſed Holineſs and ſlighted Piety will be the only ſure Companions that will ſtick to us, even then, when Riches, and Learning, and all that is idoliz'd by the World, will prove nothing but Witneſſes of our Guilt and Condemnation.

Uſe 2. *This may comfort us againſt the Death of our Friends, whom we know lived by us piouſly and righteouſly*, deſiring to pleaſe God in all things, and teſtifying the truth and ſoundneſs of their Faith in Chriſt by their Good works. If ſuch *Men* be not *bleſſed*, then God created all Mankind to die accurſed; but if they be *bleſſed*, and bleſſed with *Eternal Reſt* and an *Unconceivable Reward*: What mean then theſe ſad Hearts and wet Eyes? What do theſe Tears evidence, but what you think them miſerable, or elſe your ſelves ſo? For their ſtate is ſo infinitely glorious, that they are perferred to be *Kings*, and *Favourites* of the *King of Kings*, where they *flow* in Pleaſures and Eternal Raptures, which they inceſſantly enjoy; and had you any intereſt in their advancement, it would change your Affections of Grief and Sorrow for them into ſweet Exultation and Admiration of their Joy and Triumph. Think you, that after they have taſted of thoſe *Rivers of Pleaſure at the right hand of God*, that ever they would be content to return to you again? Or that God ſhould condemn them to live longer in this World? And when you, who in their Life-time arteſted your love to them by the ſweet harmony and conſpiring of your Affections

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with theirs, mourning when they mourned, and rejoycing when they rejoyced; what a *Solecism of Friendship* is it for you to *weep* now, when they *sing* and *shout* for joy; and to have your Eyes *blubber'd* with Tears, when God hath *wiped away* all Tears from theirs? Is it your own Loss you lament, because they are taken from you, *with whom*, nay, *for whom* you would *willingly* have died, and given up your selves to the Death? Even this is but the effect of *Self-love*, and shews, that you are more concern'd in your own Contentment than in their Glory; and that you might enjoy them your selves, you would keep them from their near and intimate enjoyment of God. Can you not for a *while* dispense with their absence for their advantage, and make up the Comfort you want in their Presence, by the Comfort you have in the Assurance of their Happiness? What our Saviour saith to his *Disciples*, in *John* 14. 28. that may I say to you, *If you love them, you will rejoyce, because they are gone to their Father:* And this separation, by this absence of theirs, is but for a short time. Do you but tread the Paths of their Example, and follow their Tract, and as their Works went before them to Heaven, so yours shall follow you; *where* you shall rest from all your *Sorrows* and *Troubles*, *where* no *Affliction* nor *Discontentment* shall overcast your *perfect Joy*; *where* without fear of another separation you shall be satisfied in the enjoyment of one another, and all in the enjoyment of God.

I have *now* finished my *Text*, and I would finish my Discourse too, but that I should *much wrong the Gentleman* whose *Funeral Rites* we *now* Celebrate, should I let pass in silence those Vertues which God *endowed* him with, and *wrong* you too in with-holding so excellent a Pattern for your imitation. Doubtless his Converse among you *was with Moderation*, *Gravity*, and *Prudence*, which were so natural to him in all the passages of his Life, that they have imprinted on you so deep Characters, as will redeem his Name from Oblivion, and make it precious to you. In his younger Years his Employment called him beyond the Seas, *where* the Blessing of God *followed* him, where he did not exchange his Principles, nor barter *away* his good Education, but returned with his Mind untainted to his Friends, and improved both to their Joy and his own Profit. He reckoned himself but a *Steward* of that *Estate* which God blessed him with. His spiritual Eyes and Hands sought out the Necessities of others, to relieve them. Those Places of Trust that he was called to, he managed with singular Prudence and Faithfulness. The *Psalmist* gives us the Character of a Good Man, *Psal.* 110. *He guides his affairs with discretion.* Such a discreet Man was *he*, who laid his Business in such order and method, that though his Employments were many and weighty, yet they never became cumbersome nor unwieldy. And as for his *Relative Duties*, wherein the chief Glory of a Christian appears, these he performed *with* much tenderness, whether as an *Husband* or a *Father*. Indeed, the *whole course of his Life* was tempered with such *Sweetness*, *Meekness*, *Humility* and *Courtesie*, as being ready to do good to any, having nothing of *sowr reservedness*, but a *winningness of disposition*, whereby he gained as many Friends as necessary Employments gained him Acquaintance. His *Piety towards God*, which is the *Crown* of all other Excellencies, shined forth *with* a *mutal awe* and *reverence*, which possest his Heart *with* an affectionate seriousness, becoming that *awful sense* of God's Omniscience and Omnipresence, making it his Design in all things to please God. His last Sickness he underwent with Patience worthy a Christian: By his submission to the Hand of God, he evidenced the acknowledgment of his Soveraignty, whereby he might do with him *what* he pleased; and yet trusted in his Goodness, whereby he *knew* He would do with him *what was best* for him. Desirous he *was*, if the Lord saw good, to live longer. And he prayed, if possible, that the *bitter Cup* might pass from him. And indeed, the strongest Grace and clearest Assurance doth not oblige any to extirpate Natural Desires. St. *Paul* himself, who 2 *Cor.* 5. 4. was caught up into *Paradise*, and had a full discovery of the Heavenly Joy, yet *was loth* to be stript out of the Body, though he *was sure* to be cloathed immediately with the Robes of Life and Glory. When his Disease and Sickness encreased upon him, his chief Care was, to look, search, and examine his Evidences for Heaven, *which*, after some Scrutiny and Doubt, it produced, he at last acquired, to his *own Unspeakable Comfort*, and the *Satisfaction* of his Acquaintance, a sedate Joy: And then resigned up his Spirit into the Hands of the Lord, his Maker, and *now Rests from his Labours*, in that Eternal Rest, that Christ hath promised to such as wait for his Appearance.

SERMON XXIV.

Practical CHRISTIANITY, &c.

PHIL. ii. 12, 13.

Wherefore my Beloved, as ye have always Obeyed, not as in my Preſence only, but now much more in my Abſence; work out your own Salvation with Fear and Trembling.

For it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good Pleaſure.

Introduction. THE whole Sum of Chriſtianity is comprehended in two Points, in Knowledge, and in Obedience: The one is Converſant about things Supernaturally Revealed; and the other about Duties Supernaturally Performed. Now although there be ſo wide a difference between theſe two; yet where they are ſuffered to run on in a courſe, they will one fall into the other; and Goſpel Revelations will make way for, and lead unto Goſpel Obedience: Yea, indeed there is no Divine Truth, how Abſtracted, how Sublime and Speculative ſoever it may ſeem to be, but by the help of one or two Conſequences may be handed down along to clear and direct our Practice: And therefore the *Apoſtle* ſpeaking of the Whole of Chriſtian Religion, calls it, *The Myſtery of Godlineſs: And the Truth according to Godlineſs.* He calls it not a Myſtery and Godlineſs, or Truth and Godlineſs; but he knits and joyns them both together, the Myſtery and Truth of Godlineſs; a Truth, yea and a Truth wrapt up in a Myſtery, becauſe diſcovered only by a Divine Light; and yet a Myſtery of Godlineſs, becauſe it is a Truth that tends to incline the Will and raiſe the Affections, and ſo direct the Converſations of Men, unto Godlineſs and Obedience.

1 Tim. 3. 16. Titus 1. 1.

And thus alſo in this *Chapter*, after the *Apoſtle* had ſoared up very high in thoſe Tranſcendent Myſteries of Chriſt's *Godhead*, in the 6th *Verſe*, of his *Incarnation*, in the 7th *Verſe*, of his *Humiliation*, *Obedience* and *Paſſion* in the 8th *Verſe*, of his *Glory* and *Exaltation* above every thing both in Heaven and in the Earth and in Hell, 9th, 10th, and 11th *Verſe:* After he had thus ſoared aloft in theſe Tranſcendent Myſteries, he makes a ſudden deſent to the Exhortation in the Text, *Wherefore work your own Salvation with Fear and Trembling.*

Expoſition. This Illative Particle *wherefore* looks back as far as to the 5th *Verſe*. Where the *Apoſtle* Exhorts them, *that the ſame mind ſhould be in them that was in Chriſt Jeſus.* Who though he was Eſſentially Equal with God, yet Mediatorily became ſubject unto God: Though he was in the form of God, yet he took upon him the form of a Servant, laid aſide his Glory, emptied and humbled himſelf, and became Obedient even to the loweſt Duties and to the vileſt Sufferings, he was Obedient unto the Death: That is, He was Obedient to God's Law till Death, by fulfilling of it, and he was Obedient unto God's Will in Death, by ſuffering of it; for which Exinanition and Obedience, *God hath highly Exalted him, and given him a Name above every Name, that at the Name of Jeſus every Knee ſhould bow.* Now ſays the *Apoſtle*, be you alſo of the ſame Mind with Chriſt: Wherefore as he was Obedient, ſo be you alſo; do you *Work*, that is, Do you *Obey:* As he was humble, and emptied himſelf, be you alſo humble and lowly. *Work with Fear and Trembling*; That is, obey with Humility and Reverence, as the *Phraſe* imports and is often uſed in *Scripture:* That ſo as Chriſt obtained Glory and Exaltation, you alſo my be Exalted and Glorified with him. *Work out your own Salvation.* For theſe Words come in as a Parallel with Chriſt: As he was obedient, ſo be you; as he was humble and emptied himſelf, ſo be you alſo humble; that ſo when he is Glori-

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fied, you may be Saved. *Wherefore, work out your own Salvation with Fear and Trembling.* And this I judge to be the *Apoſtle*'s ſcope in drawing this Concluſion.

In the Words, you have three Parts.

The Diviſion of the Words.

I. *Firſt*, A Duty preſſed upon us by a moſt ſerious and rational Exhortation; *Wherefore, Work out your own Salvation.*

II. *Secondly*, An expreſs way and manner how it is to be performed, and that is, *With Fear and Trembling.*

III. *Thirdly*, Here is the Reaſon of this Exhortation, *For it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleaſure.*

I. *Firſt*, Here is a Duty preſſed upon us, and that is, *To Work out our own Salvation.* To explain the Words a little:

What Salvation is.

1. *Firſt*, For *Salvation*, you may take it for the whole ſupernatural State of a Chriſtian, begun here in Grace, and to be finiſhed hereafter in Glory. And,

What it is to work out Salvation. What it implies. Pains and Labour.

2. *Secondly*, *To Work out this Salvation*, is nothing but to continue and perſevere in ways of Obedience, until through them, that *Salvation* that is begun here on Earth, be perfected in Heaven. *To Work out our Salvation*, therefore, implies three things.

(1.) *Firſt*, Pains and Labour. *Salvation* is that which muſt be wrought out; it is that which will make the Soul pant and breath, yea, run down with Sweat to obtain it.

Diligence and Conſtancy.

(2.) *Secondly*, It Implies Conſtancy and Diligence. A Chriſtian that would work out *Salvation*, muſt always be imployed about it. It is a Webb into which we muſt weave the whole Thread of our Lives. That Man that works at Salvation only by ſome paſſionate fits, and then within a while undoes it all again by foul Apoſtacy, and Notorious Sins, that Man will never work Salvation out. No, it muſt be Diligence and Conſtancy that muſt effect that.

Succeſs.

(3.) *Thirdly*, It promiſes Succeſs and Accompliſhment alſo: And this is a mighty encouragement to enforce the Exhortation. Though the Work be difficult, our Strength little, the Enemies many, and the Oppoſitions powerful; yet continue working, your Labour ſhall not be in Vain; though it be hard work, it ſhall not be long work; for it ſhall be wrought out, and what before was your Work, ſhall be your Reward; and what before was your Labour, ſhall be your Wages. And this *Salvation* that was ſo painful in working ſhall be moſt bleſſed in the Enjoyment.

II. *Secondly*, Here is the expreſs way and manner how this Work ſhould be done, and that is, *With Fear and Trembling. Work out your own Salvation with Fear and Trembling.* Now this *Fear*, is not to be taken for a Fear of Diffidence, Perturbation or Deſpondency; for this is ſo contrary to the Duty of working out Salvation, as that it only ſtupifies and dulls us: And as in other matters, ſo in Spirituals, it hinders both Counſels and Performances. But this *Fear and Trembling*, that muſt qualify our Obedience, is nothing elſe, but an humble Self-Reſignation, Self-Denial, and a Holy awe and reverence of God, with which Humility and Reverence, the higheſt degree of ſpiritual Joy and Aſſurance is ſo far from being inconſiſtent, that it uſually ſprings from it, and is built upon it. This now is meant by *Fear and Trembling*, and ſo the Phraſe is often uſed in *Scripture.* So the Pſalmiſt, *Serve the Lord with Fear, and rejoyce with Trembling.* It is not meant of any deſponding diffident Fear, but only of an awful reverential Fear of God, joyned with Self-abaſement. And ſo St. *Paul* to the *Corinthians*, ſays of Titus, *That he was received with Fear and Trembling.* There was no Reaſon why *Titus*'s coming ſhould cauſe Fear and Trembling, which was ſo much deſired: Only the meaning is, they received him with Fear and Reverence. And ſo *Servants* are Commanded to be *Obedient unto their Maſters:* So here, *Work out your own Salvation with Fear and Trembling:* That is, Work it out with Humility, Self-Abaſement and Reverence.

Pſal. 2. 12.

2 Cor. 7. 15.

Eph. 6. 5.

III. *Thirdly*, Here is the Reaſon of this Exhortation; *For it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of his good Pleaſure.* Wherein now lies the Strength of the Reaſon? Poſſibly it might ſeem rather to a Carnal Judgment, an incouragement to Sloath, than an incouragement to Working and Obedience. For if God work in us both the Will and the Deed; What need we then be ſo ſolicitous about the accompliſhment of our Salvation, which not ſo much we our ſelves, as God works out for us? It would rather ſeem to be a greater Motive for us to

work, if the *Apostle* had said, God will not assist you, and therefore look to your selves. But yet there are two ways without torturing the Words, whereby we may make them confess wherein their great Strength lies. The one is by reducing this Reason to the Duty. And the other is by referring it to the manner of Performing of the Duty.

(1.) *First*, If we refer it to the Duty of working out Salvation, then the Force and Strength of it lies in the Consideration of that Aid and Assistance that God by working in us affords us, to the working out of our own Salvation. Work? *Why,*

Object. *Alas may some say, How can we work? Are not the Duties of Obedience Divine and Supernatural? And is it not an Almighty Power alone that can inable us to do what is Supernatural? Are we omnipotent? Doth not God herein plainly seek Advantages against us, in biding us thus to Work, who have no Hands, nor Strength to Work with?*

Answer. No, by no means, for what God Commands us to do, he will assist us in the doing of it. And though Obedience be Supernatural, and we are Weak and Impotent, yet God is Omnipotent: Work therefore, for this Omnipotent God works in you, both to Will and to Do. And thus appears the force of the Reason, if you apply it to the Duty. Now if you thus refer it, then Observe,

That all Ability in, and all Incouragement to Obedience proceeds from God's working in us what he requireth from us. And thus as Christ said, my Father worketh hitherto, and I work: So may a Weak Christian say, what I do, is above my own Strength indeed; but my God and my Father worketh hitherto in me, and therefore it is that I am inabled thus to work.

(2.) *Secondly*, If we refer this Reason to the manner of performing of Obedience, that it must be *with Fear and Trembling*, as if the Exhortation run thus, Be humble and awful in your Obedience, *For it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do*, and then it carries a double force with it.

First, That the due Consideration of God's working in us, is the greatest inducement imaginable to a Self-debasing Humiliation. There is nothing that will sooner take down Pharisaical Pride and Boasting, than sometimes to be Catechising our selves with those two or three Questions and Interrogatories of the *Apostle*; *Who made thee to differ? What hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou hast received it, Why dost thou Boast as if thou hadst not received it?* 2 *Cor.* 13. 7. Why dost thou Boast and Glory, O vain weak Man, when all thou hast and all thou dost is from God's free and arbitrary working in thee? Alass, there is nothing of all thy Graces or Duties to be ascribed unto thy self, unless it be the Imperfections and Weaknesses of them. And this should cause us when we are most strongly carried out in the ways of God, and in the Duties of Holy Obedience, most of all to renounce our selves, and our own sufficiency; and look upon it as an evident Argument that of our selves we are able to do nothing, because through God we are inabled to do so much, yea, to do all things.

Secondly, Since all we do is wrought in us by God, this should cause us to obey with a Holy Fear and Reverence, lest by our Miscarriages we should provoke God to withdraw from us, on whom depends all the Ability and Power we have to obey: *It is God that worketh in you, and therefore work out your own Salvation with Fear and Trembling.*

This now shall suffice for the opening and explaining of the Words. That which I shall press upon all, is the Duty of this Exhortation of the *Apostle*. And the Proposition I shall lay down from them, is this,

Doctrine. *That it is the Duty of every true Christian to work out his own Salvation with Fear and Trembling.* Or thus,

Every Christian, nay every Man ought to work for his Living, even for an Eternal Life.

To mention places for the proof of this were to transcribe the *Bible*; we can no where open this *Blessed Book* but we find this Truth proved to us, either directly, or by consequence, for it is the very Genius of the *Scripture*. And yet it is strange in these Days to see how dubiously some Men (who would be thought admirers of Free Grace) speak of obedience and working, as if it were the brand of a legal Spirit, and as great a Stranger to a Christian's Warrant, as it is to their practice. Oh it is a soft and easie *Doctrine* to bid Men sit still and believe (as if God would Translate Men to Heaven upon their Couches,) to tell them that all

that

that they have now to do, is but to labour for more aſſurance, to Praiſe God, and to Sing Hallelujahs unto him. And ſo alſo it conduces much to their abundant Comfort; does it not? To tell them, that God ſees no Sin in them, nor requires any Duty from them? That Repentance and Humiliation are legal things belonging only to younger Perſons, and not to the Heirs of the Promiſes? Oh! Who could think it poſſible that ſuch Dreams and Fantaſtick Deluſions could poſſeſs ſo many Mens Hearts that ever heard the *Scripture* ſpeak in its own Language, or that ever read what *Chriſt* himſelf, the *Holy Ghoſt*, or the Bleſſed *Apoſtles* have written, who bid us *to work the works of God*? To give all Diligence, to abound in all the Fruits of *Righteouſneſs*? Is it poſſible that theſe Notions ſhould be diſperſed by ſome, and entertained by others, but becauſe it always hath been the policy of the *Devil*, wherein he hath ſped ſo well, ſtill to vent thoſe Doctrines that indulge the Fleſh, under the Name and Patronage of *Free Grace* and *Goſpel Attainments*? But of this more hereafter. Let us now conſider the *Reaſons* of this Truth. And,

Firſt, Wherefore is it that we are commanded, to ſtrive that we may enter in at the ſtrait Gate? So to run that we may Obtain? So to wreſtle that we may be able to Stand? So to Fight that we may lay hold on Eternal Life? Not to faint in our Minds? Nor to grow weary of well doing? Do not all theſe Expreſſions imply great labour and pains? Can you ſtrive, and run, and wreſtle and fight, and all this by doing nothing? Or were it needful to be taught not to grow Faint, nor to be weary, when we have no work to do? Therefore it is the genius and ſum of the *Scripture* to excite Men to be always active and laborious in the ways of Holineſs and Obedience. *Reaſon* 1. Luke 13. 24. 1 Cor. 9. 22. Epheſ. 6. 11, 12. 1 Tim. 6. 12. Heb. 12. 3. Gal. 6. 5.

Secondly, Conſider, wherefore is it that Salvation is ſet forth to us under the notion of a Reward; is it not to imply that we muſt work for it? A Reward not indeed merited by our works; but yet a Reward meaſured out to us, and conferred upon us, according to our works; *God will render to every one according to his works; to them who by patient continuance in well doing, ſeek for Glory and Immortality, he will render Eternal Life.* And indeed it were very ſtrange, if that God, who will reward us with Eternal Life, according to our works, ſhould yet lay a check upon the ingenuity of the new Creature, thereby to account Eternal Life too low a Motive to excite unto Eternal Life. *Reaſon* 2. Rom. 2. 6, 7.

Thirdly, Conſider, is it not to this end, that God hath implanted ſuch an Active Principle of Grace in the Hearts of his Servants, that thereby they might be inabled to work out their own Salvation? If God would ſave you without working, why then hath he given you ſuch an operative Principle that you might work? Nay, I might affirm it, he might as well *Save* you without *Grace*, as without *Works*; for that is not *Grace* that doth not put forth it ſelf in *working*. *Grace* if it be true it will be *working*, it will riſe in the *Thoughts*, it will work in the *Affections*, it will breath in *Deſires*, appear in good *Works*, and be very active and buſie in the whole *Life* and *Converſation*. Now not to work, is that which puts a check and reſtraint upon this active Principle; it is to curb it in, when it would freely break forth into Action upon every occaſion given to it. *Reaſon* 3.

Fourthly, Why hath God ſo often promiſed us Aſſiſtance, if it be not that thereby we ſhould be incouraged to work? He ſtands by us to confirm our Hearts, to ſtrengthen our Hands, to help our Weakneſs, to quicken our Deadneſs, to recruit our Graces by continual Supplies; and wherefore is all this but that we might work? God rather than we ſhall not work, he himſelf will ſet us at work; nay, he will maintain us at our work, and in our work upon his own coſt. He gives us Aid, and promiſes Aſſiſtance only for this end, that we might work out our own Salvation. *We are not ſufficient of our ſelves*, ſays the Apoſtle, *as of our ſelves to think any thing*: What then? Muſt we therefore ſit ſtill, becauſe we are not ſufficient? No, ſays he, for God who finds us Imployment, will alſo find us Strength; *our ſufficiency is of God*: And therefore it is that God gives in Aſſiſtances and Supplies, that we might work the Works of God. *Reaſon* 4. 2 Cor. 3. 5.

And thus I have confirmed the *Doctrine*, why we ought to work, and that we ought to work.

But here, before I can proceed any further, there are ſome *Objections* that muſt be *anſwered*, that ſeem to oppoſe the Truth of this Doctrine.

Firſt,

Obj. 1. First, *Some may cavil against this Command of working out of our Salvation, as a thing impossible.*

Obj. 2. Secondly, *As derogatory unto Christ and his Merits.*

Obj. 3. Thirdly, *Others, as prejudicial to the Free Grace of God, by which alone we are saved, and not by our own Works.*

Obj. 4. Fourthly, *Others look upon it as vain and needless, since God will certainly bring to salvation all those whom he hath Elected and fore-known according to his purpose; which purpose of his, neither their not working with it, no nor their working against it, shall ever make void or frustrate.*

Obj. 1. I begin with the First: *Say some, with what Justice and Equity can God require this Duty of working out of our Salvation, when he knows we have no power to perform it? Either say they, it concerns those that are spiritually inclined and have their Salvation already begun, that they perfect it by working of it out; and if so, alas to what purpose is it, when they themselves can act no further than they are acted? They cannot so much as Will their own Salvation unless God give them to Will; much less then can they work out their Salvation: Or else it concerns all that live under the sound of the Gospel, though Reprobates and Cast-ways, though dead in Trespasses and Sins. And is it rational, is it just and equal to bid dead Men work? Or doth it become that God, who would be thought by us to be infinitely merciful and compassionate, to mock and deride humane Miseries, in requiring of them things that are impossible? Had he commanded us to bring Light out of Darkness: Had he bid us pull the Stars out of their Orbs, or with one of our Hands to stop the Sun in its course; All these Impossibilities we might as well do, as perform these divine Duties, without divine Assistance; we can as soon glorify our selves as sanctify our selves. Exhort and command never so long, with as great Authority and Vehemency as you please, yet till God move on us and work in us, you may as well expect Stocks and Stones should move at your speaking as we. And if God doth but once begin to move and work in us, we shall work and move without your Exhortations. It is therefore* (say such as these) *altogether in vain to press Men to Duty till God works in them; for all your Exhortations are not sufficient till he works; and when he works, all your Exhortations will be fruitless.*

To this I *Answer*, and because it is the common Plea of Sinners why they do not work, and it is that which questionless doth too often rise in the Hearts and Thoughts of most Men, whereby they are greatly discouraged, and their Hands weakned in their Obedience: I shall, therefore the more largely and particularly *Answer* this *Objection*. And,

Answ. 1. *First*, This serious and pressing Exhortation to Obedience and Working, doth not suppose in us, nor is it necessary that it should suppose in us a Power to obey, I mean it of a present and actual Power; neither doth our want of Power take off our Obligation to obey. It may and will be granted, that there is no Command of God, but doth suppose a Power once bestowed. Whether or no his absolute uncontroulable Sovereignty might have required that from us that is above our Power ever to perform, may rather modestly be doubted, than peremptorily concluded: Yet this is certain, that those very Duties that now we complain we have no Strength and Power to perform, were once as subject to our Power and the Freedom of our own Wills, as now natural and moral Actions are: Subject (I say) to our Power, either to perform them, or not to perform them; not as though we came now into the World with this Power, for we are all dead and stillborn in respect of Grace; but as having this Power in our *first Parent* who was our *Representative*, for in him we must be consider'd as existent even when he existed; and what he received, it was for us, and what he did was done by us, and what he lost we lost in him. Now if we have lost this Power of Obeying, must God also lose his Privilege and Sovereignty of Commanding? Must he lessen his Authority, as we lessen our Ability? Truly had *Adam* once thought of this slight, he might have sinn'd himself quite from under the command and dominion of his Creator, and might soon have become thus free. Do not you your selves think you may, if a *Debter* of yours through his own default becomes a *Bankrupt*, require your *Debt* of him? So stands the Case here between God and us; we are all disabled to pay the *Debt* of Obedience that we owe to God, but yet it is through our own default; and the Power that we had, is not so much lost, as wilfully thrown away; and may not God justly come upon us for our *Debt?* Our want of Power takes not off our obligation to Obedience, because it is through a wilful defect that we are deprived of

of that Power. If a Servant throw away his *Tools* with which he ſhould work, may not his Maſter juſtly expect his Work from him, though he knows he cannot work without them? God's Commands reſpect not the Impotency that we have contracted, nor do they therefore abate any thing of their Severity; but they reſpect that Power and Ability that was once conferred and beſtowed upon us: Yea, were it ſo that God could with *Juſtice* require no more from us than what at preſent we have Power and Ability to perform, this would make the Grace of God, *Firſt*, Vain and Fruitleſs; and, *Secondly*, Dangerous and Deſtructive.

(1.) *Firſt*, *This would make void the pardoning Grace of God:* For according to this Doctrine, nothing could be required of us if we could do nothing; but without Grace we can do nothing, and therefore if Grace be not beſtowed on us, nothing can juſtly be required from us, and if nothing be required nothing is due from us, and then we do not ſin in not performing any thing; and where there is no ſin, certainly there can be no place for pardoning Grace and Mercy. And ſo theſe wiſe Men, who think they do ſo much befriend the Grace and Mercy of God in all haſte, in affirming that God requires nothing from us, but what at preſent we have Power to perform, are injurious to the Mercy of God in making of it void as to Pardon and Remiſſion.

(2.) *Secondly*, This Doctrine *makes the ſanctifying Grace of God deſtructive and pernicious.* If God can require juſtly no more of us than we can perform, wherefore is it that Men are juſtly damned? Is it not becauſe they will not do what they are able to do? And whence is it that they have this Ability? Is it not from the Grace of God's Spirit? And therefore if they have not Grace to make them able to do more than their own corrupt Wills are willing to do, God could not juſtly condemn them, and conſequently that of the *Apoſtle* ſhould ſtand no longer true, *Through Grace ye are ſaved*, but through Grace ye periſh. Theſe *two Conſequences* will follow, if God could juſtly require no more from us than what we have Power now to do. So that though we have not Power and Ability to work out our own Salvation, yet we are not thereby excuſed from our Obligation to do it. But, Eph. 2. 5.

Secondly, Though we cannot of our ſelves work out our own Salvation, *Yet God doth not mock us, as ſome do thence infer, neither doth he only upbraid us with our own Weakneſs; but hath ſerious and weighty ends why he Commands us to Obey.* Thoſe that are ſo ready to caſt this *Odium* upon the Doctrine of Special Grace, making God a derider of Humane Frailty and Miſeries, when he Commands Obedience from them, to whom *(ſay they)* himſelf denies that Power and Grace that ſhould inable them to obey; I would only ask theſe Perſons this *Queſtion*, Whether do they grant, or whether or no can they deny, that God antecedently before he Commands, knows who will obey and who will not obey? If they ſay God knows who will not obey; will they ſay God mocks them when he Commands them to obey, though he knows they will not? What they *Anſwer* to this, the ſame may we *Anſwer* to their *Objection.* *Anſw.* 2.

But now there are *two Ends* why God Commands us thus to work, though we are not able, according to which God is very ſerious in commanding us thus to work. And God doth this,

(1.) *Firſt*, That he may hereby convince us of our own Weakneſs, and that wretched Eſtate into which our Sins have brought us; that he might humble and abaſe us when we reflect how far we are fallen from our firſt Perfection and Excellency. When we conſider on the one Hand that God requires nothing from us now, but what we once had a Power to perform; and then on the other Hand conſider how little, yea, how much of that nothing it is that now we have Power to perform; this convinces us how miſerably great our Fall is, that makes thoſe things impoſſible to us, that once were both eaſie and delightful.

(2.) *Secondly*, God loves to deal with Men as with rational Creatures, that have free Faculties, capable of moral Influences, fit Subjects to be wrought upon by Precepts, Counſels, Commands and Exhortations, as well as by Internal and Efficacious Grace; that Arguments and Motives may perſwade without, as Grace ſways within; that ſo by both he might render them a willing People in the Day of his Power. And therefore they are not in vain, neither to thoſe that ſhall be Saved, nor to thoſe that Periſh.

(1.) *Firſt*,

(1.) *Firſt*, To thoſe that ſhall be ſaved, theſe are the Inſtruments which the Spirit of God makes uſe of to incline their Wills and conquer their Affections into the Obedience of Chriſt, and therefore they are not in vain. In converſion ordinarily, if not always, the *Moral* work goes before the *Phyſical*. That is, there is, firſt the rational Perſuaſion, before there is the efficacious and determining Motion: For God when he works on Man, he accommodates himſelf ſuitable to the Nature of Man; that as he is a Creature, ſo he may be and is the Subject of God's efficacious Motions; and as he is Rational, ſo he may be guided by Counſels, lead by Perſuaſions, over-awed by Convictions; and therefore when God Converts any, he takes both theſe ways, inwardly he works by effectual Grace, powerfully ſubduing the Will as a Creature ſubject unto it; and outwardly he works by moral Suaſions, and Authoritative Commands, whereby he inclines the Will ſweetly and freely to conſent to the Power of that inward Grace, which indeed he ſhall never, nay indeed he cannot reſiſt; and both theſe together do concur (as I ſaid before) to make a willing People in the Day of God's Power. And,

(2.) *Secondly*, For thoſe that Periſh, theſe Commands have a double end and uſe.

(1.) *Firſt*, They are Inſtruments in the Hand of the common work of the Spirit of God, to raiſe them up to all thoſe moral good things that they attain to, ſhort of true and ſaving Grace. It is Wonderful truly to ſee how the raging Wickedneſs of the World is dared by a Command charged with a Threatning. *Herod* heard *John Baptiſt*, who doubtleſs laid the Law home to him, ſo that he did many things. *Abimelech* and *Laban* were warned in a Dream, whereby God over-ruled and prevented that Wickedneſs that was intended by them. Were they compelled to what they did? No, God loves to rule the World in a rational way; ſo that though he acts and moves wicked Men to that good that they do, yet he doth it by moral Conſiderations, and ſuch Inducements as do moſt comport and ſuit with the Liberty of their own Will: Promiſes incourage, Threatnings deter, Counſels direct, Commands inforce, and all theſe concur inſtrumentally to awe the Conſciences, and to incline the Wills even of wicked Men themſelves. Whoſe Conſcience can gainſay this? Let the vileſt Sinner freely ſpeak, when he hath been moſt mad and wild upon his Luſts, hath not oftentimes ſome Command or Threatning ſuddenly ſhot it ſelf in betwixt his Conſcience and Sin? Hath not two or three weak Words ſilently whiſpered to him, whence or from whom he knows not, ſtopt his way and given a Check to his Luſt, when it was ſwelling ready to break forth into Act? And whence have they this Power? It is not from themſelves; for why then doth it not always ſo *work?* But it is from God's Inward and *Phyſical*, tho' but common *Work*, that when the Affections are moſt furious, and Corruption moſt raging, will effectually perſuade to reſtrain and aſſwage.

(2.) *Secondly*, Another End is, hereby God leaves them without Excuſe: If they periſh they ſhall have nothing to pretend againſt God. Hath he not often warned, and counſelled and threatned them? Hath he not told them, with as much earneſtneſs and vehemency as the words of his Miniſters could deliver it, *That the wages of ſin is Death*, and the end of thoſe ways wherein they walk will be Shame and Eternal Deſtruction? Have they not with all Seriouſneſs and Entreaties been called upon again and again to *repent and turn* from the unfruitful Works of Darkneſs, and to work the Works of God? Can the Mouth of God or Man ſpeak plainer, when they have been calling and crying after any, *Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?* This is that which from our Souls we do beſeech and intreat at the Hands of Sinners, even for the Blood and Bowels of Jeſus Chriſt; nay, for the Blood and Bowels of their own precious Souls, which they are wilfully ſpilling upon the Ground, that they would *turn and live.* Now there is not one that hears this ſerious Obteſtation and is not obedient to it, but his Blood, even the Blood of his Soul, will lie upon him for ever. What is it that Men expect? Muſt God drive Men to Heaven by force and violence, whether they will or no? He hath laid Promiſes and Threatnings before them, he Exhorts and Commands: And if theſe things will not prevail with Men whoſe Faculties are intire, whoſe Reaſon is ſound, and whoſe Wills are free; Think not fooliſhly to charge God, for he is free from the Blood of all Men, and Sinners will be found to be Self-murderers and Self-deſtroyers. *If I had not come and ſpoken*

unto

unto them, ſays our Saviour, *they had then had no ſin, but now they have no cloak for their ſin.* So if God had not come and ſpoken unto Sinners, they had neither had Sin nor Condemnation; but now that he hath ſpoken to them ſo often, and exhorted them ſo frequently and earneſtly, therefore, *now they have no cloak for their ſin.* God hath ſpoken, and his ſpeaking will ſtrike every impeninent Wretch dumb and ſilent at the great Day, whatever they pretend to now. And this is a *ſecond Particular* in *Anſwer* to this *Objection*, God doth not mock Mens Weakneſs when he commands them to work, but hath great, wiſe and weighty Ends why he doth it.

Thirdly, To come ſomewhat nearer: There is indeed no ſuch Impotency and Weakneſs in Man, but if he will he may work out his own Salvation. I ſpeak not this to aſſert the power of Man to work out Savation without the Aid of ſpecial Grace, to incline the Will; but if the Will be once inclined and made willing, there is nothing more required to make a Man able; I ſay, where there is ſpecial Grace given to make the Will willing to convert, to believe and to repent, there is nothing more required to make a Man able; becauſe Converſion, Faith and Repentance chiefly conſiſt in the Act of the Will it ſelf; now if the Will wills Repentance, it doth repent; if it wills Faith, it doth believe; and ſo of the reſt: And therefore there is nothing more required to make a Man able than what he hath in a ſtate of un-regeneracy; only to make him willing is required ſpecial Grace, which they that favour the undue liberty of the Will do deny. And therefore, God expoſtulates with the ſtubbornneſs of the Will, *Why will you periſh, why will you die?* And Chriſt accuſeth the Will, *You will not come unto me that you may have Life.* It is true there is an impotency in the Will, but this is only its ſtubbornneſs and obſtinacy; it will not hearken to God's Call, it will not obey his Commands, it will not ſtrive againſt Sin nor perform Duties, and therefore it cannot. Our Cannot is not indeed an impotency that we lie under ſo much, as ſtubbornneſs of our *Wills*. There is not the greateſt Sinner, who hath wrought Iniquity with both Hands greedily, but may work out his own Salvation if he will; *if he be but once willing*, he hath that already that may make him able; God puts no new Powers into the Soul when he converts it. It is true, the Will cannot incline it ſelf to Obedience without Grace, but yet it can intend it if it will; it is its ſtubbornneſs that makes it impotent. It is in the things of Grace, as in other free Actions of a Man's Life with a proportionable abatement: A Man can Speak and Walk if he will, but if he be reſolutely ſet not to do theſe things, he cannot do them ſo long as that Reſolution remains, though ſimply and abſolutely he can do them; doth this argue any impotency? So is it here, you may obey and work if you will; but if you are reſolutely bent againſt theſe, if you are reſolved not to do them, while that Reſolution continues you cannot do them; but this argues not any natural impotency, but a moral impotency only; this is an impotency of Stubbornneſs and Perverſneſs. Never therefore plead the inability of your Will, no it is through your own ſtubborn Reſolution if you periſh; you are reſolved for Hell and Deſtruction, and if you are plunged into them, it is through your own Wilfulneſs, and not through Weakneſs. *Anſw.* 3. Ezek. Joh. 5.40.

Fourthly, To come yet a little nearer to Conſcience and Practice: Theſe very Men that thus make their impotency a pretence for their Sloth, they do not indeed believe what they pretend and aſſert here; they do not believe that they are thus impotent, no it is in the inward and ſecret Thoughts of them all that they have a Power to work out their own Salvation; and therefore whether they have or have not Power, yet ſtill they are inexcuſable, if while they think they have Power, yet they will not ſtrive and endeavour to put it forth. Thoſe Men who thus plead impotency and want of power to Obey and work out their Salvation, though they ſpeak theſe things, yet they believe not a word of what they ſay, and therefore they are inexcuſable, if they ſtrive not to put forth that Power that they ſuppoſe they have into Act. Although a Man's Feet be chain'd and fetter'd that he cannot walk nor ſtir, yet if he thinks himſelf at Liberty, and yet will ſit ſtill, judge you whether the Fault be not wholly to be imputed to his want of Will, and not to his want of Power; for he thinks himſelf free and able to move, but will not try. So is it here; wicked Men do think they have Power to Work, however they ſpeak otherwiſe ſometimes, and therefore they are utterly inexcuſable if they do not Work; this is as clear as the Light, and their Sloth- *Anſw.* 4.

fulneſs therefore proceeds not from their Weakneſs, but from their Wilfulneſs. And I ſhall endeavour by ſome Arguments to convince Sinners, that they do indeed think and believe that they have this Power to work out their own Salvation, whatever they may pretend to, and therefore they are inexcuſable if they do not ſtrive and endeavour for to do it. And,

(1.) *Firſt*, Did you never, when God hath ſhaken his Rod over you, promiſe and reſolve to work? By his Rod, I mean either ſome Convictions or Afflictions; have not theſe made you to enter into Ingagements with God that you would obey him, and walk more holily and ſtrictly for the future? And did you not really thus reſolve to do? Few, I believe, there are but have ſome time or other, under ſome Fit of Sickneſs or ſome pang of Conſcience, thus done. And what, did you reſolve all this, and yet at the ſame time think and believe you could do nothing at all? Did you only mock God? Did you only dally and play with your own Conſciences? No, certainly, Conſcience was too much provoked, too much inraged, and too broad awaken'd to be ſo jeſted withal. We find this very Temper in the *Iſraelites*, when they were affrighted with the terrible Voice of God from *Mount Sinai* in the 5th of *Deuteronomy*. See how confidently under that Conviction, they promiſed and reſolved, *Speak thou unto us what the Lord our God ſhall ſay unto thee, and we will do it.* And ſo the *Jews* alſo, when they were in great Diſtreſs and Calamity, when the Whip and the Rod was over them then they take up large Reſolutions, and make great Promiſes what they will be and do, *Whether it be good or whether it be evil*, ſay they, *we will obey the voice of the Lord our God.* And oh! how many pious Purpoſes and holy Reſolutions have the Dangers, Fears and ſick Beds of many Men been Witneſſes unto? Have they not heard Sinners cry out, *Lord, ſpare a little, give us ſome ſpace, try us once more, Lord, and we will reform our ſinful Lives, and perform neglected Duties; never more will return to Folly.* And are not theſe Reſolutions and Promiſes evident Convictions, that you thought you had Power to do what you thus reſolved to do? Who is there but hath ſome time or other, under ſome Trouble and Affliction, taken up ſuch Reſolutions of Obedience as theſe? And certainly you dare not ſo much mock God, and dally with your own Conſciences under ſuch Convictions, as to make ſuch Promiſes, but that you think you can perform what you promiſe. And that is one Argument.

Deut. 5. 27.

Jer. 42. 2.

(2.) *Secondly*, Did you never in your whole lives perform a Duty to God? Did you never pray to him? Are there any ſo deſperately Prophane, ſo utterly loſt as to any ſhews and appearances of Goodneſs, as not to have prayed or performed one Duty unto God in his whole Life? Why now to what end have you prayed and performed theſe Duties that you have done? Was it not for Salvation? And did you work for Salvation and at the ſame time believe you could not work? No, this is impoſſible that ever any Man's Practice ſhould maintain ſuch a contradiction. What ever Mens Opinions are, yet their Works ſhew that they think they have Power; for ſomething muſt be done, though it be but formally, though but a ſlight, cold, heartleſs, *Lord, have Mercy on me*, or a cuſtomary, *Lord, forgive me*; yet ſomething Conſcience requires, and this Men reckon and account the working out Salvation.

(3.) *Thirdly*, Wherefore is it that you truſt to and rely upon your Works, if indeed you think you have no Power to work out your own Salvation by them? Would it be ſo hard and difficult to take Men off from leaning too much upon their Works, if they did not believe they had a Power to work out their own Salvation by them? Men do apprehend ſome worth, ſome value and ſufficiency in what themſelves do in order to Eternity. For, bid them forego and renounce their own Works, their own Righteouſneſs; this is a hard ſaying, and they can as eaſily renounce and forego all Hopes of Happineſs and Salvation, as renounce their own Works. Now whence is it that Men are ſo difficultly brought unto the renouncing their own Works? Why, it is becauſe by them they Hope to obtain Salvation. And can there be ſuch a Principle in Men, and yet at the ſame time believe and think that they cannot work out their own Salvation? It is very evident therefore, whatever Notions Men may take up to ſtop the Mouth of a clamorous Conſcience when it calls them to working and labouring, yet they do not themſelves believe what they ſay concerning their impotency, but do really think they have a Power to work out their own Salvation.

(4.) *Fourthly*, Did you never when the Spirit of God hath been dealing with your

your Hearts and Conſciences, when it hath been perſuading you to enter upon a Courſe of Obedience, did you never procraſtinate and uſe Delays? Did you never ſtifle the Breathings, and reſiſt the Motions of the Holy Spirit, thinking it time enough to do what it puts you upon hereafter? *What need I begin ſo ſoon to vex Fleſh and Blood? What, deny the Pleaſures of my Life as ſoon as I come to reliſh and taſte them? When Sickneſs and grey Hairs admoniſh me, and tell me I am near Eternity; when old Age promiſeth me, that the ſeverity and ſtrictneſs of Religion ſhall not laſt long to trouble me, then will I repent and believe, and work out my own Salvation.* Speak truly and deal plainly with your own Conſciences, have not theſe been the fooliſh Reaſonings of your own Hearts? Have you not often thus promiſed God and your own Conſciences? And doth not all this imply that you thought you had a Power to do it? Why did you delay and put it off, if you thought you had no Power to do it at laſt? Wherefore thou art *inexcuſable*, O Man, whoever thou art that wilt not work; it is in Vain to plead thou wantedſt Power, God will confute thee by thy ſelf and out of thy own Mouth. What wilt thou ſay, thou hadſt no Power? Why thou thoughteſt that thou hadſt Power, and yet wouldſt not work, nor endeavour ſo to do; and therefore thy Ruin, if thou periſheſt, is as wilful, and thy Condemnation will be as Juſt, as if thou hadſt Power and wouldſt not work. And this is the *Fourth Anſwer* to this *Objection*, Men do really believe that they have Power to work, and therefore they are inexcuſable if they will not endeavour to put it forth.

(5.) *Fifthly*, Men will not plead ſo fooliſhly, no not in matters of far lower concernment than the Salvation of their Souls is. Would a Maſter, when he Commands his Servant to work, take this as a ſufficient Excuſe for his Sloth and Idleneſs, that he hath no Power to work, till God Acts and Moves him? Why this is a Truth, that he cannot do it unleſs God inable him; and it may as well be objected by your Servants to you, and with more Reaſon too, than by you unto God. Pray tell me, what Power have I to Speak one Word, or you to Hear one Word more unleſs God concurs to it? Nay, we are not ſufficient to think as of our ſelves; yet we do not make this an Excuſe to forbear thoſe Actions that are neceſſary. Do we therefore reſolve to do nothing becauſe it is impoſſible for us to do any thing unleſs God concur? What ſtupid and dull Folly is this? No, but we put it plainly and hourly to the Trial; and never could any one produce that Man that could ever ſay, God was wanting to him in his concurrence, when he would have done an Action. What a miſerable ridiculous Task would it be, if in every Action of our Lives wherein we can do nothing without God, we ſhould ſtill be queſtioning God's concurrence with us? When you Sit, do you diſpute whether God will inable you to Ariſe? When you walk, do you every Step you take, queſtion whether God will concur to another Step? No, Men put theſe things to the Trial; and though it be impoſſible that they ſhould live, move or ſtir, till God act and move them, yet this hinders not Mens endeavours, no nor is it any matter of diſcouragement to them. Now why ſhould not we do ſo in Spirituals as well as in Temporals? Are they not of greater Concernment? Do they not more deſerve the Trial? It is true, we can do nothing without God's concurrence; yet let us put it to the Trial, whether or no God will not concur when we endeavour. Certainly that Man muſt be for ever nameleſs, that can ſay, he was truly willing and did ſincerely endeavour to do any good Thing, and God did not inable him.

(6.) *Sixthly*, Conſider this, although wicked Men had Power to work out their Salvation, yet they would never do it; and therefore it is a vain and moſt unreaſonable pretence for Sloth, to plead want of Power; for had wicked Men Power they would never Obey. *But how can any one tell that? What, not Obey if we had Power?* Why no; and the Reaſon is this, becauſe there is no wicked Man in the World that hath done ſo much, or that doth ſo much as he is able to do, no not ſo much as he is able to do without ſpecial Grace and Aſſiſtance; and therefore, it is not Inability but wilful Sloth that deſtroys Men. Sinners! ask your own Conſciences this Queſtion, Was there not one Duty more that you could have performed? Was there not one Temptation, nor one Corruption more that you could have reſiſted? Could you not have prayed, and read, and heard, and meditated more upon Heavenly Things, even then when your Hearts and Thoughts have been vain and worldly, yea, ſinful and deviliſh? Might not that time have been ſpent in holy Converſe, that you have trifled away in Idleneſs and in doing

nothing, or that which is worse than nothing? What Force or Restraint is laid upon you? Is there any Violence used to you? Can you not think? And if you can, can you not think of God as well as of the Things of the World, or think upon your Lusts? Can you not Speak? And if you can, can you not speak of God, of Heaven, and the Concernments of another Life, as well as of your Trade, and Bargainings, and other trivial Matters, which are below a Man, much more below a Christian? What force is there put upon Sinners? Doth the *Devil* screw open the *Drunkard*'s Mouth, and pour down his intemperate Cups whether he will or no? Doth the *Devil* violently move the black Tongue of the *Blasphemer* and *Swearer* to rend and tear the holy Name of God, by horrid Oaths and Blasphemies? Doth the *Devil* strike Men Dumb when they should Pray, or Deaf when they should Hear, or Senseless when they should understand and ponder? Is there any such force and violence used unto any? Can you not avoid the one? And can you not do the other if you will? Yes you can, but you will not; and therefore neither would you work out your own Salvation if you could do it. Is there any hopes that you would ever willingly do the greater, who will not do the less? Let your Impotency and Weakness be what it will, your *Damnation* lies not upon it, but upon your Wilfulness, so long as your Wilfulness is greater than your Weakness? No, it is not upon your Impotency that your precious and immortal Souls perish eternally, but it is only for lack of a Will to pity them, and to save them. *Sinners!* Wherefore then will you perish? Why will you sleep away your Souls into Hell? Will you go on drowzily to Destruction? Shall your Souls be ready to burn as a Brand in unquenchable Fire, and will you not stretch forth your Hand to snatch it out? Is it more painful for you to Work, than to be Damned? Endeavour therefore to do what you can; labour and sweat at Salvation rather than fail of it: Let it not grate and fret your Consciences in Hell, that you lie there for a wilful Neglect.

Object. *But should I labour, should I endeavour, should I work to my utmost, should I do all that I am able to do, I cannot work Grace in my self by all this, to what purpose then should I work?*

Answer. However, try God in this *particular:* Did you ever know any who thus laboured, and thus wrought, that did not give very good Evidence of a Work of Grace wrought upon their Hearts? And why then should you suspect that you should be the first? What reason have you to think that God should make you the first Example of a Soul that did endeavour, strive and work for Salvation, and yet came short of it; when you never heard or read of any that put forth themselves to the utmost for the obtaining of Grace, and yet fell short of Grace or Glory?

Thus in these six *Particulars* put together, you have a full and an abundant Answer an Satisfaction to this *Objection*, concerning our Impotency to work out our own Salvation.

Obj. 2. *Secondly*, Another *Objection* against this Doctrine is this, *Thus to press Men to Obedience and Working, is prejudicial and derogatory unto Christ's Merits, by which alone we are saved, and not by our own Works. Hath not Christ already done all for us? Hath not he finished and wrought out our Salvation himself? And is not this to render his Work as insufficient, to go and piece it out by our Obedience? Is not this to set up our Works as Antichrist, in flat opposition and defiance to the gracious Undertaking and perfect Accomplishment of Jesus Christ, when all that we have now to do is to believe in him, and to get a Right and Title to him, and saving Interest in him?*

Answer. To this I *Answer*, the Merit of Jesus Christ and our Working are not inconsistent, but there is a sweet Harmony and Agreement betwixt them in carrying on the Work of our Salvation. And to make this evident, I shall lay down the due Bounds and Limits of each of them, that so it may appear what Christ hath done for us, and what he expects we should do for our selves. Christ therefore hath done Two Things in order to the carrying on of our Salvation.

I. *First*, He hath purchased and procured Eternal Happiness to be conferred upon us hereafter.

II. *Secondly*, He hath merited Grace to be be conferred upon us here to prepare us for that Happiness.

(1.) *First*, He hath purchased Happiness and eternal Life, for all that do believe

lieve in him: *I give unto them eternal Life*, ſays he himſelf, *to the Jews.* And ſays the Apoſtle, *He is the Author of eternal Salvation to them that Obey him.* Now as there are two things that muſt be done for us before we could be brought unto a ſtate of Salvation, namely a freeing us from our liableneſs unto Death, and a beſtowing upon us a right unto Life eternal: ſo Jeſus Chriſt, that he might bring us into this State hath performed both theſe things for us. Joh. 10. 28. Heb. 5. 9.

Firſt, He hath ſatisfied Divine Juſtice for us, ſnatching us from under the vengeance of God, ſubſtituting himſelf in our room and ſtead, bearing the Load of all that Wrath and Puniſhment that muſt otherwiſe have fallen inſupportably heavy upon us. *His Soul*, ſays the Prophet, *was made an Offering for Sin.* And *He was made ſin for us*, ſays the Apoſtle, that is, he was puniſhed as a Sinner for us, *Who knew no Sin.* And, Iſa. 53. 10. 2 Cor. 5. 23.

Secondly, He hath perfectly fulfilled the Commands of the Law by his active Obedience, that the Life promiſed by God in the Law to the doers of it, doth now undoubtedly belong to all thoſe for whom Chriſt did obey the Law; that is, for all thoſe that believe in him. And by both theſe, bearing the penalty of the Law, and fulfilling the Duties of the Law, God is atoned, Juſtice is ſatisfied, Vengeance is pacified, and we are reconciled, Adopted, and made Heirs of Glory according to the Promiſe.

But what? Shall Glory and Happineſs be preſently beſtowed upon us? Shall we be inſtalled into it without any more Circumſtance? Muſt nothing intervene betwixt Chriſt's purchaſe and our actual poſſeſſion? Yes, that there muſt. For,

(2.) *Secondly*, Chriſt hath purchaſed Grace to be beſtowed upon them upon whom he beſtows Salvation. *When he Aſcended up on high he led Captivity Captive, and gave Gifts unto Men*, and among others, eſpecially the Gifts of Grace. *For of his fulneſs*, ſays the Apoſtle, *have we all received, and Grace for Grace.* And why did Chriſt make this purchaſe? Why did he merit Grace for us? Was it not that we might act it in Obedience? And if Chriſt merited Grace that we might Obey, is it ſenſe to *Object* that our Obedience is derogatory to Chriſt's Merit? If one end of Chriſt's doing all that he did for us, was to inable us to do for our ſelves, will any Man ſay, now I am bound to do nothing; becauſe Chriſt hath done all? How loſt are ſuch Men both to Reaſon and Religion, who undertake ſo to argue? No, Salvation was purchaſed and Grace was procured, that by the acting and exerciſe of that Grace we might attain to that Salvation; and both theſe are to be preſerved entirely as things moſt Sacred, aſcribing them ſolely to the Merits of our Saviour. So far are we from Exhorting Men to work out their Salvation by way of Merit and Purchaſe, as that we conclude them guilty of the higheſt *Sacriledge*, and practical *Blaſphemy* againſt the *Prieſtly Office* of Jeſus Chriſt, who think by their own works to Merit the one or the other. And therefore though Jeſus Chriſt hath done thus much for us, yet that he might leave us alſo ſome work to do, I ſhall now ſhew what he expects from us in order to the working out of our own Salvation. And as he hath done two things for us, ſo he requires two things from us. As, Eph. 4. 8. Joh. 1. 16.

I. *Firſt*, He requires we ſhould put forth all the Strength and Power of Nature in labouring after Grace. And,

II. *Secondly*, He requires that we ſhould put forth the power of Grace in labouring for Salvation, purchaſed for us.

Thoſe that are void of Grace muſt labour for it.

(1.) *Firſt*, He requires that all thoſe who are void of Grace ſhould labour for it with that Power and Strength that they have, and in ſo doing they do not at all intrench upon the Work of Chriſt, neither is it at all derogatory to his Merits. See how the *Prophet* expreſſeth this, *Ezekiel* 18. *Make you a new heart and a new ſpirit.* He ſpeaks to thoſe that were in a ſtate of Nature, and he bids them *make them a new heart and a new ſpirit*; *for why will you die?* Noting, that if they did not labour after a new Heart and a new Spirit, they would certainly die the Death. Let every Sinner know that this is it that he is called upon for, this is that God expects from him, it is his Work to repent and return that he may live. It is his Work to labour to change his own Heart, and to renew his own Spirit: It is true, it is God's Work alſo, for he hath *promiſed to give a new Heart and a new Spirit*, and it is Chriſt's Work alſo as he is God, but yet it is not Chriſt's Work as a Mediator. And therefore to endeavour the working of a new Heart in us, is Ezek. 18. 31. Ezek. 11. 10.

not

not at all to intrench upon the *Mediatory Office* of Jeſus Chriſt, for ſo his *Office* is not to work Grace, but to procure it; not to implant Grace, but to purchaſe it. You cannot therefore ſit down and ſay, what need is there of my working? Chriſt hath already done all my Work for me to my Hands. No, Chriſt hath done his own Work, he hath done the Work of a *Saviour* and a *Surety*, but he never did the Work of a Sinner. If Chriſt by meriting Grace had beſtowed it upon thee and wrought it in thee, then indeed there was no more required of thee to become Holy, but to caſt back a lazy Look to the purchaſe of Jeſus Chriſt; then thy Sloth would have had ſome pretence why thou doſt not Labour. But this will not do, our Saviour commands all Men *To ſeek firſt the kingdom of God and the righteouſneſs thereof.* And the Apoſtle exhorts *Simon Magus* himſelf, though *in the gall of bitterneſs and in the bond of iniquity, yet pray,* ſays he, *if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.* Do not therefore cheat your own Souls into Perdition by lazy Notions of Chriſt's Merits. What though Chriſt hath merited, yet God requires that you ſhould work and labour to change your own Hearts, and reform your own Lives; but if you ſit ſtill expecting till the meriting Grace of Chriſt drop down into your Souls, and of its own accord, and change your Hearts; truly it may be before that time you your ſelves may drop down into Hell with your old unchanged Hearts. And this is the firſt thing Chriſt requires.

Mat. 6. 33. Acts 8. 22.

Thoſe that have Grace muſt Labour for Salvation.

(2.) *Secondly*, Chriſt expects and requires that thoſe that have Grace ſhould put forth the utmoſt Strength and Power thereof, in labouring after that Salvation that he hath purchaſed for them: He hath merited Salvation for them, but it is to be obtained by them through their own Labour and Induſtry. Is not that which Chirſt hath already done, ſufficient for them? Is it not enough that he hath reconciled them to God by the Blood of the Covenant, that he hath made their Peace and procured their Pardon for them; But muſt Chriſt Repent, and Believe, and Obey for them? This is not to make him a *Saviour*, but a *Drudg*. He hath done what was meet and fit for a *Mediatour* to do; He now requires of us what is meet for *Sinners* to do; namely, to Believe, to Repent, to be Converted, and to Obey: He now bids you Waſh and be clean, and what would you have more? Would you have the great *Prophet* come and ſtrike off your *Leproſy*, and you only mark the Cure, and do nothing thereunto? Or is it indeed enough that Salvation and Happineſs is purchaſed, that the way to Heaven is made paſſable, that the Bolts and Bars of the *new Jeruſalem* by Chriſt are broken off? Alas, what of all this! Thou mayeſt ſtill be as far from Heaven and Glory as ever, if thou doſt not walk in the way that leads to it: Still thou art as far from entring into Heaven as ever, if, thou doſt not ſtrive at the entrance into the ſtrait Gate. It is therefore in vain that Chriſt died, it is in vain that thou art Juſtified, it is in vain that thou art Adopted, it is in vain that Heaven is prepared for thee: Chriſt may keep Heaven and Glory, and his Crowns and Robes for ever to himſelf, unleſs as he hath purchaſed theſe great things for his People, ſo alſo he hath purchaſed to himſelf a peculiar People Zealous of good Works: A People who by patient continuance in well doing ſeek for Glory and Immortality, and by that way obtain it. Thus we ſee Chriſt's doing all for us is no excuſe for our doing nothing: He hath indeed done all for us that belongs to him as a *Mediatour* meriting and procuring Grace and Salvation; but he never intended to do all for us, as to the conveying of them to us, and making of them ours. No, that is ſtill to be done by us. And therefore though Chriſt's Works alone were meritorious, yet by the actings of Faith we muſt apply his Merit, and by the acting of Obedience confirm them to our ſelves.

I might add alſo, when Chriſt is ſaid to obey the Law in our ſtead, as well as to ſuffer in our ſtead: Though his bearing the puniſhment of the Law by Death doth excuſe and exempt us from ſuffering: Yet his obeying of the Law doth not excuſe our Obedience unto the Law. Chriſt obeyed the Law in a far different reſpect to the Obedience which is now required from us: He obeyed it as a Covenant of Works, we only as a Rule of Righteouſneſs: If he had failed in the leaſt tittle he could not have purchaſed Life that was promiſed; but we, though we fall infinitely ſhort in our Obedience may yet inherit that Life that Chriſt hath purchaſed. Chriſt's Obedience was fully perfect, yet ours is not derogatory thereunto, becauſe it proceeds from other grounds than Chriſt's did. But I will not proceed further

further in this, only conclude this *Answer* with two practical things in reference to this *Question*.

First, So work with that Earneſtneſs, Conſtancy and Unweariedneſs in well doing, as if thy Works alone were able to juſtifie and ſave thee. Look with what Affection and Fervency you would pray, if now God with a Voice from Heaven ſhould tell you, that for the next Prayer you make, you ſhould be either Saved or Damned. Look with what Reverence and Attention you would Hear, with what Spiritualneſs of Heart you would Meditate, if your eternal State and Condition, were to be determined and fixed by the next of thoſe Duties that in this kind you were to perform; with the ſame Fervency, Affection and Spiritualneſs perform all the Obedience that you do. Why ſhould you not do ſo? Are not God's Commands as Peremptory and as Authoritative for Obedience under Covenant of Grace, as they were under the Covenant of Works? Is not Obedience of as abſolute neceſſity now as ever, though not to the ſame end and purpoſe? And ſince the end of our Obedience is graciouſly changed, doth not this change lay a farther obligation of Gratitude upon us to obey God, who requires it from us, not as Merit, but as Duty? Still there is as great an obligation to obey now under the condition of the Covenant of Grace, as ever there was while Mankind ſtood under the tenour of the Covenant of Works. Certainly Chriſt's Merit was never given to ſlacken our Obedience, and it is the moſt unworthy, nay, let me ſay it is the moſt accurſed uſe that any Chriſtian can make of them, that from the Merit of Chriſt he ſhall take encouragement to grow more remiſs and ſlack in Obedience. Would you not therefore turn the Grace of God into Wantonneſs? Would you not abuſe the infinite Mercy of a Mediator? Think with your ſelves, how would I ſtrive and ſtruggle were I to ſtand or fall upon the account of my own Works and Duties; uſe the ſame Diligence, put forth the ſame Endeavours as indeed in that Caſe you would do. And,

(2.) *Secondly*, So abſolutely depend and rely upon the alone Merits of Jeſus Chriſt for your Juſtification and Salvation, as if you never had performed an Act of Obedience in all your Life. This is the right Goſpel-frame of Obedience, ſo to work as if you were only to be ſaved by your own Merits, and withal ſo to reſt on the Merits of Chriſt as if you had never wrought any thing. It is a difficult thing to give to each of theſe its Due in our Practice. When we Work we are too apt to neglect Chriſt; and when we rely on Chriſt we are too apt to neglect Working: But that Chriſtian hath got the right skill and art of Obedience that can mingle theſe two together, that can with one Hand work the Works of God, and yet at the ſame time with the other Hand lay faſt hold on the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt. Let this *Antinomian* Principle be for ever rooted out of the Minds of Men, that our working is derogatory to Chriſt's Work. Never more think Chriſt hath done all your Work for you, for that is unbecoming the free Spirit of the Goſpel; but labour for that Salvation that he hath purchaſed and merited. Could ever ſuch ſenſeleſs *Objections* prevail with thoſe Men who ever ſeriouſly read that *Scripture* in *Tit.* 2. 14 *Who gave himſelf for us that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify to himſelf a peculiar People zealous of good Works?* Were this place ſeriouſly ponder'd over by Men, they would be aſhamed to *Object* any longer, that our Duties and Works are derogatory to the purchaſe of Chriſt, for *he gave himſelf for this end that he might purchaſe ſuch a People that might be zealous of good Works.* But truly when Sloth and Ignorance meet together, if you tell Men what Powers their Natures have to work, and how neceſſary Obedience is to Salvation, that thereby we might excite and quicken their Hearts to Obedience, they with the *Sluggard* fold their Arms in their Boſom doing nothing, telling us theſe Doctrines are *Arminianiſm* and flat *Popery*; whereas in Deed and in Truth they are as far diſtant from either of them as Light is from Darkneſs; it is their Ignorance and Sloth only that makes them think ſo. But deceive not your ſelves, this *Doctrine* is ſuch that whether it take hold on your Judgments and Underſtandings now, I know not; but this I know aſſuredly, it ſhall take hold of your Conſciences, either here or hereafter, and then it will not ſuffice you to make this Excuſe, either that you had no Power to do any thing, or that Chriſt hath already done all Things for you. And ſo much for the *Second Objection*.

Thirdly, *Others may Object, That this Duty of working out of our Salvation, is inconſiſtent with, and prejudical to, the freeneſs of God's Grace, by which alone we are ſaved.* Obj. 3.

If

If God ſave them only that work for Salvation, how then doth he ſave them freely, and that by Grace we are ſaved?

Anſw. 1. *Firſt*, In general I anſwer, That Salvation upon our Working and Obedience is free Salvation, and that for four Reaſons.

Working for Salvation is our Duty, and ſo not meritorious.

(1.) *Firſt*, Becauſe all our working is a natural Duty that we owe to God, as Creatures to their Creator. Had God required the ſame Things of us that now he doth, and never propounded a Reward to incourage us, he had been juſt and we had been as abſolutely and as indiſpenſably obliged to obey as now we are. We have not ſo great a Right to Salvation, as God hath to our Obedience. God can challenge our Service and Obedience from us, becauſe of our natural Bond and Obligation, as well as from that voluntary Covenant whereinto we have entred with God to be Obedient; but we can only plead for Salvation, becauſe God hath made a Promiſe that he will ſave thoſe that Obey. Whether God had made that Promiſe or not, yet he might have required the ſame Obedience from us that now he doth, becauſe we owe it to him naturally by our Creation. And is it not now free Grace and Mercy, that when God might have required Obedience without a Reward, that yet he will beſtow Salvation according to that Obedience? See what our *Saviour* ſaith in *Luke* 17. *Doth the Maſter thank the Servant becauſe he did the things that he was commaded to do? I trow not. So even ye likewiſe, when you have done all thoſe things that are commanded you, ſay, we are unprofitable Servants; for when we have done all, we have but done that which was our Duty to do.* Yea, and our Duty it was to do it, though God had never made a Promiſe to reward what we have done. We are unprofitable Servants and deſerve not ſo much as Thanks. *Doth the Maſter thank the Servant becauſe he did the things that were commanded? I trow not.* And if we do not merit Thanks when we have done our utmoſt, how then can we merit Salvation?

Luke 17. 9, 10.

Our Obedience is imperfect in this Life.

(2.) *Secondly*, Our Obedience is imperfect in this Life, it is full of cracks and flaws: And if to accept and reward the moſt perfect Obedience with Salvation, be an Act of Mercy and free Grace, as it is, becauſe it is our Duty if there were no Salvation promiſed; how much more is free Grace magnified and glorified in accepting and rewarding a weak and imperfect Obedience with that Salvation, which the moſt perfect Obedience cannot deſerve? *For when we have done all, we have done but that which was our Duty to do; and if we could ſay ſo, doth the Maſter thank the Servant? No:* But alas, in many things we offend all. Now to reward that with eternal Salvation, that deſerves eternal Damnation; to reward that Work with Life, that deſerves to be rewarded with Death, what is this but the effect of rich and glorious Grace? What is this but to beſtow Heaven, not according to Merit, but rather according to our Demerit?

There is no compariſon between Salvation and our Obedience.

(3.) *Thirdly*, Becauſe there is no compariſon betwixt Salvation and our Obediences, and therefore free Grace ſhines forth ſtill. It is free Grace though we do obey: We obey as Creatures, God rewards as a God; our Obedience is Temporal, but our Reward is Eternal; our Obedience is mixed with Rebellion, but the Reward hath no mixture to take off the fulneſs and ſweetneſs of it. Therefore it is free Grace ſtill to give an infinite Reward to ſo mean an Obedience, betwixt which Obedience and Reward, there is no compariſon or proportion.

Grace whereby we obey, is the Gift of God.

(4.) *Fourthly*, Though we are commanded to obey, yet that Grace whereby we do obey, is the Gift of God. It is he that works in us this Obedience which he rewards with Salvation: And muſt not this then be wholly of free Grace? To ſave upon an Obedience wrought in us by God himſelf, it is to ſave altogether as freely as if we were ſaved without any Obedience at all. And ſo much in *Anſwer* unto the *Third Objection.*

Obj. 4. Fourthly, *Others may ſay, That it is a vain and moſt needleſs thing to preſs this Doctrine of working for Salvation upon them. What! They work? If they are Elected to Salvation they ſhall be ſaved whether they work or not; and if they are not Elected, all their working will be to no purpoſe, for they ſhall never be ſaved by it.*

Anſwer. To this I *Anſwer*, We are to look to God's *Commands*, not to his *Decrees*; to our *Duty* not to his *Purpoſes*. The *Decrees* of God are a vaſt *Ocean*, whereinto many poſſibly may have curiouſly pry'd to their own Horror and Deſpair; but few or none have ever pry'd into them to their own Satisfaction. This *Election* in particular is not written in the Word of God, but this *Duty* is plainly written: If thou performeſt thy *Duty*, thereby thou ſhalt come to know thy *Election*. It is but

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a prepoſterous Courſe, and that which will both diſcourage all Endeavours and fill the Soul with Deſpair, to look firſt to *God's Decrees*, and then to its own *Duty*; whereas indeed the right Method is, firſt, to perform thy own *Duty*, and thereby to be led into the knowledge of *God's Decrees*. Queſtion not therefore whether thou art Elected or not, but firſt work for Salvation, and if thy Work be good, and thy Obedience true, thereby thou mayeſt come to a certain Knowledge that thou art *Elected*. And know this alſo farther, that God who Elects to the End, Elects alſo to the Means. Now Obedience is the means and way to Salvation, and therefore if thou art *Elected* to Salvation, thou art alſo *Elected* to Obedience. Say not therefore, if I am Elected, I ſhall be ſaved whether I work or not; there is no ſuch thing: I may boldly ſay, if thou art Elected and doeſt not work, it is impoſſible that thy *Election* ſhould ſave thee. What ſays the *Apoſtle*, 2 Theſſ. *God hath choſen us*, there's Election; *choſen us to Salvation*, there's the End. But how? *through Sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the Truth:* Choſen us to Salvation as to the End, but it is not an End to be obtained without Sanctification. There is indeed an abſolute *Election* to Salvation whereby God, without reſpect of Works, hath choſen ſome to Salvation; but there is no Election to Salvation abſolute whereby God hath choſen any to Salvation without Works, that is, whether they work or not. If therefore you believe heartily and obey ſincerely, then your Election to Salvation ſtands firm; nay, the *Scripture* makes *Election* to be terminated as well in *Obedience* as Salvation. *Elect*, ſays the Apoſtle, *unto Obedience through Sanctification of the Spirit*. In the former place it was, *Elect to Salvation through Sanctification*; but in this it is, *Elect to Obedience through Sanctification:* Noting, thus much to us, That none are *Elected* to *Salvation*, but thoſe are *Elected* to *Obedience*; and therefore it is unreaſonable, yea, it is contradictory to ſay, If I am Elected I ſhall be ſaved whether I obey or not, for none are thereunto Elected but through Obedience. 2 Theſſ. 2. 13.

And now having, as I hope, ſatisfactorily Anſwer'd all Objections and Scruples that may ariſe in the Hearts of Men againſt this *Doctrine*, I now proceed to preſs this Duty of working for Salvation upon their Conſciences; and I ſhall do it in a Uſe of Exhortation.

Be perſwaded then, *Oh Sinners!* To caſt off your Sloth and Lazineſs, and to rouſe your ſelves from that drowzy Slumber that you have long lain in, and to work for Salvation. But truly when I conſider how powerful an *Orator*, and how mighty a *Charmer* Sloth is; how eaſily it can ſtupify and benumb *Reaſon*, and lull Men aſleep on the top of a *Maſt*, and on the brinks of *Hell*; and though God and Man call upon them, *Sinners, Sinners*, beſtir your ſelves, work for your Lives, you periſh eternally if you do not labour to lay hold on eternal Life, for you are falling, and *Hell-fire* is under you: Yet truly when we call and cry thus earneſtly, how eaſily can a careleſs, yawning, wretched Sinner, ſlight all theſe Admonitions, baffle all theſe Arguments, Motives and Perſuaſions, though urged upon them with all vehemency and tenderneſs of Affection that can be, and turn about like a Man beſotted falling faſt aſleep again? When I conſider this, truly I am apt to conclude, that it is but a deſperate attempt to preſs Men any more againſt their Natures, and againſt ſo many Diſadvantages that can ſoon fruſtrate the Efficacy of weaker Words, and to give over in Deſpair with that of the Prophet, *He that will be Righteous, let him be Righteous; and he that will be Wicked, let him be Wicked ſtill.* And truly, were it not more for Conſcience of Duty than for any Hope of Succeſs, I would not ſpeak one Word more upon the Subject; Succeſs, I mean, upon thoſe who are altogether Carnal, whoſe Hearts *Satan* hath filled, and whoſe Ears *Satan* hath ſtopt; we may call long enough and loud enough e're theſe Men will awake; or if they do ſometimes give a Look upwards, they ſoon cloſe their Eyes again and ſlumber away into Deſtruction. And yet truly, if variety of Motives, if ſtrength of Arguments and Perſuaſions would prevail, we might hope for this ſeldom-ſeen Succeſs; why then let us conſider theſe following Particulars.

(1.) Firſt, *Conſider Sinners, you have a great and weighty Work to do, and therefore it is time, yea, high time that you were up and doing.* Believe it Sirs, God hath not placed you here in this World, as the *Leviathan* in the great Waters, only to play and ſport; were it ſo, you might take your Eaſe, hold your Arms in your Boſoms, and follow your Delights and Pleaſures; and let him be blam'd that ever

To work for Salvation is a great and weighty Work.

ever ſhould diſturb or diſcourage you. I know not whether ſome may not think that we *Miniſters* are *Task-Maſters*, and that we make more ado than needs. No, Sirs, it is God that hath ſet you your Work; we do only tell you how great it is, and of how great concernment it is to you that it be done; and if you will not do it who can help it? We have no *Scourges* or *Scorpions* to drive you to your Work, but God hath to puniſh you if you neglect it; and why is it ſo generally neglected, but becauſe Men do not ſeriouſly conſider how great it is. Moſt Men acknowledge that it muſt be done; but becauſe they look upon it as that which may ſpeedily and quickly be diſpatched, they drive it before them from Day to Day, and think to huddle it up at the end of their Lives: Then when they are fit for no other Imployment, and leaſt of all fit for this Imployment, then they think to do the Works of God. I ſhall here lay down *Three Particulars* to convince Sinners of the greatneſs of this Work, and becauſe it is ſo great a Work, it requires that they ſhould preſently, without delay, ſet upon it.

Working for Salvation is the undoing our former Works.

(1.) *Firſt*, It is a Work in which Sinners muſt undo all that they have wrought in their whole Lives before. *Oh Sinner*, think what haſt thou been doing this twenty, thirty, forty Years or more! Haſt thou not inſtead of working out thine own Salvation with Fear and Trembling, been working out thine own Condemnation without Fear or Trembling? Haſt thou not been working the Works of Darkneſs? Haſt thou not been *working the Works of thy Father the Devil*, as our Saviour tells the *Jews?* Truly this is not ſo much working as making of Work; all this muſt be undone again, or you your ſelves muſt be for ever undone; you muſt unrip and unravel your whole Lives by a deep and bitter Repentance; you are gone far in the way that leads to Death and Deſtruction, and you muſt tread back every Step, and at every Step ſhed many ſalt and briny Tears before ever you come into the Way that leads to Life and Happineſs; and is it not yet time to begin? Can the Work of ſo many Years be undone, think you, in one Moment? No, *Sin* and *Satan* make their Works more durable and laſting, than to be ſo eaſily and ſpeedily ſpoiled. It were the Work of an Age, yea, of Eternity it ſelf if poſſibly we could ſo ſpend it, rather than of a few faint late Thoughts, to get an Humiliation deep enough, and a Sorrow ſad enough, to bear any the leaſt proportion to any of the leaſt Sins that we have committed. Do not hope or think that your many great and ſinful Actions ſhall ever be blown away with a ſlight and general Confeſſion; or that ever they ſhall be waſh'd away with a ſlight and overly Repentance. What ſays Holy *David? Thou telleſt my Wanderings, put thou my Tears into the Bottle.* Thou haſt my Wandrings by Number, but thou haſt alſo my Tears by Meaſure. There muſt be ſome proportion betwixt the Humiliation and the Sins; great Sins call for great Sorrow, and long continuance in Sin requires a continued and prolonged Repentance. Is it not then yet high time to begin? Have you not already made Work enough for your whole Lives, ſhould they be longer than they are like to be? Nay, and will not every Day of your Lives make Work enough for it ſelf? What ſays our Saviour? *Sufficient for the Day is the evil thereof.* Truly the Evils that we every Day commit, is ſufficient Work for the Sorrow and Repentance of that Day to undo. Now then begin this undoing Work; the longer you delay, ſtill the more will lie upon your Hands, ſtill the more Sins you have to repent of. We already complain, That the Work God hath ſet us is too hard and too grievous, and yet ſuch fooliſh Creatures are we that we make it more and more difficult by our Delays, adding to the ſtrictneſs of God's Commands the neceſſity of a ſevere Repentance. And therefore it is Prudence, as well as Duty, to begin this repenting, this undoing Work betimes, that ſo the greatneſs of the Work, and the ſhortneſs of the time to do it in, may not at laſt diſmay and confound us.

Pſal. 56.8.

Mat. 6. 34.

Variety of Duties to be performed in working out of Salvation.

(2.) *Secondly*, Conſider the great variety of Duties that muſt be gone through in the working out of Salvation, and this will evince how great a Work it is. A Chriſtian's Work is a Life full of Actions and Imployments, there ſhould be no gap nor void ſpace at all in it, but all ſhould be filled up with Duties ranked in their ſeveral Orders, that as ſoon as he paſſeth through one he ſhould enter upon another, that where one leaves him another may find him. Thus a Chriſtian ſhould go from one Duty to another; from hearing the Word to Meditation, from Meditation unto Prayer, from Prayer to the acting of Grace, and in all there

there ſhould be much ſtriving and ſtruggling with the Heart, and much carefulneſs and circumſpection over the Way and Life.

Now there are *Four* great and uſual Duties every Man hath to do, which is enough to fill up all the time of his Life, were it ſtretched and tenter'd out to the end of our time. *Four Duties incumbent on all Chriſtians.*

(1.) *Firſt*, He is to get the Truth and Reality of Grace wrought in him; this is his firſt and general Work: And this will coſt a Man much Sweat and Anguiſh, for this he muſt ſuffer many Pangs and Throws of the New Birth, and ſhall lie under many Fears and Jealouſies, leſt Hypocriſie and Preſumption ſhould cauſe him to miſtake in a Matter of ſuch infinite Concernment. *To get the Truth of Grace.*

(2.) *Secondly*, He is to draw forth, and to act this Grace when once it is wrought in him. This is the next Work of a true Chriſtian, continually to act Faith, Love, Patience, Humility, and to let all have their perfect Work: And there is no moment of a Man's Life ſo idle, but all may adminiſter ſome Occaſion or Object for the exerciſe of Grace. *To act Grace.*

(3.) *Thirdly*, A Chriſtian's next Work is continually to grow and increaſe in Grace: *To go from Strength to Strength, to be changed from Glory to Glory.* Still to be adding Cubits to his ſpiritual Stature, till he is grown to ſuch a height and tallneſs in Grace, that his Head ſhould reach into Heaven and be Crowned there in abſolute Perfection, with a Crown of Glory and Immortality. Here is that Work that will keep you in Imployment all your Days; and if you can find one ſpare minute in your whole Lives wherein you have not ſome Duty to perform, then give over and ſit ſtill. But beſides all this, *To grow in Grace.*

(4.) *Fourthly*, Another Work of a Chriſtian is earneſtly to labour after the Evidence and Aſſurance of Grace in himſelf. *Give all diligence*, ſays the Apoſtle, *to make your Calling and Election ſure.* Still a Chriſtian muſt be aſcending, aſcending from a probable Conjecture to a good Perſuaſion, from a good Perſuaſion to a full Aſſurance, from that to a Rejoycing with Joy unſpeakable and full of Glory. Theſe now are the general Works that ſhould take up the Lives of Chriſtians, and to theſe are ſubſervient almoſt an infinite number of Particulars, ſome whereof are means whereby theſe great Things are obtained, others are Concomitants or the Effects and Fruits of them; but I will not ſo much as mention any of them now. *Chriſtians muſt labour for Aſſurance of Grace.*

For ſhame then, O Chriſtians, ſince that your Work is ſo great, why will you ſit ſtill as if you knew not how to imploy your ſelves? Beſides, there is great variety in your Work, and this uſually breeds ſome kind of Delight. You are not always to be toiling and drudging at the ſame thing: But as *Bees* fly from one Flower to another and ſuck ſweetneſs from each of them; ſo ſhould a Chriſtian paſs from one Duty to another, and draw forth the ſweetneſs of Communion with God from every one of them.

(3.) *Thirdly*, To evince the greatneſs of this Work, conſider it is a Work that muſt be carried on againſt many Encounters and ſtrong Oppoſitions that a Chriſtian will certainly meet with; within are ſtrong Corruptions, without are ſtrong Temptations; you have a treacherous and deceitful Heart within, and this Traitor holds Intelligence and League with your great Enemy the Devil without: You are ſure to meet with Difficulties, Affronts and Diſcouragements from a peeviſh ill-conditi-on'd World in which you live: Never any yet could ſcape free to Heaven without meeting with theſe Things. And doth not all this call upon you to work and ſtrive for Salvation? Is it a time to ſit ſtill when you have all this Oppoſition to break through, ſo many Temptations to reſiſt, ſo many Corruptions to mortify, *Satan* that *old Serpent* to repel, and make him become a *flying Serpent?* Doth not all this require a moroſe Conſtancy, and a kind of ſour Reſolvedneſs to go through the ways of Obedience, notwithſtanding all Oppoſition? Theſe great Things are not to be atchieved without great Pains and Labour; and therefore, if you reſolve to do no more than a few heartleſs Wiſhes, no more than a few more heartleſs Duties will amount to, never raiſe your Expectations ſo high as Salvation; for let me tell you, Salvation will not be obtained at ſuch a rate as this; no, there muſt be great Struglings and Labour, with earneſt Contendings, if ever you intend to be ſaved. *To work for Salvation a difficult Work.*

And thus much for the *firſt Argument* taken from the conſideration of the great-

neſs of the Work: To work Salvation out is a great Work and requireth great Pains. But leſt the ſetting out the greatneſs of this Work, ſhould rather deter and fright Men from it than excite and quicken their Endeavours to it, let me add a ſecond Thing;

It is infinite Mercy that Sinners may work for Salvation.

2. And that is to conſider what an infinite, incomparable Mercy it is that God will allow you to work for your Lives, that he ſets Life and Death before you, and gives them into your Hands to take your Choice: If you will indulge your Sloth, then you chooſe Death; but Life may be yours if you will: It will indeed coſt you much Pains and Labour, but yet it may be yours: And is it not infinite Mercy that Salvation and Happineſs may be yours, though upon any Terms? Wicked Men are apt to ſay, *O how happy had we been if God had never commanded us to Work, if he had never required from us ſuch harſh and difficult Duties, if we were but once freed from this hard Task and heavy Burden of Obedience!* But alas! *Fooliſh Sinners*, they know not what they ſay; as happy as they count this to be, yet if God required no working from them, he ſhould then ſhew them juſt ſo much Mercy as he doth to the Devils and damned Spirits, and no more, from whom God requires no Duty as well as from whom he receives no Duty, and unto whom he intends no Mercy. You think it a hard Reſtraint poſſibly, to be kept under the ſtrict Commands of the Law: Oh! that God required no ſuch Obſervances from you. But what do you deſire herein but only the unhappy Privilege of the Damned, to be without Law and without Commands? But ſhould God ſend to the Spirits now impriſon'd, and ſhould he declare to them, That if they would Work they ſhould be ſaved, Oh! how would they leap in their Chains at ſuch glad Tidings as theſe are, and count it part of Salvation that there was but a poſſibility of it. No, but God commands nothing from them, becauſe he intends nothing but Wrath upon them; he will not vouchſafe ſo much Mercy to them as to require thoſe Duties from them, that you repine and murmer at as grievous. And furthermore conſider this, if you do not now work, but periſh under your Sloth, in *Hell* you will think it an infinite Mercy if God would command you more rigid and ſevere Obedience than ever he commanded from you on Earth. It would be a great Mercy there, if it might be your Duty to Repent, and Pray, and Believe; nay, you would count a Command then to be as comfortable as a Promiſe; for indeed there is no Command but connotes a Promiſe: No, but theſe things ſhall not ſo much as be your Duty in *Hell*; for there you ſhall be freed for ever from this rigorous and dreadful Law of God, that now you ſo much complain of and murmer againſt. Oh! therefore be perſuaded while you are yet under the Mercy of the Law, (give me leave to call it ſo) and while you have ſo many Promiſes couched in every Command, before God hath left off his merciful Commanding, before the time of Duty be expired, be perſuaded to Work: Delay not, you know not how long God will vouchſafe to require any thing from you; and as ſoon as that ceaſeth, truly you are in Hell. And this is the ſecond Argument to preſs this Duty upon you. Work, and that ſpeedily too; while you may Work there is hope that upon your working you may be ſaved; and therefore while God calls upon you, and whilſt he will accept of Obedience from you, it is time for you to begin to work.

Time to work for Salvation in, is very ſhort.

(3.) Thirdly, *Conſider, what a ſhort ſcantling of Time is allowed you to do your great Work in.* And this I ſhall branch out into two Particulars.

(1.) *Firſt*, Conſider, how ſad it will be for your Time to be run out before your great Work be done. Alas! what are threeſcore Years, if we were all ſure to live ſo long, from the date of this preſent Moment? How ſhort a ſpace is it for us to do that which is of Eternal Concernment in, and yet how few of us ſhall live to that which we ſo improperly call old Age? Our Candle is lighted, and it is but ſmall at the beſt; and to how many of us is it already ſunk in the Socket, and brought to a Snuff? And how ſoon the Breath of God may blow it out, neither you nor I know. Night is haſtning upon us, the Grave expects us, and bids other Corpſes make room for us: Death is ready to graſp us in its cold Arms and to carry us before God's Tribunal; and, alas, how little of our great Work is done! What can any ſhew that they have done? Where are the actings of Faith, the labour of Love, the perfect Works of Patience? Where are thoſe Graces that are either begotten or increaſed? Where are the Corruptions that you have mortify'd? Theſe are Works that require Ages to perform them in, and yet you neglect

neglect them that have but a few Days, nay, poſſibly but a few Minutes to do them in.

But what, is God ſevere? Is God unjuſt, to require ſo much Work to be done in ſo little time?

No, far be it from us to ſay thus: Though our Work be great, yet our Time is long enough to perform it in, if it were well improved. We do indeed conſume away our precious Days, waſte our Life and Light, exhauſt our Strength, and lay out our Endeavours upon Vanities and Trifles, on nothing but Emptineſs and Folly. And that Life which the *Prophet* tells us, *is but as a Tale*, truly we ſpend it as a *Dream:* We ſleep and drowſe, and ſuffer our precious Minutes to run and waſte away doing nothing to any good purpoſe, till the Night is ſhutting in, till the Night of Darkneſs come upon us, and then the greatneſs of our Work will confound us, and cauſe Deſpair rather than excite Endeavours. Have you never known any who at the cloſe of their Lives, having neglected their great Work, have ſpent that little time that they had then left them, in crying out for more time? And thus it may be with you alſo, if your Conſciences be not awakned ſooner than by the Pains and Diſquiets of a *ſick Bed*; then, with Horror, you may cry out, *More Time*, Lord, *More Time*. But it will not then be granted, the Term is fixed, the laſt Hour is ſtruck, the laſt Sand is run; and as you and your Work ſhall then be found, ſo you muſt go together into *Eternity*. This is ſuch a Conſideration as muſt needs prevail with all Men, if they would but lay it to Heart: My Time is but ſhort and momentary, I am but of Yeſterday, and poſſibly I may not be to Morrow, and God hath ſuſpended *Eternity* upon the Improvement of this Moment; a few Hours will determine my everlaſting State and Condition; according as theſe few are ſpent, ſo will my Doom be, either for *Eternal Happineſs* or for *Eternal Miſery*. And why ſhould my precious Soul be ſo vile in my own Eyes, as to loſe it for ever through Sloth and Negligence? Why ſhould I hearken to the Allurements of my own Corruptions, or to the Enticements and Perſuaſions of *Satan*'s Temptations? No, ſtand off, for I am working for *Eternity*, an *Eternity* that is but a few Days hence, a boundleſs, a bottomleſs, an endleſs *Eternity*, into which I know not how ſoon I may enter; and Woe to me, yea, a thouſand Woes to me that ever I was born, if my great Work be not done before the Days of *Eternity* come upon me. This is ſuch a Motive as methinks ſhould make every Man that hears it, and hath but a ſenſe what *Eternity* is, preſently to beſtir and rouze up himſelf, and give God and his Soul no reſt till his Immortal Soul be ſecured, and well provided for, for *Eternity*. To me there is no greater Argument of the Witchcraft and Sorcery that Sin and Satan uſeth to beſot the Reaſon and Judgment of rational Creatures, than to hear of ſuch Truths, Truths that are not to be denied or doubted of, and yet Men to live at ſuch a rate as they do, ſo vainly, ſo fruitleſsly, ſo lazily, ſo ſecurely and preſumptuouſly, as if their *Eternity* were to be expected and enjoyed here, or that there was none to come hereafter.

(2.) *Secondly*, The conſideration of the ſhortneſs of our Life, may ſerve as a great Incouragement to work. The conſideration of the burthenſomneſs and trouble of working for Salvation may doubtleſs fright many from engaging therein; Oh! it is a Work very painful and laborious, and this diſcourageth them. But know, *O Sinner!* though it be grievous, yet it is but ſhort Work; it is to laſt no longer than our frail, ſhort Life doth laſt: And O! how unreaſonable is it to complain, as moſt do, of our Work being too long and too tedious; and of our Lives, as being too ſhort and brittle? For our Work is to be no longer than our Lives. A Child of God doth not, at leaſt he ſhould not, deſire to live longer than his great Work is done: And truly when it is finiſhed, it is a great piece of *Self-denial* in him to be content to abide here in this World any longer: And in the mean while this may ſupport him, that it ſhall not be long that he ſhall thus wreſtle with Temptations, and thus ſtruggle with Corruptions: *Death* will come in to his Help, and put an end to his Toil and Labour; and though he brings a Dart in one Hand, yet he brings a Reward and Wages in the other Hand; and this may be his great Encouragement.

(4.) *Fourthly*, My next Argument to preſs this Duty of working out of our own Salvation, ſhall conſiſt of *three* or *four* Gradations. And,

(1.) *Firſt*,

We are all buſy, active Creatures.

(1.) *Firſt*, Conſider, we are all of us very buſy, active Creatures; the frame and conſtitution of our Natures is ſuch as we muſt be working ſome Work or other: And therefore ſince we muſt be working, why ſhould we not work the Works of God? We do not ſimply exhort Sinners to work, neither indeed need we: You have active Faculties and ſtirring Principles within you, that muſt and will be ſtill in Imployment; and when your Hands ceaſe, yet then your Hearts and Thoughts are at work: Your whole Lives are nothing but Actions; yea, when your Thoughts themſelves are moſt unbent and moſt remiſs, when they are moſt vaniſhing and glimmering, ſo that your ſelves ſcarce know what they are, yet then are they viſibly working, though you perceive it not. Now what is it that God requires of you? It is not that you ſhould be more imployed than you are, that you ſhould do more than you do; for that is impoſſible, becauſe you never are idle doing nothing; but it is, that what you do ſhould be done in order unto Heaven and Salvation; and how reaſonable is ſuch a Command as this? It is not more Work that God expect from you, only other Work; your Thoughts need not be more than they are, but they muſt be more Spiritual than they are; your Deſires no more, but only more Gracious; your Actions no more, but only they muſt be more Holy than now they are: Let but Grace regulate what Nature doth, and the Art of working out of your Salvation in attained. The Wheels of a Watch move as faſt and as quick when it goes falſe as when it goes true; and if the Watch be but at firſt ſet right and true, the ſame activity that makes it go falſe, will make the motions go right and orderly: Truly you your ſelves are like your Watches; your Faculties are the Wheels of your Souls, and they move and click as faſt when they go falſe, as when they go right; and if Grace doth but once ſet them right, the ſame activity of Nature that makes them work falſly and go amiſs, will alſo continue their Motion orderly and regular when once they are ſet right. Well then, whatever your Trade be, whether it be a Trade of Sin, or whether it be a Trade of Holineſs, you muſt be working at it. And let me tell you, Religion and Holineſs are ſo far from increaſing of your Work, that they rather leſſen and contract it: What ſays our Saviour? *Martha, Martha, thou art careful about many things; but one thing is neceſſary.* So may I ſay; *Sinners*, you are careful and buſy your ſelves about many things, but there is but one thing that is neceſſary; many things indeed you trouble your ſelves with, the Cares of the World, the Temptations of Satan, the Corruptions of your own Hearts, theſe diſtract you, yea, very Trifles and Impertinencies themſelves give you full Imployment; this Luſt ſtorms and rageth, that Luſt flatters and enticeth; this is impetuous, that is inſinuating; the one impells, the other allures; and it may be after all, Conſcience begins to grow terrible, giving the Sinner no quiet in doing of that which Luſt would let him have no reſt till he had done: So that betwixt them, of all Mens Lives in the World his is the moſt toilſome and vexatious. Since then you can ſave no Labour by being as you are, why will you not change your Work? You are now in conſtant Imployment as you are, and no more is required of you in the ways of *Obedience*; nay, you are now divided, diſtracted and even torn in pieces, betwixt divers Luſts and Pleaſures, all which cry *give, give*, and all are eager and importunate, ſo that you know not which to turn to firſt. But in working for Salvation your Imployment is but the one thing neceſſary, which though indeed it calls for the ſame Endeavours and Induſtry which now you uſe in the Service of Sin, yet by reaſon of its Uniformity, is leſs diſtractive and leſs cumberſome: And that is the firſt Gradation.

Luke 10. 41.

All Men work either in God's Service or the Devil's Drudgery.

(2.) *Secondly*, Conſider this, *You muſt work either in God's Service, or in the Devil's Drudgery:* And chooſe you whether you had rather be Satan's Slaves, or God's Servants; nay, indeed chooſe whether? Is it a matter of Choice with Men, who have rational and immortal Souls? Do you not all profeſs your ſelves to be the Servants of the Living God? Do you not all wear his Livery? Would not the vileſt and moſt profligate Sinner willingly lurk under the Name and Badge of a Chriſtian, and count it a great Wrong done him, ſhould any ſo much as doubt of his Salvation? And wherefore is this, but becauſe they are aſhamed of their Service, and of their own black Maſter? But alas! It is in vain to renounce him in Words; for if your Works be not for God, if they be not ſuch as Religion exacts, as the Holy Ghoſt inſpires, as Grace performs, and as Salvation calls for

for from you, his Slaves you are, and though you profeſs to deny him, yet in your Works you own him,

(3.) *Thirdly, If you work for Satan you do but work for your own Damnation:* For work you muſt and will, and this is all the Reward and Wages that you can juſtly expect from the Service of Sin and *Satan*; and of this a juſt God and a malicious *Devil* will look that you ſhall not be defrauded; but as your *Ephah* hath been full of Iniquity and Abominations, ſo ſhall your *Cup* be full of Wrath and Indignation. Think, *Oh Sinner*, think how theſe Maſters, whom thou now ſerveſt, will in *Hell* inſult over thee and upbraid thee. Is this he our faithful and induſtrious Servant? He, who preferred our Miſery before his own Happineſs, whoſe precious Soul was not precious to him for our ſakes? And is he now come whither his Ways lead him? Prepare a Place quickly for him; let his *Darkneſs* be horrid and diſmal, his Works were ſo; let his *Chains* be ſtrong and maſſy, the Bonds of his Iniquities were ſo; let his *unquenchable Fire* be piercing and vehement; let his *Torment* be next unto my ſelf; this, this will be the inſulting of your Maſter then. *Oh Sinners* conſider! Is this the Reward and Preferment that you work for? God forbid, Mercy prevent, you will ſay; nay believe it, Mercy will not prevent, God will not forbid, unleſs you your ſelves labour to prevent it; all this muſt be your Condemnation as unavoidably as if God had no ſuch Attribute of Mercy belonging to his Nature. This Sinners know, and are perſuaded of the Truth of it, unleſs they are *Atheiſts*; and if you are, truly it will not be long before your own Senſe and Feeling will convince you of the Truth of theſe things, to your eternal Grief and Sorrow: And if you do believe this, why do you not rowze up your ſelves and fall to work? If you are reſolved for *Hell*, for a foreſeen and forewarned *Hell*, who then can ſtop you? And unleſs you are reſolved for *Hell*, methinks I might have done and need proceed no further. Tell me therefore, *O Sinners*, are you not all perſuaded by theſe Terrors? Will you not from this Moment labour, and ſtruggle, and ſtrive, and take any Pains in the ways of Obedience, rather than ruin your own Souls, and thruſt them down into the Pit of Deſtruction? I might be confident *Sinners* thus reſolve to do, were I ſpeaking now to Men that were themſelves. But Men's Reaſons are beſotted, and their Ears are open only to the *Devil*, and to the baſe Allurements of the *Fleſh:* And when we have done our utmoſt in perſuading Sinners, in the end we muſt turn our Exhortations to them, into Prayers to God for them, that he would ſnatch them as Brands out of the Fire and burning, into which they, like drunken Men, are caſting themſelves and lying down in.

Thoſe that work for Satan, work for their own Damnation.

(4.) Fourthly, *Once more, the ſame Pains that poſſibly ſome take to damn their own Souls, might ſuffice eternally to ſave them.* The ſame Toil and Labour that ſome undergo for *Hell* and Deſtruction, might have brought them to *Heaven* and *Happineſs*, had it been but that way laid out. The *Prophet* tells us of ſome, *That draw Iniquity with Cords of Vanity, and Sin as it were with Cart Ropes.* That is, they are ſo inſlaved to the work of the *Devil*, that he puts them into his Team, and makes them draw and ſtrain for their Iniquities; and he doth them a Courteſy when their Sins come eaſily to them, for ſo the Phraſe imports. And we read of ſome in another *Prophet*, *That ſin with both Hands greedily.* And the *Pſalmiſt* tells us of thoſe, *That deviſe miſchief upon their Beds, and that travel with Iniquity.* That is; they are in as much Pain and Torment till their wicked Deſigns be accompliſhed, as a Woman in Travail is till ſhe be delivered. Now Sinners, ſince the work of Sin is ſo toilſome, why will you not *work the Works of God?* Doth that Salvation that follows Obedience fright you, or is Heaven and Glory become terrible to you? Is not this it that all Men deſires? Do not your Hearts leap at the mention of it? What then is it that any rational Man can pretend, why he will not work? Is it becauſe you are loth to take Pains? Why then are you ſo laborious in Sinning? Why do you ſo ſweat and toil in carrying Faggots to your own Fire? Why are you continually blowing up thoſe Flames that ſhall for ever burn you? It is in vain to plead this any longer that you are loth to take Pains; for where are there greater Drudges in all the World than Sinners are? The *Devil* can ſcarce find them Work enough, they out-ſin his Temptations; and had they not that Corruption within, the ſcum whereof is continually boiling up in them, they muſt of neceſſity (I was going to ſay) ſometimes be Holy, for want of Imployment; *Satan* could not find them work enough. How, reſtleſs and impatient are they till they have done ſome wicked

The ſame pains that ſome take to damn their Souls might eternally ſave them.
Iſa. 5. 18.
Mic. 7. 8.
Pſal. 36. 4.
Pſal. 7. 4.

wicked Work? And ſometimes they are more reſtleſs and impatient when they done it, through the *Devil*'s Temptations; and yet, notwithſtanding theſe Torments, they will do them again. Are there now more Drudges in the World than theſe are? Doth God require more Pains in his Service than theſe Men take? No, he doth not: Would but Men do as much for their precious Souls, as they do againſt them; would they do as much to ſave them, as they do to deſtroy and damn them; truly their Salvation would not lie upon their Hands unwrought off.

Object. *But ſome may ſay in their Hearts, It is true indeed we are convinced that the Work of Sin is laborious, but yet there is pleaſure in that labour: But to the Works of Obedience we find reluctancy, and to ſtruggle againſt that is exceeding irkſome and grievous, and therefore we cannot work.*

But is it ſo indeed? Is it all Peace and Tranquillity with you when you ſin? Are your Conſciences ſo utterly ſeared as that they make no Reluctancy, give you no Checks or Reproofs, when you ſin? If they do, put that Reluctancy of natural Conſcience againſt ſin, into the Ballance with the Reluctancy of natural Corruption againſt Obedience, and the moſt profligate Sinner in the World ſhall find, though this is more ſtrong and prevalent, yet that is more vexatious and tormenting. God requires no more Labour from you than you now take; nay, this Labour ſhall not put you to ſo much Torment as ſometimes you now feel: The ſame Labour, with more content and ſatisfaction, may perfect your Salvation, that now tends only to conſummate your Deſtruction. What Madneſs then is it for Men not to be perſuaded to *work the Works of God*, when it will coſt them leſs Pains, I mean leſs tormenting Pains? You wear your Lives in the Service of Sin, and at the end of your Days you go down to *Hell*; when with as much eaſe you might inherit *Life* and *Glory*, as you thus purchaſe *Hell* and *Deſtruction*. And is not this great Folly and Madneſs?

Well now, bring all theſe four *Gradations* together, and look upon them all at once, and we ſhall find the Argument ſo ſtrong as nothing can reſiſt it, but the perverſe Reaſonings of Mens own Wills; you will not becauſe you will not: *You muſt work; if you work not in God's Service, you will work in the Devil's Drudgery; if you work Satan's Work, you muſt receive Satan's Wages, which is the Reward of eternal Damnation; and the ſame Labour that you take to damn your own Souls, might ſuffice to ſave them.* Wherefore then ſhall not God imploy you as well as the *Devil*? Hath he not more right to you? Why ſhould you not work out your own *Happineſs*, as well as work out your own *Miſery*? Doth it not concern you more? If Men would but ſet their Reaſon on work in this particular, if they would but ſhew themſelves to be Men, they would ſoon ſet Grace on work and ſhew themſelves to be Chriſtians alſo: It is but turning the Streams of your Actions into the right Channel and the Work is done; ſince that they will inceſſantly flow from you, why ſhould they all fall like *Jordan* into the *dead Sea*, when they might as well run into the infinite *Ocean* of all Happineſs, and carry your Souls along with them alſo? But,

Men ſhould be as diligent to ſave their Souls as the Devil is to deſtroy them. 1 Pet. 5. 8. Job 1. 8.

(5.) *Fifthly*, Conſider this alſo; the Devil works conſtantly and induſtriouſly for your Deſtruction; and will not you much more work for your own Salvation? See the place of the *Apoſtle*, 1 Pet. *He walks about as a roaring Lion, ſeeking whom he may devour.* And therefore when God queſtions him, *Whence comeſt thou, Satan?* He anſwers, *From going up and down to and fro in the Earth, and walking in it.* What Pains doth he take to prompt Men with Temptations, to ſuit Objects and Occaſions to their Corruptions? Still he is at their Right Hand laying Snares and Traps for them that they might fall as his Prey; and wherefore makes he all this ado? Is it not to ſatisfie his Malice and Hatred againſt Men's Souls? And ſhall Malice and Rancor make the *Devil* ſo laborious and unwearied to deſtroy Souls, and ſhall not your own Happineſs and Salvation make you much more diligent to ſave your Souls? Is the *Devil* more concern'd in your Ruin, than you your ſelves are in your own Salvation? Shall the Death of your Souls be more dear to him, than the Life of your Souls is to your ſelves? Learn from *Satan* himſelf how to rate and value your own Souls; Did not he know them to be exceeding precious, he would never take ſo much Pains to get them; and did you but know how precious they are, certainly you would never loſe them ſo contentedly. Let the *Devil* (if you will learn no otherwiſe) teach you

you the worth of your precious Souls; and ſince he thinks no Pains too much to ruin them, why ſhould you think any Pains or Labour too much for to ſave them?

Men take pains in things of far leſs concernments than their Souls.

(6.) Sixthly, *Conſider, you your ſelves do Labour and take Pains in things of far lower and leſſer Concernment than the Salvation of your Souls is.* Men can riſe up early and go to Bed late, eat the Bread of Carefulneſs, and all to get ſome little inconſiderable piece of this World to provide for a frail, ſhort Life here; and who is there that thinks their Pains too much? And why then ſhould you not labour for a future Life in another World, that you confeſs to be infinitely more glorious and deſirable than any thing you can obtain here? To me it is Folly ſo groſs and ſenſeleſs to be bemoan'd, if it were poſſible, with Tears of Blood, that Men ſhould ſo toil for the low Conveniencies of the World, and yet neglect the eternal Happineſs of their precious and immortal Souls, as if they were not worth the looking after. *Sinners*, do you know what a vain, empty Bubble, blown up by the creating Breath of the Almighty, the World is? Do you know it, and yet will you take pains for it, yet will you graſp and ketch at it? Who would doubt when we ſee Men ſo buſy about Impertinencies, and the trivial Concernments of this vain World; who would doubt, but that they were far more anxious and careful about the Things of Heaven, and the Concernments of their Souls? Who would not conclude, but that they who are ſo diligent about petty Trifles, had certainly made ſure that their great Work was done? But, *alas*, would it not aſtoniſh Men and Angels, if we ſhould tell them how fooliſh Sinners are? Would it be believed that rational Creatures, that have immortal Souls that muſt be for ever ſaved or damned, ſhould ſpend all their Time and Strength about nothing, never taking any Care or Thought what will become of them for ever? Would ſuch Folly be believ'd to be in Men? And yet this Madneſs are moſt Men guilty of. We may all of us be aſhamed to lift up our Heads to God, when we confeſs the World to be ſo vain and ſlight a Thing, that if we ſhould get all of it, nay, ſhould we get ten thouſand of them, yet were they not all worth one Soul, that yet we ſhould be ſo fooliſh to ſtrive to get a vain World, to the Neglect, yea, to the Contempt of our precious Souls? It is ſuch Folly as Men would ſcarce ſuſpect that any Perſons ſhould be guilty of it, if it were not ſeen daily in the Practices of almoſt all Men.

To work for Salvation makes Men honourable.

(7.) *Seventhly*, Conſider this: *Are you ambitious? Do you affect true Honour and Dignity? Yes, I know this is the great Idol of the World, that which every one falls down to and Worſhips: Well then, Sinners, here is a way to prefer you all.* To work for Salvation is the moſt honourable Imployment in the World, and Honour that will poſe and nonplus the moſt towring and raiſed *Ambition*, when once it is ſpiritualized. Alas, what poor and contemptible Things are the Grandees and great Ones of the World, though they take great State and Pomp upon them, and will ſcarce own their Inferiours for their Fellow-Creatures; nay, will ſcarce own God himſelf for their Superiour, are yet but like Painted *Flies* that play and buz a while in the Sun-ſhine, and then moulder away and come to nothing? All worldly Honour and Pomp is but imaginary; but would you have that which is ſolid and ſubſtantial? Chriſt tells you how it is to be attained. *If any Man ſerve me, him will my Father honour.* Whatever Honour we have, we hold it by Service; our Works is not only Duty, but Preferment alſo: If any Man ſerve me, he ſhall be honoured. Would you be inrolled for *Right Honourable* in Heaven's Treaſury? Would you be *Peers* of that Kingdom with *Saints* and glorified *Angels?* Then honour God. And how ſhall you honour him, but by obeying him? And he who thus honours God, God will honour him. This is the only real Honour, all other is but airy, fictititious Titles; like *Cyphers*, which as they are placed, ſtand for Hundreds and Thouſands, but are all of the ſame Value when huddled together. So truly the great Ones of the World, if not made honourable by Obedience to God, have but imaginary Excellency; and when *Death* once ſhuffles and huddles them together, *Nobles* with *Ignobles*, will the Duſt and Aſhes of the one ſtand at a Diſtance and make Obeyſance to the other? No, all Honour here ſignifies no more than a *King* upon a *Stage*. But here is a way to attain true Honour, here is the way to it by becoming Servants, not to Command, but to Obey; not to be imperious over others, but to work your ſelves; this is true Honour. Now I ſhall in three Things demonſtrate the Honour of working for

John 12. 26.

Wherein the Honour of working for Salvation conſiſts.

Salvation, that if Men be not very lowly ſpirited, they may be excited unto this honourable Work.

It is a ſpiritual and pure Work.

(1.) Firſt, *It is pure, ſpiritual, refined Work.* In Services among Men, the leſs of Filth and Drudgery there is in them, the more creditable they are accounted. It is an Honour to be imployed in higher and more cleanly Work, when others are buſied about baſer Imployments. Now, Chriſtians, your Work is the higheſt and moſt noble Service imaginable; you are not at all to ſet your Hands to any foul Office; you have nothing to do with that Mire and Sink in which wicked Men are raking, yea, and it is their Work to do it; no, but your Work is all ſpiritual, conſiſting of the ſame pure Imployment that the *Angels* in Heaven ſpend their Eternity about: *Holy Thoughts, divine Affections, heavenly Meditations, ſpiritual Duties*, in theſe lyes your Work, which becauſe of its Purity is therefore very honourable.

It is the Service of an honourable Maſter.

(2.) *Secondly*, Your Work is honourable becauſe it is the Service of a moſt honourable Maſter. We account it a great Credit to tend immediately upon the Perſon of ſome *Prince* or *Potentate*; but what is this to their Honour who are called always to attend upon the Perſon of God himſelf, who is *King* of *Kings* and *Lord* of *Lords*, to be continual Waiters about his Throne? God hath but two Thrones; his Throne of Glory in the higheſt Heavens, about which *Angels* and *glorified Saints* are the Attendants: And his Throne of Grace to which you are called. *Angels* and *Saints* are but your Fellow-Attendants; and if they ſee his Glory in the higheſt Exaltation, you are admitted to ſee it in the next degree; yea, and herein is your Honour ſo great, that you are capable but of one Preferment more, and that is of being removed from one Throne to the other, from attending upon the Throne of Grace, to attend upon the Throne of Glory, ſo great is your Honour.

The Service of God makes us his Friends.

(3.) Thirdly, *Your Work is ſuch as makes you not ſo much Servants, as Friends unto God.* It is an Honour to be Servant unto a King, but much more of a Servant to become a Favourate. Why thus it is in the ſervice of God; you are not only Servants, but Friends and Favourites. *You are my Friends, if you do whatſoever I command you.* A ſtrange Speech; one would think the doing of what is commanded is the Office of a Servant, rather than of a Friend: No, ſays Chriſt, *Henceforth I call you not Servants but Friends; you are my Friends if you do whatſoever I command you.* And certainly no Title ſo truly glorious as that which God put upon *Abraham*, *To be the Friend of God.* Well then, let wicked Men go on ſcoffing and mocking at Obedience in the People of God, let them look on them as poor and low ſpirited Perſons, yet can there be no Honour like unto theirs, to be Attendants upon, yea, the Friends of the great God of Heaven; and there can be no Diſcredit ſo baſe as theirs who are Slaves to the Devil, who is God's Slave; to be a Slave unto the Devil, whom the People of God have in part ſubdued and overcome, and over whom they ſhall ſhortly at once perfectly triumph.

And now having thus, by ſeveral Arguments, preſt this great Duty of working out of our own Salvation, I ſhall now proceed to ſome other Things that are neceſſary to be ſpoken unto from this Doctrine: But becauſe this is a Duty of ſo vaſt Importance, and of ſo univerſal Concernment unto all, and the Slothfulneſs and Backwardneſs of many ſo great, and if perſiſted in, will be ſo ruinous and deſtructive, I ſhall further urge the practice of this Duty upon the Conſciences of Sinners, by theſe following Conſiderations.

Working for Salvation is delightful Work.

(1.) Firſt, *This working for Salvation is the moſt delightful Work and Imployment that a Chriſtian can be ingaged in.* What is it that makes the whole World ſo buſy in the Service of Sin and Satan, but only Pleaſure which they either find or imagine? The *Devil* baits all his Temptations with this enticing Witchcraft, which the World calls Pleaſure, and this is that makes them ſo ſucceſsful. But hath the *Devil* ingroſſed all Pleaſure unto his Service? Can the Ways of God promiſe no Delight? Are they only rough and rugged Ways? *David* certainly thought otherwiſe, when ſpeaking of the Commandments of God, he tells us, *They were ſweeter than the Honey and the Honey-comb.* He could ſqueeze Honey out of them; it is an Expreſſion that ſets forth the exceeding Pleaſantneſs and Delight that is to be found in the ways of Obedience. And truly the whole *Book of Pſalms* is abundantly copious in ſetting forth that Delight that is to be found in the ways of

Pſal. 19. 10.

of God. Ask therefore the Children of God, who are the only ſufficient Judges in this Matter, and they will tell you with one Conſent, that they know no Delight on Earth comparable to that Delight that is to be found in Obedience. Indeed if you are only taken with a ſoft, luxu ious, waſhy Pleaſure, this is not to be found in the ways of Holineſs; but if a ſevere Delight can affect you, a Delight that ſhall not effeminate but innoble you; if you deſire a maſculine, rational, vigorous Pleaſure and Delight, you need not ſeek any further for it than in the ways of Obedience.

Two things make working for Salvation pleaſant.

Now there are *two Things* that make this working for Salvation to be ſo pleaſant; the ſuitableneſs of this Work to the *Agent* or *Worker*, and the viſible Succeſs and Progreſs of the Work it ſelf: And both theſe make the working out of Salvation exceeding pleaſant and delightful to the People of God.

Suitableneſs of the Work to the Agent.

(1.) *Firſt*, It is a Work ſuited to their Natures, and that makes it pleaſant. As Jeſus Chriſt had in a phyſical Senſe, ſo every true Chriſtian hath in a moral Senſe two Natures in one Perſon: There is the divine Nature or the Nature of God, and there is the humane, corrupt Nature, the Nature of ſinful Man, and each of theſe have Inclinations ſuited unto them; there is the carnal part, and that is too apt to be ſeduced and drawn away with the Pleaſures of Sin, that are Objects proportioned to the carnal part: But then there is alſo a divine, and if I may ſo call it, a ſupernatural Nature, imprinted by Regeneration, that only doth reliſh heavenly and ſpiritual Things: So that it is not more natural to a godly Man by reaſon of the Propenſions of the old Nature to ſin againſt God, than it is natural to him, by reaſon of the Propenſions of the new Nature, to obey and ſerve God. Now when Nature acts ſuitably to its own ſway and *pondus*, this muſt needs cauſe two Things: Firſt, *Facility and Eaſineſs:* Secondly, *Delight and Complacency.* Streams flows from the Fountain with eaſe, becauſe they take but their natural Courſe. So the Works of Obedience flow eaſily from that Fountain Principle of Grace that is broken up in the Hearts of the Children of God, becauſe they flow naturally from them; and therefore becauſe Nature makes things eaſie, that eaſineſs will make them pleaſant and delightful. It is true indeed when they work, there is an oppoſition and reluctancy from their other contrary Nature; for as they act ſuitably to the one, ſo they act quite contrary to the other Nature: But doth not the gracious and new Nature as ſtrongly wreſtle againſt and oppoſe the Workings and Eruptions of the old Nature, as the old doth the Workings of the new? Yes, it doth; and therefore you that are truly Regenerate, never ſin becauſe of the eaſineſs of it, becauſe of its ſuitableneſs, becauſe elſe you muſt offer violence to your Nature if you reſiſt a Temptation. Do you not offer violence to your Nature if you cloſe with that Temptation? You are not all of one piece, if I may ſo ſpeak, if you are Regenerate. And what? Muſt the corrupt part only be indulged and gratified, and muſt the renewed part be always oppoſed? Why ſhould not Grace, ſince it is as much, nay, more your ſelf than Sin is, why ſhould not that have the ſame ſcope and liberty to act freely as Sin doth? Truly theſe Things are Riddles to wicked Men, and they are unfit Judges in this Caſe; they wonder what we mean when we ſpeak of Eaſineſs and Delight in ways of Obedience, which they never found to be otherwiſe than the moſt burthenſome Thing in the World. And truly it is no wonder, for they have no Principle ſuited to theſe Things, they are made up only of the old Nature, that is as contrary and repugnant to them as Darkneſs is to Light. But if once God renew and ſanctifie them, then they will confeſs as we do, that the Works of God have more eaſineſs in them than the generality of the World do imagine; and therefore St. *Paul* tells, *That he delighted in the Law of God after the inward Man.* Rom. 7. 22. But why after the inward Man? But becauſe though his corrupt part was contrary thereunto, yet his renewed part, which he calls his inward Man, was ſuited to the Duties of the Law of God, and carried him out as naturally to Obedience as the Spark flies upward. And hence is it that the Children of God delight in the ways of Obedience, becauſe they ſuit with their new Nature that is implanted in them.

Progreſs in working for Salvation makes it pleaſant.

(2.) *Secondly*, Another thing that makes working for Salvation ſo delightful, is, *That viſible Succeſs that the Children of God gain, and that viſible progreſs that they make in this Work.* Nothing doth uſually cauſe greater Delight in Work than to ſee ſome riddance in it, and that we are like at length to bring it to ſome iſſue.

So truly this is that which mightily delights the Children of God to ſee that their Work goes forward, that their Graces thrive, that their Corruptions pine and conſume away, that they are much nearer Salvation than when they firſt believed, that they are perfecting Holineſs in the fear of God, and every Day growing nearer unto Heaven and Happineſs than other: And though theſe Works of theirs are now imperfect, yet they ſhall be ſhortly finiſhed and conſummate in Glory.

Well then, if Pleaſure and Delight do affect you, here you ſee is that which is ſolid and ſubſtantial; it ſprings from Succeſs in your Work, and from that ſuitableneſs that is in your renewed part thereunto alſo. And therefore the more Work, the greater Delight you find; becauſe the greater progreſs you make, and the more ſuitable to it your Will becomes. Nay, your Delight is of the ſame Nature with that which you ſhall enjoy in Heaven: The Work the Bleſſed are there employ'd in is of the ſame Nature with yours; only their ſuitableneſs to it is perfect, and therefore there Delight and Pleaſure is perfect: And accordingly the more ſuitable your Hearts are to your Work, the more Delight and Pleaſure you will find in it. This is that makes Heaven a place of Happineſs becauſe there is no Corruption, no Body of Sin and Death there to make thoſe Duties that are there required from glorified Saints to be irkſom and grievous to them.

The Reward of working for Salvation.

(2.) Secondly, *Conſider the exceeding greatneſs of your Reward. Doth* Job *fear God for nought*, was the Cavil of *Satan*, when God applauded himſelf that he had ſuch a Servant as *Job* was upon the Earth. The *Devil* himſelf thought it no wonder that *Job* ſhould fear and ſerve a rewarding God, a God whoſe Hands are as full of Bleſſings as his Mouth is full of Commands: And yet what were theſe great Somethings that the *Devil* envies *Job* for (and thinks every one would have done as much as he, if they had but as great a Recompence for it?) It was but *Hedging of him about, but bleſſing of the Works of his Hands, and increaſing of his Subſtance*, as it is in *Job* 1. Why, alas! theſe are poor mean *Rewards* to what God intends to beſtow; ſuch Rewards they are as that God ſtill reckons himſelf in Arrears to his Children, till he hath given them ſomething better than he can beſtow upon them here upon Earth: Theſe Things he caſts but as *Crumbs* unto *Dogs*, when he reſerves a far better Portion for his Children. And yet *Satan* thinks *Job* well paid for his Service in having of theſe lower Enjoyments, in cauſing the Works of his Hands to proſper; *Doth* Job *ſerve God for nought?* And therefore if *Satan* doth not wonder that *Job fears* and *ſerves God* for Temporal Mercies, will it not be to the great wonder of *Satan* himſelf that you ſhould not *fear* and *ſerve God*, that have infinitely better Things promiſed to you than Temporal Mercies are? Do you deſerve your Breath, in ſpending of it ſome few Hours in Prayer? Or do you deſerve your plentiful Eſtate, by laying out ſome ſmall part of it for God? Why, to be able to Think or Speak, to enjoy Health and Strength, are ſuch Mercies, though outward Mercies, as can never be recompenced to God, although you ſhould think of nothing but of his Glory, and ſpeak of nothing but of his Praiſe; although you ſhould impair your Health and waſte your Strenth, and languiſh away in the performance of Holy Duties: Theſe, tho' they are Obligations to Obedience, yet they are not the Reward of Obedience; no, far higher and more glorious Things are provided, promiſed and ſhall be conferred upon you, if you will but work. For there is Firſt, your ſet ſtanding Wages, and that is eternal Salvation; no leſs. And Secondly, beſides this there are many incident Vails accrew to God's Servants, in the performance of his Service: And is not here Reward and Wages enough?

Job. 2. 10.

Working for Salvation ſhall be rewarded with Heaven.

(1.) *Firſt*, Conſider *there is that eternal weight of Glory that ſhall be the Reward of the Saints in Heaven.* This now is ſo great that it is impoſſible for you to conceive: It is ſuch as *Eye hath not ſeen, Ear hath not heard, nor hath it ever enter'd into, no nor can it ever enter into the Heart of Man to conceive what God hath prepared for them that love him*, as the *Apoſtle* ſpeaks. If St. *Paul* were now preaching and preſſing this very Conſideration of the infinite, glorious Reward, it would poſſibly be expected, that he who ſuffered a Tranſlation, and was admitted as a *Spy* into the *Land* of *Promiſe*, ſhould at his return make ſome Relation of it, and diſcover ſomething of the Riches and Glory of that Place; and would not all flock about him, as Men do about *Travellers*, to enquire for a Deſcription of the Country

1 Cor. 2. 9.

Country whence they come? Who the People and Inhabitants are? What are their Manners and Cuſtoms? What is their Imployment? Who is their King, and what Subjection they yield unto him? Thus inquiſitive truly our Curioſity would be. And yet when St. *Paul* purpoſely relates his *Voyage* to the other World all that he ſpeaks of it is only this, *I knew a Man caught up into Paradiſe, who heard things that no Man could, nor is it lawful for any Man to utter.* The Glory of Heaven is ſuch that it can never be fully known till it be fully enjoyed; and yet if Heaven were ever made chryſtally tranſparent to you, if ever God opened you a Window into it, and then opened the Eye of your Faith to look in by that Window, think what it was that you there diſcovered, what inacceſſible Light, what cheriſhing Love, what daunting Majeſty, what infinite Purity, what over-loading Joy, what inſupportable and ſinking Glory, what Rays and Sparklings from Crowns and Scepters, but more from the Glances and Smiles of God upon the heavenly Hoſt, who for ever warm and Sun themſelves in his Preſence: And when you have thought all this, then think once again that all your Thoughts are but Shadows and Glimmerings, that there is Duſt and Aſhes in the Eye of your Faith that makes all theſe Diſcoveries come infinitely ſhort of the Native Glory of theſe Things; and then you may gueſs, and gueſs ſomewhat near what Heaven is. Nay as God, by reaſon of his infinite Glory, is better known to us by Negatives than by Affirmatives, by what he is not than by what he is; ſo is Heaven, by reaſon of the greatneſs of its Glory, better known to us by what it is not, than by what it is; and we may beſt conceive of it when it is told us: There is nothing there that may affright or afflict us, nothing that may grieve or trouble us, nothing that may moleſt or diſquiet us, but we ſhall have the higheſt and ſweeteſt Delight and Satisfaction that the vaſt and capacious Soul of Man can either receive or imagine. Are you now burthened with Sin and Corruption, thoſe Infirmities that tho' they are unavoidable, yet they make your Lives a Burthen to you? Why the old Man ſhall never more moleſt you there, that Body of Sin and Death ſhall never enter with you into Life; the Motions of Sin ſhall for ever ceaſe in that Eternal Reſt. Are you here oppreſſed with Sorrows? Do Afflictions overwhelm you? Why there God ſhall kiſs your blubbered Eyes dry again, and wipe with own Hands all Tears from your Eyes? Are you peſter'd here with Temptations, and doth the evil One, without intermiſſion, haunt you with black and helliſh Thoughts, with dreadful and horrible Dejections? There you ſhall be quite beyond the Caſt of all his fiery Darts; and inſtead of theſe you ſhall have within you an ever-living Fountain bubbling up ſpiritual and ſprightly Contemplations and holy Raptures for ever, ſuch as you never knew when you were here upon Earth, no not when you were in the moſt ſpiritual and heavenly Frame. Are you here clouded and caſt down with Deſertions, and doth God ſometimes hide his Face from you in Diſpleaſure? In Heaven there ſhall be an everlaſting Sun-ſhine, God ſhall look freely and ſtedfaſtly upon you, and you ſhall no more ſee him through a *Glaſs darkly, but Face to Face*, without any interruption or obſcurity: *Think O Soul!* (and then think of any Thing elſe if thou canſt) What is it to ſee the *Father of Lights* in his own Rays? What is is it to ſee the *Sun of Righteouſneſs* lie in the Boſom of the *Father of Lights?* What is to feel the Eternal Warmth and Influence of the *Holy Ghoſt* ſpringing from both theſe Lights? What is it to converſe with *Holy Angels and the Spirts of juſt Men made perfect*, to joyn with them in ſinging the ſame *Hallelujahs* for ever? And when you have thought all this, think once more, Heaven is all this, and more alſo. Well then, ſince Heaven is ſuch, and ſince ſuch a Heaven as this is may be yours, what ſhould I ſay more, but only with the *Apoſtle? Having theſe Promiſes*, dearly Beloved, Promiſes of ſo certain and vaſt a Glory as this is, *let us cleanſe and purify our ſelves from all filthineſs and pollution both of Fleſh and Spirit, and perfect Holineſs in the fear of God.* Is this Heaven attainable upon your Working? Will God give it into Wages after working? Will he ſhare Stars, nay will he ſhare himſelf and his Chriſt among you? Truly methinks Chriſtians ſhould not have patience to hear any more, methinks it is too much dulneſs to indure another Motive beſides this: Why do you not interrupt me then? Why do you not cry out, *What ſhall we do that we may work the Works of God?* Why do you not ſay and pray, *Lord, work in us both to will and to do of thy good pleaſure?* Why is there not ſuch a holy Tumour and Diſturbance among you, ſome Queſtioning, ſome Praying, ſome Reſolving, all ſome way or other teſtifying a ſenſe

2 Cor. 7. 1.

of

of Salvation upon you? But, alas, there is a general Silence; Men and Women ſit as quiet in their Seats, as if their Seats were filled rather with Monuments than with Men; as if Heaven and eternal Salvation were of no Concernment for them to look after. And wherefore is all this, but becauſe their Sight is ſhort and their Faith weak? They do not ſee afar off, nor believe afar off: Heaven they look upon as at a great diſtance, and very unwilling they are to go ſo long upon Truſt; and ſenſual Perſons, as they are, they look for preſent Reward and preſent Wages, and will not ſtir till they have received it: And this is the *Reaſon* why the Conſideration of this great and infinite Glory affects Men no more, they look for ſomething preſent.

The Reward in working for Salvation is great.

Well, be it ſo. Will God's Work bring in no preſent Profit? Yes, it will, and that ſuch as you your ſelves ſhall acknowledge to be great. And therefore,

(2.) *Secondly*, Beſides thoſe ſet Wages that are to be received at the end of our Lives, there are many Vails and occaſional Incomes that accrew to God's Servants in the performance of their Work. As,

God will provide for us while we are working. 1 Tim. 4. 8.

First, *Such are aſſured that God will provide for them while they are doing of his Work*; he hath aſſured them of the Mercies and good Things of this Life by Promiſe. I do not ſay of the troubleſome abundance of them, but of the Enjoyment of them ſo far forth as they are Mercies and good Things. *Godlineſs*, ſays the Apoſtle, *is profitable for all things, having the promiſe of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come.* It hath the Promiſes of this Life, and that is a large *Charter*, by virtue whereof God feeds them and cloaths them, and provides Suſtenance and comfortable Enjoyments for all thoſe that work in his Service. And therefore that I may note it by the way, moſt Men are greatly miſtaken that labour and toil in the World to get Riches and great Eſtates, this is not the right thriving Courſe; if you would grow Rich, *Firſt ſeek the kingdom of Heaven and the Righteouſneſs thereof; work out your own Salvation:* Labour for the true Riches, and this will not only increaſe and improve your inward Graces, but increaſe and improve your outward Mercies alſo. It is true indeed *Earth Worms* may by carking and caring, by pinching and drudging increaſe their heap of Dirt; but let who will, for my part I will not nor cannot call that Man a rich Man, that hath more Curſes than Enjoyments. Well thus we ſee what great Vails God gives his Servants; he gives them not only thoſe of another Life, but thoſe of this Life ſo far as they are Mercies, and that is one *Vail.*

(2.) Secondly, *As God provides for his Servants while they are working, ſo their very Work is Wages and Reward enough for it ſelf.* If God ſhould only give us our Labour for our Pains, as we uſe to ſay, and never beſtow a Penny more upon us than what we get in his Service, we were even in that ſufficiently rewarded. It was certainly a voilent Pang of diſtempered Zeal in that Perſon, that carried Fire in the one Hand and Water in the other; and being demanded a Reaſon of it, his anſwer was, He would burn up Paradiſe and quench Hell-fire, that ſo God might be ſerved, and Holineſs embraced upon no other Motive s than themſelves. This was a violent Pang and cannot be allowed; this Fire was ſtrange Fire, and this Water was too much muddied to be Water of the Sanctuary. But yet certainly, that Man, who abſtracting from the Conſideration of *Heaven* and *Hell*, eternal Rewards and Puniſhments, would not rather choſe the Works of God and the Ways of Holineſs, than the Works of Sin and the Ways of Iniquity, let that Man know he never yet had much Acquaintance with that Way and with that Work. What ſays holy *David* concerning the Commandments of God? *In keeping them there is great Reward*; not only after keeping them, when thoſe Commands that have here been the Rule of our Holineſs and Obedience, ſhall in Heaven become the Meaſure of our Reward and Happineſs; *but in the very keeping of them*, while we are obſerving and obeying, there is ſo great a Reward, that we ſhould have no cauſe to complain, ſhould God beſtow no more upon us, than to ſuffer us to obey his Law. For,

By working for Salvation we enjoy Communion with God.

(1.) Firſt, *Herein we uphold Communion with God and Chriſt, through the holy Spirit.* What is Communion, but only a mutual Intercourſe of Grace and Duty, when Grace received reflects back again in the returns of Duty? Then is Communion maintained between God and the Soul, when we return Duty for Grace. Now is this nothing to enjoy Fellowſhip and Communion with the great God of Heaven and Earth; to be admitted to him, to walk and converſe familiarly with him and to enjoy

enjoy him, to see him who is invisible, to lean upon him who is Almighty, to enjoy him who is infinite? Is all this nothing? Will not the Souls of those who have by Experience tasted the sweetness of these Things, cry out, *They are so excellent and transcendent, that there is but one Thing more desirable, and that is immediate Enjoyment?* What is Heaven it self but Communion with God at a nearer Hand? Here it is by Faith, there by Vision; here by Ordinances, there by immediate Influences; here it is by Duty, there by Union. And therefore if the Consideration of a future Heaven be not cogent and prevailing with you, behold here is a Heaven at present; here is Happiness for your Work, as well as for your Reward. It was nobly spoken of *Galleacius Carriciolus*, *Cursed*, says he, *be that Man who preferreth the whole World before one hours Communion with Jesus Christ.* And certainly they who have once tasted the sweetness of this Communion, will subscribe to that *Anathema.*

Peace of Conscience an effect of working for Salvation.

(2.) Secondly, *There is usually great Peace and Tranquility of Conscience attends and accompanies this working for Salvation*; that fills the Souls with as great a Calm as the World had the first Morning of its Creation, when there was no Wind or Tempest to discompose it. Never is the Soul more at rest than when it is most at work, I dare appeal to the Experience of the People of God in this Case. Do not your most solemn Feasts come in by your Obedience? Doth ever Conscience look so friendly and pleasantly upon you as when it finds you active in the Ways of God? It then wears not a Wrinckle or Frown upon its Face; as Sin ruffles it, so Duty smooths it out again; and this causeth such Peace and Quietness in the inward Man, as yields more satisfaction than all the noise and ruffling Gallantry and Jollity in the World can. *This is our rejoycing, the Testimony of our Consciences, that in simplicity and godly Sincerity we have had our Conversation in the World.* So that if Men care not for the Enjoyment of God, yet if they love the Enjoyment of themselves, if they would avoid Discords and Civil Wars in their own Breasts, this were enough to excite them to this pacifying Work, that atones and reconciles Conscience unto themselves.

2 Cor. 1. 12.

In working for Salvation God gives in many Testimonies of his Favour.

(3.) Thirdly, *In this working for Salvation God gives in many evident Testimonies of his special favour and acceptation unto the Souls of his Servants. Thou meetest him,* says the Prophet, *that rejoyceth and worketh Righteousness.* Thou meetest him, how? Not to contend with him, as with *Jacob*; not to slay him, as thou didst *Balaam*; but to embrace him, to reveal and manifest thy self unto him. If you have any comfortable Evidences that God is yours in a strict Bond of an everlasting and unalterable Covenant, and that you are accepted of him in the well-beloved: Examine how you attained to this Evidence; Was it not through Obedience and Working? This is the way whereby God manifests himself unto the Souls of his; and should your comfortable Persuasions not come in thus by *Obedience* and Working; They are but *Enthusiastical* and groundless Presumptions, and not true and divine Assurance. The *Apostle* in *Pet.* 2. exhort us, *To make our Calling and Election sure:* But how is that to be done? Why it is *by giving diligence.* What is it Men desire and wish for next to Heaven? Is it not Assurance of it? Would you not have the Terrors and Torments of Conscience apprehending and pre-occupating your own Condemnation, eased and removed? Would you not have the unquiet tossings and fluctuations of your Minds, because of the uncertainty of your future State and Condition, settled and confirmed? Why then be perswaded to Work; believe it, this Evidence is never received in any other way than in a way of Duty: God will not hold his Light of Assurance to them who will not work the Works of Obedience.

Obedience accompanied with Joy.

(4.) Fourthly, *Those that are diligent in working for Salvation, many times have high Spring-tides of Joy.* Joy that is unspeakable and Glorious, that rusheth in upon the Soul and ravisheth it with a sweet and potent Delight, while it is in ways of Obedience. Now this, though it be not ordinary with every Christian, yet God sometimes vouchsafes it, especially to the most laborious working Christians, as a Cordial to revive and quicken them that they should not faint and grow weary in their Work. He gives them many times such prelibations of future Glory, such bright Glimpses of himself passing before them, that they scare know wherein their state differs from the state of the Glorified, unless it be that it is shorter in the duration, lasting not so long as theirs. Well then, should you be asked as they were in the *Parable, Why stand you here idle all the day long?* You could not return the same Answer as they

they did, *because no Man hath hired us*; for God hath hired you, and that at no less a rate than all these great and glorious Things that have been propounded to you do amount unto: A glorious Heaven, a blessed Work that is accompained with Communion with God, Peace of Conscience, Assurance of divine Favour and Joy in the *Holy Ghost*; and if all this will not persuade you, certainly you set a mighty price upon your own Sloth; only let me say this, beware that these Souls of yours that you will not part with to God for Salvation, beware you do not sell them to the Devil for nothing.

There is an eternal Rest after working. Heb. 4. 9.

(3) *Thirdly*, Consider your Incouragements after your Work is done, there is an eternal Rest that waits you. I have already consider'd Heaven as a Reward for working, let us now consider it as a Rest after working. And so the *Apostle* tells us, *there remains a Rest for the People of God.* And in *Rev.* 14. we read, *Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, from henceforth, yea saith the Spirit for they rest from their Labours and their Works do follow them.* They rest from their Labours.

No Affliction in Heaven.

(1.) First, *They rest from their Labour in working under Affliction.* Sometimes Afflictions are Spurs and Incentives, and sometimes they are Burthens and Discouragements to Obedience. But when we arrive at Heaven we shall no longer need the Spur to quicken us, nor shall we any longer bear that Burthen to oppress us, but cast it down at Heaven's Gate, where never Sorrow nor Suffering durst yet appear. And,

No Desertion in Heaven.

(2.) Secondly, *In Heaven you shall rest from your Labour in working under Desertion.* Now though you do work, yet it may be you apprehend God frowning upon you, and finding fault with all that you do. Now it may be though God doth cause the clear Light of his Precepts and Spirit to shine before you to direct you what your Work is that you should do, yet he makes it dismal Darkness behind you, and shuts up the Light of his Comfort that you cannot see what Work you have done; and this is your great Trouble, you work and labour, and yet you know not whether you shall be accepted. Obedience were easie and pleasant Work, *says the Soul*, if I knew that God did regard me; but alas! I pray, and he shuts out my Prayer from him; I lay hold upon him, *but he shakes me off in displeasure*; *I obey, but he rejects all my Services*; *and this is the Anguish and Torture of my Life.* This indeed is Matter of great Grief and Trouble. But know, *Oh Soul!* thou shalt not long work thus in the dark, shortly thou shalt be above these Clouds, and then thou shalt see that those Prayers that thou thought'st were vainly scatter'd and lost in the Air, are become a Cloud of sweet Incense hovering before the Throne of God. And those Tears that thou thought'st were dropt in vain upon the Earth, are all gathered up and preserved in God's Bottle. And those poor Duties of thine, that for their own meanness and vileness thou thought'st God would scorn, yet through that worth that is put upon them by the Intercession of Christ, are ranked in the same degree of Acceptation as the most perfect Services of the Angels themselves are. Have but patience a while and continue working and thou shalt see a happy Issue, when the Clouds of Darkness and Desertion, that now lie upon thy Spirit, shall be all scattered and blown away.

In Heaven there is Rest from Sin.

(3.) Thirdly, *You shall also rest from your Labour in working against the continual Workings of your own Corruptions*; which shall then at once both cease to act and cease to be: And this indeed is the great Thing that makes it such a blessed Rest to the People of God. Indeed God cuts you out your Work in his Commands, but it is the old Man within you that makes it to be tedious, irksome and difficult unto you; God makes it not so, but your Corruption makes it so; and this it doth two ways: *First*, By deadning your Heart to it: And *Secondly*, By turning your Heart against it. Deadness and dulness to and aversness from the ways of holy Obedience, are the greatest cause of all that Toil and Pains that most take in the Work and Service of God, if ever they will bring it to a good Issue. Now both these shall shortly cease and be removed, if you but wait and continue striving against them.

In Heaven there is Rest from labouring with a dead heart in the ways of God.

(1.) First, *You shall rest from all that Labour that you take with a dead and heavy Heart in the ways of God.* Now you are continually calling upon it, *Awake, awake my Glory*, now you are continually tugging of it to get it a little more forward, lifting of it up to get it a little higher towards God and Heaven. Now you stand in need of continual quickening Grace to actuate and excite those Lumps of Lead that

that lie heavy within your Breasts; and it is the greatest disquietment of your Lives that you find your Hearts so heartless and listless to what is holy and spiritual. It is with them as with some great Bells, that you must pull long at the Rope before you can make them sound. Is not this the daily Complaint of God's Children, that their Hearts are dull and heavy and they cannot raise them? And this makes the ways of Obedience, yea, this makes their very Lives become burthensome. Well, have but patience for a while, and continue still to struggle against this sad Indisposition, and it will not be long before you shall rest from this Labour also. Though now you are as *Birds* whose Bodies are too heavy for their Wings, when you stretch them forth and would fain be soaring up to Heaven, you can only run up and down and flutter upon the Earth; yet shortly these heavy and cloggy Bodies shall fall off and you shall be all Wing, free from all Deadness and Straitness, Distraction and Weariness in the Ways of God that now afflict you: Then shall your Affections be always intent and not languish, always burning and yet never waste nor consume; every Motion of your Soul shall then shoot themselves to God as quick as the Lightning, and yet constant as the Sun-beams. And those who are now out-stript by weak and underling Christians, shall then be able to keep pace in their Obedience, even with the *Holy Angels* themselves.

In Heaven there shall be a Resting from the opposition of our Heart against Duty.

(2.) And then Secondly, *In Heaven there shall be a resting from all that Labour that the People of God now take in the ways of Holy Obedience, through the averseness of their Hearts from them, and the opposition of their Hearts against them.* There is that contradiction in the carnal part against what is holy and spiritual, that the Godly cannot bring themselves to the performance of it without much Strife and Contention, *the Flesh lusteth against the Spirit*; and when the spiritual part calleth for holy Thoughts and heavenly Affections, the corrupt and fleshly part sends forth noisome and stinking Vapours, obstructing the Good that we would do, and infecting that little Good that we do perform: So that as if working were not a sufficient Imployment, a Christian must Fight that he may Work; and this is it that makes working for Salvation so laborious, because we must Fight and Work at once. But it shall not be long before that which hinders shall be removed, and then as you are not under a sad necessity of offending God, so also you shall be under a most blessed necessity of serving God, and shall find no more trouble in that Service, than in those Actions which you now cannot but do. And thus shall you have a happy Rest from all that Labour and Pains that your Corruptions here made you take. And therefore be incouraged to persevere in well-doing, perfect the Work you have undertaken in spight of all opposition from your own corrupt Hearts, for assure your selves this troublesome Inmate shall not long disquit you. I might also add,

Saints in Heaven are free from Satan's Temptations.

(4.) Fourthly, *You shall then rest from your Labour in working against Satan's Temptations*; who is now buffeting of you while you are here upon Earth, but in Heaven the evil One shall not approach near to touch you. There you shall no more trouble your selves to know how to distinguish between the *Injections* of *Satan* and the *Ebullitions* of your own Corruptions, for you shall know neither there; you shall then stand no more upon your own Guard and keep Centinel to your own Soul, nor conflict with any of *Satan*'s Temptations, but shall for ever triumph in Victories and Conquests over them.

This is that blessed *Rest* that you shall shortly possess if you will but now Work. And what is it that comforts the *painful Labourer* but this, that though his Work be hard and difficult, yet the Evening will soon shut in, and he shall then betake himself to quiet Rest and Repose? What is it that comforts the *wearisome Traveller*, but this? Every Step of his long Way brings him nearer to his Home, where he shall enjoy a longer Rest: And shall not the same incourage and support you in your Way and Work? What though the Work be painful and laborious? Yet it will not be long before you shall lie down in the Bed of the Grave, and sweetly sleep away a short Night of Oblivion that is between this and the *Resurrection*, and your tired weary Souls shall then repose and nestle themselves in the warm Bosom of God himself. What though the Way be long and tedious to the Flesh? Yet you are Travelling to your Father's House, where you are sure to be welcome, and where you shall enjoy an Eternity of Rest and Repose, and shall sit down with *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, and the whole Ring of

glorious Saints, discourſing to them of the Dangers and Difficulties that you have paſſed through in getting to them. Doth it not ſweeten the Toil and Pains that you take in your *Youth*, to think that thereby you are laying up that whereupon you may live at Eaſe hereafter, and ſpare the weakneſs of *Old Age?* And is it not much more Rational that while you are in this World, which may be called the *Youth of Eternity*, you ſhould lay up a good Foundation, and treaſure up a large, rich Stock, upon which you might live at Eaſe for *Ever?* Why ſhould you not be as wiſe and politick for Heaven, as for a little of the periſhing Things of this World? Will you Labour that you may Reſt here, where your Reſt ſhall certainly be diſquieted and you ſhook out of it; and will you not labour that you may Reſt in Heaven, where alone you can enjoy an Everlaſting Reſt? I know it is that inveterate prejudice that Men have taken up againſt the Ways of God, that they are painful and laborious, and this invalidates all Reaſons and Arguments that we bring them to perſuade them to work. Reſt, that is it they would have; and though God tells them they ſhall have an *Eternal Reſt* if they will but work a while; and tells them on the other Hand, *that they ſhall never enter into Reſt*, if they do not work, that they ſhall never enjoy more Eaſe than what they can find in *Hell* it ſelf, where there Groans and Bellowings, together with the Smoak of that bottomleſs Pit ſhall aſcend up for ever; yet ſuch is the madneſs of Mens *Folly*, that neither the *Reſt* of *Heaven*, nor the *Reſtleſsneſs* of *Hell*, can ſtir or move them, but they roll themſelves up in their own Sloth and will hear nothing, nor lay any thing to Heart that may rouze or awaken them. Hath not God often called upon them by his Miniſters? *Sinners, Sinners, awake*, beſtir your ſelves, *Hell-fire* is kindling about you, *God* is ready to open his Mouth to pronounce Sentence againſt you, *Satan* is ready to lay hold of you and to drag you to be tormented. One would think ſuch Execrations as theſe are, ſhould awaken the *Carkaſſes* that you ſit over, were they not in their final ſtate; and yet with you whoſe Souls are yet in their Bodies, but know not how ſoon they may be in *Hell*, who among you are moved with all that hath or can be ſaid of this Matter? Nay, are you not like ſleepy Men when jogged, ready to grow pettiſh and to quarrel with us? Why do you moleſt us? Why do you envy us our Reſt? Why do you diſturb our Peace, and will not let us alone? Shall I ſay to you now, as once our Saviour ſaid to his Diſciples? *Sleep on, and take your Reſt*; ſleep on, and nod your ſelves into Deſtruction; ſleep on, and never wake more till the Flames of Hell awaken you. Truly we come not to diſturb your Reſt, but we come to inform and guide you to a better Reſt than what you can find here, even an eternal Reſt, a Reſt with him that is immortal, a Reſt with him who alone is unchangeable; and is not this Reſt worth a little Pains and Struggling to obtain? Do you think you are always to believe and to repent, always to obey and mortifie your Corruptions? You cannot think ſo, unleſs you think you are always to live in this World: No, there is a Reſt remains for the People of God, after a few ſhort Days be gone. It is not therefore your Eaſe that you ſeek when you will not work; no, it is rather your Pain and eternal Torment, which ſhall certainly then be given unto all ſlothful Perſons; when the induſtrious and painful Chriſtian, that labours and works for Salvation, ſhall be admitted into the Eternal Reſt that he is aſpiring after, and hath already embraced in his Hope and Faith.

Matth. 26. 45.

In Heaven there is an Eternal Work.

(4.) *Fourthly*, Conſider, *As in Heaven there is an eternal Reſt, ſo alſo in Heaven there is an eternal Work to be done:* And therefore you ſhould inure your ſelves to that Work while you are here upon Earth. If Happineſs, according to the *Philoſopher*'s Notion, conſiſts in Operation, then in Heaven where there is the moſt perfect Happineſs, there muſt needs be the moſt perfect Operation. And therefore, whatever hath been ſpoken of Reſt that remains, yet you are not ſo to conceive of it as poſſibly ſome groſs enough are apt to wiſh and fancy to themſelves, as if in Heaven the bleſſed were unactive and enjoyed there only a long Vacation, and only ſtretched themſelves on that Flowery Bank, and ſo void of Cares and Fears lull'd away an Eternity: No, theſe are too low and brutiſh Apprehenſions for the Glory of that Place. That Reſt that is there to be expected and enjoyed is *operative working Reſt*; it is both Reſt and Exerciſe at once, and therefore it is a true *Paradox*, though the Saints in Heaven reſt from their Labours, yet they never reſt from their Working; continually are they bleſſing and praiſing of God, *Aſcribing Glory, and Honour and Power to him that ſits upon the Throne, and to*

to the Lamb for evermore: Always are they beholding, admiring and adoring of God, and burning in Love to each other, and mutually rejoycing in God and in one another: And this is the Work of that Eternal Reſt, a Work never to be intermitted nor to ceaſe. And therefore it is worth our obſerving, that both thoſe Places that do chiefly ſpeak of the future Reſt of the People of God, do alſo intimate a Work in that Reſt. So the *Apoſtle* to the *Hebrews* tells us, *There remains a Reſt for the People of God*; the Word is, *There remains a Sabbath for the People of God.* Look now as you are to be imployed on a *Sabbath*, ſuch ſhall be your Imployment in your *Eternal Reſt.* Is it not your Work now upon a *Sabbath-Day* to raiſe your Thoughts and Affections to Heaven, to fix and terminate them upon God, to maintain Communion with him, to admire him in all his Works both of Grace and Providence, to ſtir up your own Hearts, and to quicken the Hearts of others to praiſe and adore him? Why this ſhall be the Work of your *Eternal Sabbath.* And when you are at any time lifted up to a more than ordinary Spiritualneſs in theſe Things, then may you give ſome gueſs what your Work ſhall be in Heaven, and what the frame of your Hearts ſhall be in your Eternal Reſt. And ſo that other place in the *Revelations*, *Bleſſed are the dead that die in the Lord, for they reſt from their labours, and their works follow them.* Which may be meant not only of the Reward of their Works that they ſhall then receive, but of the Works themſelves that here they performed on Earth; theſe ſhall follow them and enter into Heaven with them; and as they were done by them weakly and imperfectly here, ſo there the very ſame Works ſhall be done by them with abſolute and conſummate Perfection; all thoſe Works I mean that for the Matter and Subſtance of them do not connote a ſinful State and Condition. Now then, ſince you muſt be imploy'd in ſuch a Work as this is to Eternity, why do you not accuſtom your ſelves to it while you are here? The *Apoſtle* to the *Coloſſians*, *Bleſſeth God who had made them meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light.* Were it a meet thing that thoſe that ſpend their whole time in Sin, ſhould be abrubtly ſnatcht up into Heaven, to ſpend an Eternity there in Holineſs? And therefore God accuſtoms thoſe whom he ſaves in an ordinary way and manner, to work thoſe Works here on Earth that they are to be imployed in hereafter in Heaven; here they are *Apprentices* as it were that they may learn the *Trade* of Holineſs, that when that time comes they may become fit *Citizens* of the *New Jeruſalem*; here God is trying their Eyes with more qualified and allayed Diſcoveries of himſelf that when they come to view him Face to Face, they may be able to bear the exceeding Brightneſs of his Glory. And therefore though you profeſs Heaven to be your Country, and *that you are Strangers and Pilgrims here on Earth*; yet ſay not with the Captive *Jews*, *How ſhall we ſing the Song of Sion in a ſtrange Land*? Yes, you muſt accuſtom your ſelves to that *Song*, you muſt mould and warble it here on Earth, that you may be perfect in it when you come to join with *Saints* and *Angels* in their Eternal *Hallelujahs.* You muſt try your Eyes by ſeeing of God, and your Voices by ſinging that *Song* that you muſt continually ſing in *Heaven.* And were it only for this diſpoſing and fitting of your ſelves for the Work of Heaven, this were Motive enough to perſuade to begin it now.

Heb. 4. 9.

Col. 1. 12.

Pſal. 137.

(5.) Fifthly, *Another incouraging Conſideration to perſuade you to work out your own Salvation, is this; as your Work is great, ſo the Helps and Aſſiſtances that God gives for the performance of this Work are many:* So that your Work is not greater than your Aids are, nor is it more difficult than they are potent. And therefore though you are weak in your ſelves, and ſo weak that were you left to your own Strength you would faint in the moſt eaſie Service, yea, the weight but of one holy Thought would ſink you, for *we are not ſufficient*, ſays the Apoſtle, *as of our ſelves to think any good thing:* Yet when we conſider thoſe mighty *Auxiliaries* that are afforded and promiſed, as Comfort when we Droop, Support when we are Weak, that we ſhall Riſe when we Fall, Recruits when we are Worſted, Omnipotency to ſupply our Impotency, All-ſufficiency to make up our Defects: When we conſider theſe Things, then may we triumphantly ſay with the Apoſtle, *When we are Weak, then are we Strong*; and though of our ſelves we are nothing, and therefore can do nothing, yet through theſe mighty Aſſiſtances we are able to do all Things. Now I ſhall rank theſe *Auxiliary* Forces into Two *Bands.* Some are External, others are Internal. External Helps are various: I ſhall only inſtance in Three.

A Chriſtian hath many helps to work for Salvation.

(1.) Firſt, *You have the exciting Examples of others, who have already happily gone through this Work.* You are not commanded that which never yet was impoſed upon any of the Sons of Men, nor that whoever undertook failed in the performance, and ſunk under the burthen of it: No, there are Hundreds and Thouſands gone before you, from whom God required as much as he doth from you, theſe have demonſtrated that the Work is poſſible, and the Reward certain. And therefore as *Iſrael* followed the Cloud for their Conduct into the *Land of Canaan*: So may you be led into a *Land* of better *Promiſe* by a *Cloud of Witneſſes* of thoſe who have already paſſed through the ſame Faith, Patience and Obedience, wherein you are to follow them. It is *Superſtition* heightned to *Idolatry*, to make uſe of the departed *Saints* as ſubſtituded *Mediators* and *under-Advocates* unto Chriſt, that Chriſt may be our *Advocate* unto God the Father; what their preſent *Prayers* for us are we know not, but this we are certain of, their paſt *Example* ought to be propounded and improved by us for our Incouragement in the ways of Holineſs and Obedience. Hence the Apoſtle exhorts us that we *ſhould be diligent, not ſlothful*; and he grounds it upon this, *becauſe in ſo doing, we ſhould be followers of them who through Faith and Patience inherit the Promiſes.* In difficult and hazardous Enterprizes, every Man is apt to ſtand ſtill and ſee who will lead the way, and according to the Succeſs of the firſt Attempters, ſo either to be incouraged or diſmayed. Now what ſays our Saviour, *Mat.* 11. 12. *The Kingdom of Heaven ſuffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.* You are not the forlorn Hope, you are not the firſt Aſſailors: No, whole Armies of Saints have in former Ages ſtorm'd Heaven; they have heretofore planted ſtrong Batteries againſt it, and made wide Breaches in it; they have heretofore entred and taken poſſeſſion; and ſtill the paſſage is as open for you, and the Conqueſt as eaſie as for them; and you may ſee them beckoning out of Heaven to you, and hear them calling to you, *Fellow Soldiers*, bend your Force hither, there is your Labour, here is your Reſt; there are your Enemies, here is your Crown and Victory; believe it, there are no more Dangers for you to paſs through, no more Difficulties for you to meet with than what we have paſſed through, yea, and paſſed with ſo much ſafety as not ſo much as one Soul of us miſcarried, not a Soul left dead on the place; we ſtruggled againſt the ſame Corruptions that you do, and overcame them; againſt the ſame Temptations, and baffled them; againſt the ſame Devils, and routed them; againſt the ſame Flatteries, and Oppoſitions of a baſe World and deſpiſed them: Believe it upon our Experience, all theſe Things are but Scare-Crows ſet in the ways of Obedience on purpoſe to affright you, but there is no danger at all in them unleſs you fear them; this they tell you with one conſent: And therefore if *Examples* are any Incouragement, as indeed they are almoſt the greateſt: If Imitation hath any force to Obedience, as too often we find it hath great force to ſin; why ſhould we not hereby quicken our ſelves? Why do you not ariſe and preſs upon the Footſteps of them who have gone before you, and ſhew'd you that the way is both certain and paſſable? Are you called to exerciſe *Self-denial? Abraham* looks down from Heaven upon you, and tells you that he was ready to Sacrifice his beloved *Iſaac*. Are you afraid of the Scoffs and Jears of a ſlearing World? Why *Noah* builded an Ark; *Moſes* relinquiſh'd the Honours of *Pharoah*'s Court, and met with as many Perſecutions and Afflictions, and underwent as many Taunts and Flouts as you are like to do. Are you called to lay down your Lives for the Teſtimony of Jeſus and a good Conſcience? Why *Stephen* tells you a Storm of Stones fell upon him, and brake open the Priſon, and ſet the Priſoner free; his Soul eſcaped, that broke out of the Cage, and as a Bird took Wing and flew to Heaven. Are you aſſaulted with Temptations? St. *Paul* looks down and tells you that he had much ſtronger Temptations than you have, and yet he got ſafe to Heaven? Yea, our great Maſter and Pattern Jeſus Chriſt wrought out all Obedience; and what were the Motives that put him upon this mighty Undertaking? It was not for his own Salvation and Happineſs, but it was for ours: Nay, the *Scripture* goes yet lower, it was, *To leave us an Example that we ſhould follow his Steps.* Now ſhall Chriſt do all this, not for himſelf, but for us, and ſhall we ſit ſtill and do nothing for our ſelves? Shall Chriſt take ſo much Pains to ſet us an Example, and ſhall not we follow that Example? We who have ſo great a Happineſs to work for, and ſo great a Pattern to work by? Shall we be ſlothful in procuring our own Good, ſince Chriſt was ſo

1 Pet. 2. 21.

ſo laborious and expenſive, not in procuring Good to himſelf, but in procuring Good for others? Methinks theſe Things ſhould add ſome Spurs to our Endeavours, and excite us to follow the Examples of thoſe that are gone before us, yea, and to leave an Example unto them that are to come after us; and though we do come after the Examples of others who are gone before us, yet the conſideration of their Examples who have gone through this Work, may excite us not to come behind them in any good Work.

(2.) Secondly, *God holds out to us the Light of his Goſpel-Truth and Ordinances, whereby to help us in our Work.* What Chriſt ſaith of himſelf is applicable unto all, *We muſt work the Works of God while it is Day; the Night cometh wherein no Man can work.* Joh. 9. 4. You are not ſhut up in Darkneſs, you are not muffled up in the Clouds of Error and Ignorance; or if you are, it is not becauſe you have not Light ſhining about you, but becauſe you ſhut it out when it is breaking in upon you. It is not a double Labour that is put upon you, firſt to find out your Duty, and then to perform it; no, the Light ſhines about you, and unleſs you will ſeal up your Eyes againſt it, it is impoſſible but that it will ſometime flaſh in upon you, and diſcover both what you have miſ-done, and what you ought to do. The *Mahometans* have a *Tradition* among them, That *Moſes Law* and *Chriſts Goſpel* were written at firſt with Ink made of pure Light: This Conceit of theirs, though it be fond and ridiculous, yet it carries a myſtick Truth in it; the Scripture is as plain for matter of Duty, as if it had been written with a *Sun-beam.* Ordinances are diſpenſed freely and powerfully, ſo great a throng of Teachers and ſuch variety of Goſpel-Adminiſtrations, that Men muſt take almoſt as much Pains to keep themſelves ignorant of their Duty, as would ſuffice to perform their Duty. And wherefore think you is all this glorious Light given you? Is it not that you might work by it? Doth a Maſter light up a Torch or Candle only that his Servants might play about it? And wherefore doth God light up the *Sun* of *Truth* in the *Firmament* of his *Church?* Is it only that you ſhould dally and trifle with it? No, it ſhines that you may work by it, and truly work by it you do; but alas! How many do work the Works of Darkneſs by the glorious Light of Truth? How many have Light enough to ſee that they are notoriouſly wicked and prophane Swearers, Drunkards, Deſpiſers of Ordinances, Reviles at Religion and the Profeſſors of it, Enemies to what is ſober and ſacred in Chriſtianity? This Light they have flaſhing in their Faces from the clear Evidence of the Word of God, and yet ſtill they continue to work the Works of Darkneſs. What ſhall I ſay to ſuch as theſe are? Truly I can ſay nothing worſe to them than what their own Conſciences already thunder againſt them, for they are ſelf-condemned Perſons. But truly this Complaint may too too juſtly be taken up againſt all that do not walk worthy of the Light vouchſafed to them; their Sins are revealed clearly, and Duties are revealed as clearly as the *Scripture* can poſſibly expreſs them, and yet they live in a groſs neglect of them. Well, believe it, this Light will not always ſhine to be gazed at only; the Day is drawing to an end, the Night is haſtning upon us, the darkneſs of the Night of Death, and the darker Night of Judgment; and Oh! That then it may not be any of our Condemnations, *That Light is come into the World, but we loved Darkneſs and the Works of Darkneſs better than Light, becauſe our Deeds were evil.*

(3.) Thirdly, *God hath to this end ſet apart his Miniſters, that they might be Helpers to you in this great Work of working out of your Salvation.* And therefore they are called, *Helpers of your Faith and Joy.* They are ſaid, *To watch for your Souls as thoſe that muſt give an account.* They are ſaid to be *Co-workers with Jeſus Chriſt*; yea, they are ſaid *To ſave your Souls.* Miniſters are ſet in the Church to admoniſh with all Meekneſs, to beſeech with all Earneſtneſs, to rebuke with all Authority, yea, and we have done it: Have we not called upon you, *Sinners, Sinners, why will you die?* The Way wherein you now walk leads down to the Chambers of Death and Deſtruction; the Wages of that Work you are now doing is Shame, Death and Hell: Have we not thus often call'd upon you? Yes, ſo often have we thundred Terrors in Mens Ears, that they now diſregard them out of cuſtom; and when we ſpeak of Sin and Death, and Hell and Judgment to come, Men think we are fallen into a Common Place, and we muſt talk dreadfully to keep in our Road. Theſe are the Apprehenſions Men have of the great and fearful Denunciations that are daily diſcharged in their Ears by the Miniſters

2 Cor. 1. 24. Heb. 13. 17. Jude. 23.

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of the Goſpel. And have we not alſo diſplay'd Jeſus Chriſt in all his Excellencies, ſo far forth as his infinite Excellencies can be diſplay'd with a few ſhort-breath'd Words? Have we not ſet forth Holineſs in its Beauty and Luſtre, and done as much as we could do to reconcile you to the ways of Obedience, and to remove the unjuſt Prejudices that Men have taken up againſt them? What could we have done more than we have done, to inform Mens Judgments, ſo ſatisfie their Conſciences, to anſwer all their Doubts, to allay their Fears, to ſupply them with quickning Conſiderations to Duty, and with deterring Conſiderations from Sin? We appeal to your ſelves; and yet we ſpeak not this to ingratiate or to commend our ſelves (we profeſs we care not much for the good Opinion of any Man in the World, farther than it may be of ſome advantage to do your Souls good;) but do you think God expects not ſome great Thing from you? Give me leave to deal truly and faithfully with you; if your Works do not in ſome meaſure anſwer the Labours of God's Servants that have many Years follow'd you with Line upon Line, and Precept upon Precept here a little and there a little, ſtill warning and intreating with all Bowels of Tenderneſs, alluring you to pity your own Souls, and to ſave your ſelves from that Wrath and Vengeance that ſhall ſhortly overcome the diſobedient World; They who have thus exhorted you, believe it, ſhall within a while be Witneſſes againſt you. Well then, ſince you are daily called upon and warned to flee from the Wrath to come; ſince you have ſuch clear Convictions of your Duty that a bribed Conſcience can hardly evade; ſince you have ſuch abundance of Examples of others who have gone before you, and have done what God requires of you why will not you be hereby perſuaded and encouraged to work? Theſe Things you muſt acknowledge are great Helps to further your Salvation; and, believe it, they will prove dreadful Aggravations of your Condemnations, if they do not prevail with you. But theſe are only outward Helps.

Inward Helps.

(2.) *Secondly*, There are other Helps, and they are inward, and of far greater Force and Efficacy, of which I ſhall Name Two.

The Dictates of Conſcience.

(1.) Firſt, *the Dictates of your own Conſciences, they are ſtill prompting and exciting of you to work.* Conſcience it is God's Deputy and Vicegerent in the Soul, that rules and governs in his Name and by his Authority. Now of all the Faculties in Man this was the leaſt corrupted by his Fall; though the Will be wholly corrupted and perverſe that it will not obey the Commands of Conſcience, yet Conſcience ſtill continues the performance of its Office, ſtill it informs and urgeth, and threatens, and tormenteth; and thus may you ſee it buſily working, even in thoſe that never had the Law of God to direct Conſcience. The *Gentiles*, ſays the *Apoſtle* to the *Romans*, *that have not the Law, do by Nature*, that is, by natural Conſcience, *the things contained in the Law, their Conſciences bearing witneſs, and their Thoughts, in the mean while, accuſing and excuſing one another.* And becauſe they had not the Law, therefore Conſcience in them was like an Officer walking in the Dark, apprehending the Innocent and letting the Guilty eſcape: But yet this was from the Beginning ſo deeply implanted in the Heart of Man, that ſomething muſt be done and avoided for to obtain Happineſs, which could never yet be obliterated. Tho' our knowledge of what is Duty, and what is Sin, be in a great part defaced, yet this knowledge the *Scripture* doth abundantly ſupply to us, and gives Conſcience a perfect Draught of all the Duties that God requires, and bids it be Overſeer and look that the Work be done. How? Is it not a great Help when you have ſomewhat within you that ſtands for, and takes part with what is Good and what is your Duty? Conſcience ſecretly bids you beware of ſuch and ſuch Sins that will bring Ruin, Deſtruction, and Vengeance upon you; and perform ſuch and ſuch Duties, Pray, Hear, Meditate, and be more fervent and affectionate in all your Services; this is the way that tends to Life and Happineſs. Thus Conſcience daily and hourly is following of you, with Counſels and Chidings, and with Threatnings, denouncing Wrath and Vengeance againſt you; and though it ſpeaketh theſe Things with ſo low a Voice that others, though they lay their Ears to your Soul cannot hear it, yet in your Ears it ſpeaks as loud as Thunder, and no leſs terrible; it is in vain to wound it, it is in vain to ſtop its Mouth, for that will but make it break out with the more violence and out-rage; nothing a n appeaſe it but Duty and Work. Why ſhould you not then, ſince you have that within you that ſtands for and prompts you to

Rom. 2. 14, 15.

to work, why ſhould you not as well follow and obey the Dictates and Commands of your Conſciences that prompt you to Work and Duty, as obey the Propenſions of your ſenſual part to the contrary?

God himſelf helps a Chriſtian to work.

(2.) Secondly, *God himſelf helps us by working all our Works in us and for us; by working in us the will to work, and by working for us the work when we have willed:* And therefore while there is no part of our Work too hard for God, there ſhould be no part of it too hard and difficult for us. Chriſt tells us, *His burthen is not heavy*, yet were it heavy we might well undergo it, ſince he himſelf helps us to bear it. The frequent experience of every Child of God doth abundantly confirm this: Did you never begin a Duty with your Hearts liſtleſs and dead, with Affections cold and flat, with Thoughts very wandring and diſtracting, that at the very entrance of it you concluded you ſhould never make good Work of it, you ſhould never bring the Duty to a good Iſſue? And yet have you not in the midſt of theſe your Diſtempers found a mighty aſſiſtance and influence ſhining down from Heaven into your Hearts, filling them with holy and divine Affections, tranſporting them beyond all that deadneſs that did oppreſs them, enlarging them with ſweet and heavenly Enlargements, ſo that no Duties were ended with more Comfort and Revivings than thoſe that were begun with ſuch dead Hearts and cold Affections? Have you not often found it ſo? And what is this but a ſenſible feeling of God's working in you, that in the ſame performance you ſee your own weakneſs when you are left to your ſelves, and you ſee the Power of God's Aſſiſtance when he comes in to help you, and there is no Duty but this Divine Aſſiſtance may be hoped for and expected by you to enable you in the performance of it? Are you to do? *God works in you the Will and the Deed.* Are you to ſuffer? *When you paſs through the Fire and through the Water he will be with you; he will deliver you in ſix Troubles, and in ſeven there ſhall no Evil touch you.* Are you to pray? *His Spirit maketh Interceſſion for us.* God doth not, as the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* did, lay heavy Burthens upon others and not touch them with the leaſt of his Fingers, no, he is pleaſed to become a Co-worker with you, he begins, he carries on, and he alſo perfects whatever concerns your Duty here and your Happineſs hereafter; and is not this a mighty Encouragement to Obedience? Will you any longer delay ſince God affords you ſuch Aſſiſtance as this? Why do you not preſently attempt this Work? *But you will ſay, how ſhall I know that God will aſſiſt me?* Why put it to the Trial. Was it ever known that God ever failed any that reſolutely ventured? Diſpute not concurrence, but believe, and by looking for it and depending upon it, you ingage God to help you. It was the conſideration of the all-ſufficient Aſſiſtance of God that made one of the *Ancients* cry out, *Da Domine quod jubes, & jube quod vis: Give, Lord, what thou commandeſt, and then command what thou wilt.*

Iſa. 43. 2. Job 5. 19. Rom. 8. 26.

God looks at Sincerity more than Perfection.

(6.) Sixthly, *Conſider for your Incouragement, it is not ſo much the abſolute and legal perfection of the Work, as the perfection of the Worker; that is, the perfection of the Heart that is looked at and rewarded by God:* And is not this a great Incouragement? There is a twofold perfection; the perfection of the Work, and the perfection of the Workman: The perfection of the Work is when the Work doth ſo exactly and ſtrictly anſwer the holy Law of God, that there is no irregularity in it. The perfection of the Workman is nothing but inward Sincerity, the uprightneſs of the Heart towards God, which may be where there are many Imperfections and Defects intermingled. If God ſhould accept and reward no Work but what is abſolutely perfect in reſpect of the Law, this would be ſuch a ſadning Diſcouragement that it would take off the Wheels of all Endeavours, for all our Obedience falls far ſhort of legal perfection in this Life. We our ſelves are conſcious of many failings and imperfections in our beſt Services, and God knows far more; and ſince we can do nothing without Infirmites, who would venture to do any thing upon the account of thoſe Infirmities, leſt God ſhould caſt back all again as Dung into our Faces? No, but we do not ſtand upon ſuch Terms as theſe are with our God, it is not ſo much what our Works are, as what our Heart is that God looks at and will reward: Yet know alſo, leſt any ſhould too ſoon lay hold on this; if our Hearts are perfect and ſincere, we ſhall endeavour to the utmoſt of our Power that our Works may be perfect according to the ſtrictneſs of the Law. I ſpeak not this therefore to incourage ignorant ſottiſh Sinners, that though they live in a conſtant courſe of Sin and neglect of Duty,

Duty, yet ſooth up themſelves with this, God knows their Hearts are good, ſincere and upright. Let me cut off the fooliſh Hopes of theſe Men in a Word: It is impoſſible the Heart ſhould be ſincere where there is the allowance and liking of any one ſin in the Life. But I ſpeak what I have ſaid to thoſe who upon the ſight and ſenſe of their many Failings, of the deadneſs and untowardneſs of their Hearts, of their averſeneſs and indiſpoſition, of their wandrings and formality in the performance of what is holy and good, upon the ſenſe of theſe things are ready to be dejected and diſcouraged, and to give over doing of any thing, becauſe they can do nothing well: Let ſuch know, though their Works have not this legal Perfection, yet if they do proceed from a ſincere upright perfect Heart, they ſhall be accepted and rewarded by God. *Hezekiah* had his Failings, and the *Prophet* ſharply reproves him for his Pride, *&c.* making a glorious and boaſting Oſtentation of his Treaſure to the King of *Babylon*, yet he prays and appeals to
Iſa. 38. 3. God, *Remember, O Lord, how I have walked before thee in Truth and with a perfect Heart.* There may therefore be a perfect Heart, where there are imperfect Works; and if you can make this *Plea*, let me tell you the perfection of your Hearts will ſwallow up the imperfections of your Works, that they ſhall never come up in remembrance againſt you before God.

Succeſs in working for Salvation is certain.

(7.) Seventhly and Laſtly, *Conſider for your Incouragement though your Work be great, yet the ſucceſs of it is certain.* The greateſt check to Induſtry is fear of Diſappointment, from which you have no ſecurity while you labour for any thing beſides your own Salvation. All Worldly Affairs are moved by ſuch inviſible Wyers and turned upon ſuch ſmall Pins, that if the Finger of Providence diſplace but one of them, the whole Fabrick of our Deſign is thereby diſordered and our Hopes defeated; and God ſometimes delights to fruſtrate Mens Attempts about Worldly
Hab. 2. 13. Concernments. *It is not of the Lord of Hoſts*, ſays the Prophet, *that the People labour in the Fire, and that the People weary themſelves for very vanity?* To labour in the Fire ſignifies two Things; *Firſt*, Great Pains. *Secondly*, Great Diſappointment. They work in the midſt of ſcorching Flames, and what they do produce with ſo much Anguiſh, they enjoy it not but it conſumes betwixt their Fingers. When Men have weaved a curious Web of earthly Contrivances, and think to wrap up themſelves therein and to keep them warm, God breaths ſecret Flames into it that ſinge it, that it can no more hold together than ſo much Tinder. And wherefore doth God blaſt Mens Endeavours, but that ſeeing the vanity of all their Labour under the Sun, how wavering, how uncertain, and how unſucceſsful Things are, how Means run one way, and the End another, they might hereby be induced to turn their Labours into another Channel, and to work for their Souls and for eternal Happineſs and Salvation, that are as far above the reach of Diſappointment, as
Iſa. 52. 22. they are far above the rate of earthly Concernments. *Mine Elect*, ſays God, *ſhall long enjoy the Work of their Hands*, they ſhall not labour in vain. And this is the
1 Cor. 15. 58. great Argument urged by the *Apoſtle* upon the *Corinthians*, *Be ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord*; and why ſo induſtrious and conſtant? *Knowing this*, ſays he, *that your Labour is not in vain in the Lord. Two Things* there are that make all Labour to be in vain.

Firſt, When it doth not accompliſh its End.

Secondly, When that End it doth accompliſh is not worth the Coſt and Pains. Now in neither of theſe reſpects is your Labour in vain. For,

Firſt, It ſhall not fail to accompliſh the end to which it is ordained, and that is eternal Salvation. *Three Things* there are that make Men come ſhort in the accompliſhment of an End propounded.

Firſt, When Men propound to themſelves Ends that are in themſelves ſimply impoſſible.

Secondly, When though the End be poſſible, yet the Means that are uſed are unfit and improbable.

Thirdly, When though the Means are rightly ſuited to the attainment of the end, yet we do not perſevere in the uſe of them. Now in none of theſe ways ſhall a laborious Chriſtian fail of his end. For,

The End Chriſtians work for is not impoſſible.

Firſt, *The End that you work for is not in it ſelf ſimply impoſſible.* Should you propound to your ſelves to become *Angels*; ſhould you ſtrive to ſublimate your ſelves into *ſpiritual Eſſences*, your attempts herein were all but vain, becauſe it is impoſſible you ſhould ever be refined into *Angels*. But if your end be to be *like Angels*,

Angels, to be *equal to Angels*, this is poſſible and may be attained. *When they ariſe from the dead, they are as the Angels that are in Heaven*, which another *Evangeliſt* renders, *they are equal to the Angels*. If in this Life you propoſe to your ſelves a ſtate of perfection and freedom both from Sin and Sorrow, a ſtate of conſummate Bliſs and Happineſs, this End is impoſſible. But if you make it your End to enjoy ſuch a ſtate as this is hereafter, this is attainable and Labour may atchieve it; yea, aim at what degree of Glory you pleaſe, next below God and Chriſt, be it as high as *Cherubims* and *Seraphims*, I cannot ſay you think of an impoſſibility; your Labour may raiſe you to ſuch a pitch and advance you to ſuch Glory, as ſhall dazle the *Sun* in its brightneſs. It is true, there was once a time when Salvation might well be reckoned among thoſe Things that were impoſſible; and that was in that ſad interval between the *Fall* and the *Promiſe* of Chriſt, when all Mankind lay in the Shadow and in the Valley of Death; under the Breach and yet under the Bond of the Covenant of Works when it had indeed been in vain ſo much as once to have thought of Happineſs, or to have laboured for it: But ſince Chriſt's undertaking, *We who were once without Hope, have now obtained good Hope through Grace; the Partition-Wall*, that then we could neither climb over nor break through, *is now taken away*; the Gate of Heaven is now ſet open, and with ſtriving we may enter, for our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt *hath aboliſhed Death, and brought Life and Immortality to Light through the Goſpel*. And therefore though it may ſeem an impoſſibility to dejected and deſpairing Souls that ever ſuch vile Wretches ſhould receive ſo great a Dignity, that thoſe who are ſunk ſo low in Miſery, ſhould ever be raiſed to Happineſs; that thoſe who are ſo loaden with Sin and Iniquity ſhould ever feel the weight of Mercy and beaten Glory; that thoſe whoſe beſt Works deſerve the loweſt *Hell*, ſhould, though not for, yet upon the performance of thoſe Works obtain the higheſt Heavens: Though this may ſeem to be an impoſſibility, yet believe it, while you think of any Glory lower than the Glory of the *Godhead*, you think of nothing above a poſſibility and the reach of Induſtry. There are none of you excluded from a poſſibility of being ſaved; the Covenant of Grace runs in moſt large and comprehenſive Terms, *Whoever believeth ſhall obtain eternal Life*. The Death of Chriſt and his Blood is a moſt ſovereign Medicine, applicable not only to all Maladies, but to all Men, if they will believe: Though it is true none ſhall be ſaved but the Elect, yet is it true alſo that a poſſibility of Salvation, extends farther than Election. Election gives the infallibility of Salvation, as Reprobation doth the infallibility of Damnation; but yet as there is a poſſibility for thoſe that ſhall infallibly be ſaved, to periſh if they do not believe, ſo is it poſſible for thoſe that ſhall infallibly periſh, to be ſaved if they will believe. The poſſibility of Salvation therefore ſtands not upon Election, but upon two other Grounds.

Mark. 12. 25. Luke 20. 36.

(1.) *Firſt*, The meritorious and all-ſufficient procurement of Chriſt, whereby he hath procured Salvation for all the World, and for all in the World, upon condition of their Faith, for that muſt ſtill be taken in; for were it not ſo, how could we preach Remiſſion of Sins in his Name to every Creature, were not his Death applicable to all? Then though ſome ſhould believe, yet for want of a Sacrifice offered up, and a Price paid down for them, they ſhould not be ſaved, though they ſhould believe. How then is it that we ſeriouſly call all Men to repent and believe, that their Sins may be pardon'd and their Souls ſaved? Certainly unleſs the Death of Chriſt hath procured Salvation for all Men upon condition of Faith and Repentance, ſuch Calls would be falſe in us, and vain to them; for ſo we ſhould promiſe Salvation upon believing, to thoſe to whom though they ſhould believe, Salvation ſhould be denied, becauſe they want a Covenant made with them, and a Surety to undertake for them: Therefore I ſay, Chriſt's procurement is general ſo far, that whoever believes ſhall receive the Benefit of his Death.

(2.) *Secondly*, As the Death of Chriſt is applicable to all for Salvation if they believe, ſo Faith that alone applies this Death is attainable by you all if you be not wanting to your ſelves; you are none of you under an impoſſibility of believing, and therefore not under an impoſſibility of Salvation. Though it be certain that ſome ſhall infallibly perſevere in Infidelity, yet there is none that hears the ſound of the *Goſpel*, and the outward Call of God in his Word, but may believe and obey if they be not wanting to themſelves: Neither is this

Doctrine *Arminianiſm*, nor is it prejudicial to the efficacious Grace of God, whereby the Will is powerfully ſwayed to Faith and Obedience; for the converting Grace of God is not given to make Men capable to believe and to be converted, but it is given to make them actually believing and actually converting. The moſt wicked Man that is, without the converting Grace of God, is capable to be converted even in his ſtate of Unregeneracy, and converting Grace gives not any new Power to inable us to be converted, but it gives us an actual Converſion. Some ſhall never Believe, and why? Not becauſe they are under an impoſſibility, but becauſe they will not believe; it is not becauſe they cannot, but becauſe they will not, unleſs we would ſo gratifie their Sloth as to call their obſtinacy an Impoſſibility: It is true they are obſtinate, and that obſtinacy can never be cured without efficacious Grace, but yet that obſtinacy is not properly called an Impoſſibility.

Well, ſince Salvation is a thing poſſible, why do you not labour for it that your Souls may be eternally Happy? Chriſt hath the *Key of David*, *and he opens and none ſhuts*; and he hath opened the everlaſting Gate to you all, and bids you all enter and take Poſſeſſion. There ſtand no grim Guards to keep out you, or yours; you cannot complain that you are excluded by a forcible Decree, no, you ſhut the Doors upon your ſelves, and refuſe to enter. And this is the *firſt Reaſon* why Salvation is not Labour in vain, becauſe the End is poſſible to be attained.

Secondly, *There are alſo right means made known to you for the obtaining of this End.* *Jacob* in his *Dream* ſaw a Ladder reaching from Earth to Heaven. Certainly there is a *Jacob*'s *Ladder* reaching up from Earth to Heaven that is more than a *Dream*; every Round in it is either a Grace or a Duty; it is not hid from you what Grace you muſt act, what Duties you muſt perform, that you may obtain Happineſs; theſe are direct and proper means to it, nay, not only means to it, but the initials and beginnings of it. The glimmering *Light of Nature* could diſcover that there was a future Happineſs, but it could not diſcover to us the right means thither, it could not direct us to believe in a crucified Saviour, and therefore to write by this dim *Light of Nature* had been Labour in vain: But now we know the way of Salvation is by Repentance towards God, and Faith towards our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; now we know that Holineſs and Obedience do as certainly lead to Heaven, as Sin and Diſobedience drag down to Hell, and therefore while we continue believing and working, is there any fear? Nay, is there any poſſibility of diſappointment in our great End? It is as impoſſible that Faith and Obedience ſhould not lead unto Glory, as it is that Faith ſhould, or Obedience not continue in Glory: And therefore, *O Soul*, be confident of Succeſs. Haſt thou any good Evidences that thy Graces are genuine and true, though but weak; that thy Duties are ſincere, though but imperfect; and that thou doſt work the Works of God with a ſteady Heart, though with a Trembling Hand? Give this Aſſurance one lift higher, and as thou art already aſſured of the Truth of thy Grace, and of the Sincerity of thy Obedience, ſo henceforth be as much aſſured of thy future Glory, as if it were no longer future, but now actually in thy preſent poſſeſſion. Thy dawning ſhall break forth into a moſt perfect Day; the Womb of thy Morning Twilight ſhall be delivered of a Noon-tide Brightneſs; thy Spark ſhall become a Sun; thy Seed of Grace ſhall ſprout till it be fit for tranſplantation into Paradiſe, and there ſhall flower into Glory.

Object. *But may a poor Soul ſay, Though the means that I now uſe for the obtaining of Salvation be right to effect it, if ſtill perſiſted in; yet I fear leaſt the many Corruptions, Temptations and Hardſhips that I meet with may turn me off from following my Work, defeat me of my End, and make all I have done as ſo much Labour in vain, and therefore I could have this confidence and aſſurance that you ſpeak of, did I not fear this, that I ſhould deſiſt in my Work.*

(3.) Would you have good Security againſt this? Well then in the *Third* place, the laborious Chriſtian as he uſeth right means, ſo he ſhall continue and perſevere in the uſe of them till he hath wrought out his own Salvation by them; and therefore he ſhall certainly accompliſh his End, and his Labour ſhall not be in vain. It is true, if you deſiſt from working, all that you have hitherto done will be in vain, your Faith in vain, your Tears in vain, your Prayers in vain, all in vain: And therefore this ſhould cauſe you to work with Fear and Trembling, leſt the wiles of Satan and the deceitfulneſs of your own Hearts, ſhould intice you

your from your Work, and cheat you of your Reward. *Let us therefore fear* (ſays the Apoſtle) *leaſt a Promiſe being made us of entring into his Reſt, any of us ſhould fall ſhort.* Yet as this may cauſe Holy Fear, ſo it may be matter of ſpiritual Joy and Rejoycing, that notwithſtanding the deadneſs of our Hearts, the ſlackneſs of our Hands, the many Avocations from without, the many Interruptions from within, yet none of us ſhall forſake our Work till we have brought it to Perfection; our Obedience ſhall be crowned with Perſeverance, and our Perſeverance with Glory and Immortality. See for this that of the Apoſtle, *We are confident of this thing, that he that hath begun a good Work in you, will perform it till the day of Jeſus Chriſt.* Let therefore the Mouth of *Calumny* be for ever ſtopt, that accuſeth this comfortable Doctrine of the Saints Perſeverance through Grace unto Glory, that accuſeth it of patronizing Sloth and Idleneſs. Some do faſten this *Viper* upon it; let Chriſtians live as they liſt, though careleſs of good Works, yea, though continually imployed in evil Works, yet being Chriſtians they need not fear that they ſhall fall ſhort of Glory. But though we do affirm that every true Chriſtian ſhall certainly inherit Heaven and Glory, yet we ſhake of this pernicious Confidence, for he is no true Chriſtian who is not zealous and careful of good Works, whoſe knowledge of his own Eſtate doth not provoke him *to walk worthy of that Vocation wherewith he is called*, whoſe hope of Heaven doth not inable him *to puriſy himſelf, and to perfect Holineſs in the fear of God.* What a Contradiction is it to ſay, we patronize ſinful Sloth in Men, when we tell them if they are true Chriſtians that they ſhall continue working? Is it Sloth to continue working? Or do we incourage Men to be idle, by aſſuring them if they are Chriſtians, they muſt and ſhall work? Yet this is the natural ſtrain and tendency of our *Doctrine.* What greater Incouragement can you have to Obedience than this? If you will work you ſhall not fail of your End, becauſe the End it ſelf is poſſible, becauſe the means to it are direct and certain, and becauſe if you once begin to work, you ſhall moſt aſſuredly perſevere till you have attained that End, even the Salvation of your own Souls. And this is one *Reaſon* why your Labour ſhall not be in vain. Phil. 1. 6.

(2.) Secondly, *Your Labour ſhall not be in vain, becauſe this End ſhall fully anſwer, yea, infinitely exceed all that Coſt and Pains you are at in procuring it.* It is not ſo in the Things of this World. As to this that of the *Pſalmiſt* holds true, *Surely every Man walketh in a vain Shew, ſurely they are diſquieted in vain.* Though they do attain their End, and that becauſe that very End that they graſp at is it ſelf but Vanity. But can any Man account Heaven and Happineſs a vain Thing? Is it not infinitely worth all, yea, more than all that thou canſt do or ſuffer for it? Certainly when you come to enjoy it, you will not think it a hard Bargain that it ſtood you in ſo many Duties and Difficulties before you came to the poſſeſſion of it: No, if there could be any Sorrow in that ſtate of perfect Joy, it would be, not that we have done ſo much, but that we have done no more; not that we have gone through ſo much Anguiſh in Repentance, or that we have ſuſtained ſuch great Conflicts in Self-denial and Mortification, but that we waded no deeper in our own Tears, and deeper in the Blood of our own Luſts; that we have not more vexed and croſſed our carnal *Self*, and taken more Pains in the ways of God; could there be any Sorrow in Heaven this would be the cauſe of it: But certainly a great part of our Joy there, will be to reflect back upon thoſe Duties and Works of Obedience, through which, though with much ſtruggling and ſtriving, we have attained unto that moſt bleſſed State. And this is the laſt Argument or Motive that I ſhall inſiſt upon; Work, for your Labour ſhall not be in vain, you ſhall certainly accompliſh your End, and this End ſhall abundantly recompence you for all your Labour and Pains. Pſal. 39. 6.

Well then to conclude this Head, you have at large ſeen what can be pleaded on the behalf of Obedience; What is it now that you can *Object* againſt theſe Things? Are they not true? Are they not cogent? Your Conſciences I know tell you that they are ſo; why then do they not prevail with you? Why ſit you ſtill holding your Arms in your Boſoms? Sirs, I have not ſpoken to you *Fables* or *Myſteries* that cannot be underſtood, but the Truth in all plainneſs; and if you will not lay it to Heart, believe it there is a Day coming; when you ſhall, too late; know that once you had a Proffer of Salvation, and you might have been happy for working for it: But, alas! this the deſperate Folly of Men, they do

not prize Salvation while it is attainable, they never account their Souls precious till they are loſt, yea, and loſt beyond all hope of recovery. I cannot tell how theſe many and weighty *Arguments* that have been propounded may work with you, God and your own Conſciences know; but this I can tell, the *Devil* can never bring ſuch ſtrong *Reaſons* why you ſhould deſtroy and damn your ſelves, as have now been laid before you why you ſhould work out your own Salvation: And if they do not prevail with you, truly there is nothing that you can plead for your ſelves: You cannot plead that you could not do theſe Things, that Objection hath been anſwered; you cannot plead that there would no Profit ariſe to you if you did them, for the *Reward* hath been abundantly diſcovered to you; if you plead any thing it muſt be becauſe you will not do them, and that is the thing that will condemn you: Therefore if theſe Things do not prevail with you, if you ſtill continue obſtinate, and inſtead of working the Works of God, you work the Works of your Father the *Devil*; God acquits himſelf, your Blood lies not upon him, you have been fairly warned and told of it, but your own Deſtruction ſhall juſtly lie upon your own Heads.

And thus having done with the *Arguments* to preſs you to this Duty of working out your own Salvation with Fear and Trembling; I come now to Anſwer ſome *Objections*. And,

Obj. 1. Firſt, *It may poſſibly enter into the Heart of ſome deſperate Sinner or other to ſay, Theſe indeed are ſtrong* Arguments *that have been propounded for the inforcing this Duty of working out our Salvation upon thoſe that expect Salvation; but for my part I pretend not ſo high, let me but now enjoy the Sins that I ſerve, and the Pleaſures that I purſue, and for the ſtate of my Soul hereafter, I ſhall commend it to the Mercy of God; had I true Grace, I might be perſuaded to attempt this hard Work with hopes of ſome good ſucceſs; but I own my ſelf to be a Sinner, and you tell me I cannot change my own Heart, and without this change no Salvation can be expected; why then ſhould I diſquiet my ſelf in vain, by labouring for that which I cannot accompliſh? If I muſt periſh, I will periſh with as much* Eaſe and Pleaſure *as I may; if I muſt go to Hell, I may be as ſoon carried down thither in a Flood of Tears, as with a Flood of Sins; if God hath ſentenced me to Hell hereafter, why ſhould I ſentence my ſelf to a Hell here? And therefore if Salvation and Happineſs be ſuch Points, I will give them over and embrace more eaſie and obvious Pleaſures.*

I know there is no pious Heart but ſhivereth with Horror at ſuch Language as this is, though it be but preſented to them; and may, and do, think it rather the Speech of *Devils* than Men that are in a way of Salvation. It is true it is the Speech of *Devils*, but it is the Speech of *Devils* in Mens Hearts. But what now? Shall we leave theſe Men to ſuch deſperate Reſolutions as theſe are? Shall we ſuffer them thus to go down flaming to Hell? Certainly Religion hath reaſon enough in it to convince ſuch as theſe, if they will but ſhew themſelves to be Rational Men. For,

Anſw. Conſider, thou who hadſt rather periſh than make thy Life a Trouble to thee by Obedience, God under thy Diſobedience may make thy Life a Trouble, yea, a Hell to thee by his Terrors. Thou thinkeſt the filthy Garments of thy Sin and Pollution ſit more eaſie and looſe about thee, than the cloſe Garments of Holineſs and Obedience will do; nay, but God can wrap and roll theſe filthy Garments of thine in Brimſtone, and ſet them on Fire about thine Ears. Many Mens Conſciences indeed are like *Iron* that hath lain for ſome time out of the Fire, that you would not ſuſpect to be hot till you let ſome Water fall upon it, and then it appears to be ſo by its noiſe and hiſſing: So truly their Conſciences ſeem cold and dead and ſuch as you might handle at your Pleaſure; but when once God lets fall ſome Drops of his Wrath upon their Conſciences, then they hiſs and boil, and fill the Soul with Smoak and Smother. A hard Heart is no ſecurity from a troubled Conſcience. It is with the Hearts and Conſciences of wicked Men, as it is with a Sore in the Body, which it may be is the hardeſt part in the Body and yet the ſoreſt alſo, the red Fleſh about the Sore is hard and yet full of Pain and Anguiſh: So is it many times with the Hearts and Conſciences of wicked Men, which though they are exceeding hard, yet are full of Pain and Anguiſh. We read of *Heman*, *That whilſt he ſuffered the Terrors of God he was diſtracted.* And *David* tells us, *The Sorrows of Death compaſs'd me about, and the Pains of Hell got hold of me.* And if the Wrath of the Almighty be thus ſore and terrible

Pſal. 88. 3. Pſal. 116. 3.

terrible upon theſe holy Men, whoſe Hearts were ſound towards God; how fretting and galling will it be upon the ulcerated Conſciences of Sinners? No Man hath his preſent Contentment and Delight in his own Power, no more than he hath his own Conſcience in his own Power, which will ſpeak, yea, and ſpeak terrible Things too, when the Sinner hath done all he can to ſtifle it; nay, let every Sinner ſpeak, How is it with you after the madneſs and rage of your Sin is over? Are you not then haunted with direful Thoughts of Horror and Amazement, that are as it were gnawing and devouring your Hearts? And are theſe they who are content to buy Eaſe and Quietneſs at ſo dear a rate, as the loſs of their precious and immortal Souls, and to be eternally tormented hereafter, beſides their preſent Pain and Anguiſh after the committing of Sin now, which if they feel not always yet frequently they do? But if God ſhould give them up to ſuch hardneſs of Heart as to become altogether inſenſible and ſtupid while they continue in this World, yet what will this avail them? Will they not purchaſe their Eaſe and Pleaſure very dearly, to loſe their Souls for ever hereafter, and to ſuffer the Pains of Hell eternally? The *Devil* hath put a horrid Cheat upon theſe Men; for they do not change their Troubles and Sorrows, but only the time of them, and for a little fanſied ſenſual Eaſe and Pleaſure in this World, which it may be they may enjoy and it may be not; for poſſibly God may be ſo provoked by them, that he may ſuddenly cut them off in their Sins; but if not, it is but for a very little time that the Pleaſures of their Sins and Luſts will laſt, and then an Eternity of Pain and Torment ſhall be their Portion. Sinners, be not therefore deceived; ſuffer not the *Devil* to abuſe you, and to impoſe his Drudgery upon you, under the pretence of Eaſe and Quietneſs: If therefore it be only preſent Contentment and Satisfaction that you ſeek, if you think that you ſhall periſh, but yet you would periſh the eaſieſt way; that is not, believe it, that is not by giving up of your ſelves to a way and courſe of Sin, but in a way of Duty and laborious Working; in that only can you find preſent Contentment, and in that poſſibly you may find eternal Happineſs.

But may ſome ſay, The Works of God would be more pleaſing to us, if we could but work them. But firſt we have no working Principle, we are in a ſtate of Nature and without Grace, ſo that we cannot work. And, Secondly, *We cannot implant this Grace in our ſelves.* Object.

To this I Anſwer, Though you neither have Grace, nor can work Grace in your ſelves, yet you can do much, yea, very much in order to Salvation by the meer Strength of Nature, and the Liberty of your own Will: This is a Conſideration that needs to be frequently preſſed upon the Conſciences of wicked Men, they often hear unto what a ſtate of Weakneſs Sin hath reduced them, and that without Grace they can do nothing that is pleaſing unto God, or advantagious to themſelves; and by this they are put out of conceit of ſetting upon the Work of God, and leave the Salvation of their Souls at all adventures. Conſider therefore, Sinners, how much you may do towards your own Salvation from your own Nature and Free-will. And here, *Anſw.*

What Sinners may do towards their own Salvation.

(1.) Firſt, *The vileſt Sinner, even by the power of Nature and his own Free-will, may attain to the higheſt degree and pitch of preparation that is uſually wrought in the Heart antecedently or before true Grace.* Such are legal Conviction and Contrition, a ſad ſight of Sin, and a deep ſorrow for it, together with ſtrong Reſolutions and Purpoſes againſt it, with ſtrong Deſires after Grace and Holineſs, and the like: And the Reaſon of this is becauſe all theſe Things are ſhort of Grace; and whatever is ſhort of true Grace falls within the compaſs of Nature and Free-will, which is common unto all Men; which though it be indeed wounded and maimed, yet may make ſhift to go ſo as far this comes to. True Grace now is only the Creation of the Power of God, and not the Production of Nature or Free-will: Wherefore after all this preparation is wrought, a Sinner can no more work Grace in himſelf than he could before, yet is he now nearer to Grace, and in a greater probability of it than he was before; and there is none but may go thus far, if they will but improve that Power and Ability that they have.

They may attain to the higheſt degree of preparation wrought in the Heart before Grace.

(2.) Secondly, *There is no Duty in Religion but the Power of Nature may carry a Man out to the external Performance thereof, and that with Affection and Enlargement alſo.* *Ahab* humbles himſelf. *Herod* heard *John Baptiſt* gladly. And ſo Sinners can, Pray, Hear, Read, Meditate

No Duty in Religion but the Power of Nature may carry a Man out to.

Numb. 24. 17. ditate and Discourse of the Things of God; others have done so formerly, and therefore they may and can do so now. Indeed heretofore there were peculiar Gifts bestowed upon wicked Persons immediately from God, as *Balaam* was made to prophesie of Christ, and the like: But these are now ceased, and all unregenerate Persons now, have the same Power and Faculties in them, one as well as another, and may be able to do one as much as another in the performance of spiritul Duties if they themselves will.

The Power of Nature will keep a Man from scandalous Sins.

(3.) Thirdly, *There is no wicked Man whatever but may, by the meer* **Power** *of Nature, restrain himself from the commission of Sin:* I speak not of Sins collectively taken, for no Man can so say his Heart or Life is clean and pure; but he may keep out of notorious and scandalous Sins. There is no Sinner that hath given himself up to his Lusts, but may, if he will for the future, live inoffensively, that neither the World nor his own Conscience may have much to accuse him of besides common Infirmities: Mark the Reason of this; because wicked Men commonly make choice of Sin, this Sin they will live in, and that Sin they will not live in: The *Drunkard* is not *Covetous*, and the *Covetous* Man is not a *Drunkard*, and so I may say of other Sins. Now it is from the Power of Nature that wicked Men refrain from the commission of any one Sin, and not from the Power of Grace: And therefore if one Sinner hath Power to keep from this Sin, and another Sinner hath Power to keep from the commission of another, and a third from a third Sin, then every Sinner may, by the Power of Nature, keep from all those Sins that any of those Sinners do deep themselves from, because there is the same Power in each Sinner to lay the same restraint upon this or that Sin, that others keep from.

Sinners may continue constantly in the performance of Duty.

(4.) Fourthly, *There is no Man, how great a Sinner soever, but if he will he may with constancy, yea, to the end and period of his Life, continue thus in the performance of Duties, and in the avoiding of Sins by the Power of Nature only:* For if it be possible that Men should do it at any time, then it is possible for them to do it continually: No more Power is required to enable them this Day, than was required the Day past; nor no more Power is required for the Day to come, than was for this Day now present; therefore having Strength to avoid them one time, they might also avoid them another time, yea, and continually persevere in so doing, if they would keep a daily constant Watch against them.

Through Perseverance Sinners may attain to habitualness and facility in Duty.

Fifthly, *There is no Man but through this perseverance and continuance may attain to Habitualness, and thereby to a facility and easiness in performance of Duties, and in avoiding of Sins.* When Men are accustomed to a road and round of Duties, it is a trouble to them to omit them: So if Men did but set themselves to their utmost to perform Duties in a more hearty and cordial manner, those Duties would become easie to them; and if Men would but ingage themselves perseveringly to oppose their Corruptions, this would bring them to that pass, that it would be their Delight to keep from Sin and to perform Duty; and all this the Power of Nature would bring them to.

Now Sinners, you see what a large Tenor you have; you are not staked down fast that you can do nothing; no, it is much, yea, very much that you may do in order to your Salvation.

But here some may possibly say, We hope that these Words are not true; for they would not be able to do so much as all this comes to, because they are willing to do nothing at all: But let such know, that that which will Condemn them at the last Day, will be, that they have not done what they might have done, in performing of Duties and in opposing of Sins, and therefore they wilfully fall short of Happiness and Salvation.

Object. *But may some say, If we should put forth to our utmost the Power of Nature, what would that avail us? We cannot thereby work Grace in our selves, and without Grace no Salvation is to be had.*

Answ. To this I *Answer*; Consider you do not know but, whilst you are thus doing what you can, God may come in, and by his Grace enable you to do what you cannot do: God is not wont to be wanting in this particular unto any; *He is found of those that seek him not*; and much more will he be found of those that seek him and enquire after him, though it be but by the weak Endeavours of Nature.

But may ſome ſay, Hath God obliged himſelf to convert and ſave thoſe that do to the utmoſt what Nature enables them to do in deſiring Salvation, and in ſeeking to obtain it? Object.

To this I *Anſwer*; God hath not bound himſelf, but uſually he doth ſo; God is neither bound to give Grace upon the Endeavours of Nature, neither is he wont to deny it. Can you ſay that ever you knew or heard of any careful, conſcientious, induſtrious Soul, that diligently and conſcientiouſly exerciſed it ſelf in performing of Duties and in avoiding of Sins, that was not at laſt truly converted and eternally ſaved; and why then ſhould you doubt or think that you ſhall be the firſt? Caſt your ſelf therefore upon God, truſting to his rich and free Grace, doing the utmoſt of your Endeavours. *Anſw.*

However, ſuppoſe the worſt, that thou art never converted nor ſaved, which Suppoſition is very dreadful and terrible; and if thou art careful and conſcientious to improve thy Abilities to the utmoſt, it is altogether improbable; but ſuppoſe the worſt:

(1.) *Firſt*, Thou liveſt here then more according to the Rule of Nature and Reaſon than others do; for when others wallow in Sin, thou ſheweſt thy ſelf to be more like a rational Man, thou art ſenſible thou haſt a Soul of more Worth than to be loſt for want of Care and Diligence. And then,

(2.) *Secondly*, Thy Pains and Puniſhments hereafter ſhall be greatly mitigated. Poſſibly thou mayeſt ſlight this, becauſe at beſt it is Damnation; yea, but conſider there are ſeveral degrees of *Torments* in *Hell*: Now thy Working and Endeavours may free thee from many degrees of Torment, and therefore they free thee from many *Hells*; and is not this worth thy Labour? Nay, and not only ſo, but it is very probable you may altogether eſcape thoſe Torments, if you be conſcientious in doing your utmoſt Endeavours.

And now, methinks, every one that hath but Reaſon to judge, and a Soul to ſave, muſt needs ſee ſo much ſtrength and force in the Arguments that have been propounded, that the next *Queſtion* ſhould be, *What muſt we do to work the Works of God?* In every Trade and Profeſſion there is ſome kind of Myſtery, that gives to them that have attained to it, a quicker diſpatch in their Buſineſs than other Men have. And ſo is it in the Work and Profeſſion of a Chriſtian, there is an Art and Myſtery, that he that is Maſter of ſhall make good diſpatch in this great Work, and poſſibly we may have ſome inſight into it by theſe following Directions. Job. 6. 26.

Firſt, *If you would work out your own Salvation, then digeſt and diſpoſe your Work into a right Order and Method.* Immethodicalneſs breeds Confuſion, and makes that a Tumult and a heap of Buſineſs, that would otherwiſe become a Trade in Chriſtianity; one attainment makes way for and opens into another; and to attempt any thing in Chriſtianity by Leaps and Jumps as it were, is fruitleſs, unprofitable and vain. No wiſe Man will try to mount up the higheſt Round of a Ladder at the firſt ſtep But yet many ſuch prepoſterous Endeavours there are found among Men in the working out of their Salvation. In reſpect of Doctrinals St. *Paul* tells us, ſome built *Hay* and *Stubble* upon a *Foundation* of *Gold*, 1 Cor. 8. But in reſpect of Practicals, it is frequent that many Men endeavour to build *Gold* upon a *Foundation* of *Hay* and *Stubble*: Theſe Mens Buildings will ſoon totter, fall, and come to nothing but Ruin, Shame and Diſappointment. Now the right diſpoſing of your great Work lies thus. *Firſt*, You are to work from Nature for Grace, and then from Grace unto the holy and ſpiritual performance of Duty, by which Grace is much confirmed and ſtrengthned; and ſo continuing in Duty, to arrive at Aſſurance; and from this the next ſtep is Salvation. From Nature to Grace, and from Grace to Duty. See this Method laid down by the *Apoſtle*, *Let us*, ſays he, *have Grace whereby we may ſerve God acceptably, with Reverence and godly Fear.* This is the *Ladder* of Heaven, whoſe bottom Step is below Grace in Nature, and whoſe utmoſt Step is above it in abſolute Perfection and Glory. *Firſt*, There muſt be Grace before any Duty can be performed acceptably unto God. But now moſt Men pervert and diſturb this Method; and the ordinary way of Diſturbance is this, they are frequent in Duties, but they perform them not either for Grace, or from Grace; neither that they may attain Grace by them, nor that they may exerciſe Grace in them: And yet, notwithſtanding, theſe Men think and hope to work out Salvation by ſuch Duties as theſe are, making a Leap from Duties to Salvation, neglecting to obtain that Grace that Direct. 1. Heb. 12. 28.

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can make their Duties acceptable and ſaving; and hence it is that they make no quicker diſpatch and riddance in their great Work. Now ſuch Attempts as theſe are,

(1.) Firſt, *Diſcouraging and diſheartning.* And,
(2.) Secondly, *They are vain and fruitleſs.*

(1.) Firſt, *They are very diſcouraging.* Duties never flow freely from the Soul where Grace is not like a continual Fountain to ſupply it. *Job*, ſpeaking of the
Job 27.10. *Hypocrite*, asks this Queſtion, *Will he delight himſelf in God? will he always call upon him?* No, he will not. It is not poſſible that he ſhould do ſo, though for a time he may drive at a high rate, praying both with Fervency and Affection, yet will he ſoon decay and faint, becauſe he hath no Life of Grace to carry him through Duties; but he finds them to flow ſtubbornly from him, and therefore through Wearineſs and Diſcontent at laſt he gives them over. The good Works of graceleſs Perſons may be as flouriſhing as if indeed they were true Saints; but they have not a Root to ſupply them, *the Root of the Matter*, as *Job* ſpeaks, *is not in them*, and therefore they are ſoon nipt and fade away. It is ſimply impoſſible that a Perſon, without the Life and Power of Grace, ſhould perſevere in a cordial, affectionate performance of good Works; Intereſt, Credit, Reſpect and natural Conſcience, are too weak Wheels for ſo great a Burthen; it is Grace only that can over-balance all outward Diſcouragements, yea, and which is more, that alone can remove all inward alſo: This can make Obedience ſweet to a Child of God, which to a wicked Man muſt needs be irkſome, and that becauſe he hath no reliſh in them. St. *Matth.* 16. 23. *Thou ſavoureſt not the things that are of God*; this may be much more ſaid of graceleſs Perſons, becauſe they have not Salt in them, for ſo Grace
Col. 4. 6. is called, that ſhould make holy and heavenly Things to be ſavoury to them. What a Torment is it to be ſtill chewing an unſavoury Prayer and an unſavoury Meditation; to hear and ſpeak thoſe Words that their Ears cannot reliſh? Muſt I always, *ſays the Sinner*, offer this force to my ſelf? Muſt I ſtill ſtrain and pump for Tears and Sighs? Were Holineſs as eaſie to me as it is to ſome, no Life would I chuſe ſooner than that; but I am ſtraitned and pinched up, and all good Things come out of me like the evil Spirit, which rends and tears me, and is a torture and anguiſh to my Heart and Bowels: And it is ſo, becauſe in the performance of them there is a neglect of that Grace that ſhould make Duties become eaſie, and therefore ſuch a one will ſhortly give over Duties themſelves, which he finds to be ſo troubleſome, yea, and alſo give over all hopes of attaining any good at all by them.

(2.) Secondly, *Such Works are alſo, as to the obtaining of the laſt and main End, vain and fruitleſs*, and that upon two Accounts.

(1.) Firſt, *Becauſe the acting of Grace is the Life and Spirit of all our Works*, without which they are all but Carkaſſes and dead Things, and only equivocally called good Works, even as the *Picture* of a Man may be called a Man. *We are*, ſays the Apoſtle, *his Workmanſhip created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good Works.* As after the *firſt Creation* God took a ſurvey of all the Works of his Hands, and pronounced them all very good, ſo there is no Work of ours that God will pronounce to be a good Work, but what is the effect of his creating Power, that is, the product of
Eph. 2. 10. his ſecond Creation: *Created*, ſays the Apoſtle, *to good Works.* Good Works are no otherwiſe neceſſary to Salvation, but as they are the exerciſes of Grace, by which we expreſs the life ard likeneſs of God, ſo only are they neceſſary unto Salvation. How ſhould Grace be ſeen and known but by Works? *Firſt*, God imprinted his own Image upon our Souls in Regeneration, and ſtamps us Feature for Feature, Grace for Grace, and Glory for Glory: But now becauſe this is hid and concealed, therefore are we to copy forth this Image in a holy Converſation, and to expreſs every Grace in ſome Duty or Work of Obedience or other. As thoſe that we call *falling Stars* dart from Heaven, and draw after them long Trains of Light, ſo God would have us to ſhoot up to Heaven, but yet to leave a Train of Light behind us. Our Graces muſt ſhine always, we muſt go on in good Works, and theſe good Works are of no value or account with God, of which
1 Cor. 13. 3. Grace is not the End or Principle. What ſays the Apoſtle? *Though I beſtow all my Goods to feed the Poor and have not Charity, it profiteth me nothing.* Can a Man beſtow all his Goods upon the Poor, and not be charitable? Indeed the Word that

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we tranſlate *Charity*, might, for the avoiding of ſome Miſtakes, better have been tranſlated *Love*; but, however, we muſt take *Charity* for a diſpoſition to relieve the Wants and Neceſſities of others with reſpect of *Love* to God and his Image; if this good Work be not from Grace through a Principle of *Love* to God and Obedience to his Command, it but the empty Shell and Husk of a good Work, and it avails a Man nothing. Yea further, if after this, *I give my Body to be burned and have not Charity, it profiteth me nothing:* If my *Soul* burn not as clear and bright in *Love*, as my *Body* in the Flames, it availeth me nothing, I burn only what was dead before, and offer a Carcaſs inſtead of a Sacrifice. There is no Work or Duty, how ſpecious ſoever, that is of any profit to the Soul, if that Work or Duty hath not the Life and Power of ſome Grace or other expreſſed in it. Well then, this is the *firſt* Ground why Works without Grace are fruitleſs, becauſe they are empty and liveleſs. Grace is the Life and Spirit of good Works.

(2.) *Secondly*, All Works and Duties whatever without Grace leave the Heart in the ſame eſtate of Sin, and therefore the Perſon in the ſame eſtate of Wrath and Condemnation as before. For,

(1.) *Firſt*, All of them are not a ſufficient expiation for the guilt of any one Sin. Should ſuch Men pray and ſigh till their Breath were turned into a Cloud, and covered the Face of the whole Sky: Should they weep till they drown'd themſelves in their own Tears, yet if all this could be ſuppoſed to be only the remorſe of Nature, and not true and godly Sorrow; they would ſtill be under the ſame ſtate of Condemnation as the moſt ſeared Sinner in the World. The *Prophet Micah* tells of ſome that bad very high for Pardon and Forgiveneſs, as if they were reſolved to carry it at any rate whatever. *Wherewith*, ſay they, *ſhall we come before the Lord and bow our ſelves before the moſt high God? Shall we come before him with burnt Offerings, and with Calves of a Year old? Will the Lord be pleaſed with Thouſands of Rams, and with ten Thouſands of Rivers of Oil? Shall we give our Firſt-born for our Tranſgreſſions, the Fruit of our Bodies for the Sin of our Souls?* What high Rates are here bidden, and yet all this falls ſhort! There is but one Grace, and that is *Faith*, that can give us a Right and Title to that Righteouſneſs that ſhall be a ſufficient Expiation and Atonement for all our Sins. Micah. 6, 6, 7.

(2.) *Secondly*, All Attainments and Attempts, all Endeavours and Duties, without Grace, can never mortifie and ſubdue the Power and Dominion of any one Luſt or Corruption. Men may divert and chain, and reſtrain their Corruptions, and impale in their Luſts, ſo that they ſhall not break forth into any outragious Wickedneſs; but yet without Grace they can never ſubdue them becauſe it is Grace alone that can lay the Ax to the Root of this evil Tree. Well then, notwithſtanding all that hath been ſaid concerning the Power of Nature, what Men may do thereby and how far they may go, yet here you ſee what Impotency there is in Nature without Grace, and what it cannot reach to perform. But now this is not ſpoken that hereby any ſhould be diſcouraged from Working, and becauſe ſome doubt of the Truth of their Graces, that therefore they ſhould deſiſt from a courſe of Holineſs and Obedience; this were plainly to thwart the whole deſign of this Subject: No, all that hath been ſaid, is, to perſuade Men not to reſt ſatisfied in any Work of Obedience or Religion, in which ſome Grace is not breathed or exerciſed, nor to look upon them at all as inductive to Salvation as in themſelves, but as in reference to true Grace. How many poor Souls are there, who becauſe they run on in a round of Duties, becauſe they do ſomething that they call good Works, think that Salvation is as ſure their own, as if all the Promiſes in the Scripture were ſealed and delivered to them by God himſelf? And yet poor Creatures, never examine or regard from what Principle this their Obedience flows, whether from a Principle of Grace, or from the old corrupt Principle of Nature, new-vampt from ſome new Operations of the common Spirit. Believe it, this is not that Obedience that God requires, nor that he will accept, an inward *Groan*, if breathed by Grace, is of more account with God, and will be more available to the Soul than the moſt pompous and ſpecious Services of unregenerate Men. What is it to God, when you offer not only the Blind and the Lame, but the Dead alſo? Is it not rather an Abomination than Obedience? The Apoſtle tells us, *Without Works, Faith is dead.* And it is as true on the other ſide alſo, that Works without Faith and other Graces of the Spirit, Jam. 3. 20.

are not only dead, but rotten and noiſome. Every Duty Men perform in a graceleſs State and Condition God muſt needs loath it and them for it; *The Prayer of the Wicked is an Abomination unto the Lord.* It is as hateful unto God, as Vapors that aſcend up out of *Tombs*, from putrified Bodies, are unto us, What then? Muſt ſuch Perſons, give up themſelves to Sin therefore? God forbid. No, rather let ſuch think thus; if our Duties and our Righteouſneſs be ſo loathſome, what are our Sins and Iniquities? Though every Sinner be *dead in Sins and Treſpaſſes*, yet is it leſs offenſive to have a dead Carcaſs embalmed than to have it lie open. Still therefore continue working, but in your working, *Firſt*, aim at the obtaining of Grace, before you aim at the obtaining of Heaven and Salvation; let it at no time content you that ſuch and ſuch Duties you have performed, but look what Grace have you acted in them; what is there of God breathing in this Prayer that I now put up? How am I in Hearing, in Meditation, in Diſcourſing of the Things of God? Is my Heart holy and ſpiritual? Are my Affections pure and fervent? Are my Graces active and vigorous? And are they vigorous in this Work of Obedience? Elſe to perform Duties, and to neglect Grace that alone can enable us to perform Duties acceptably, is only to go to *Hell* a little more cleanly.

Prov. 28. 9.

Direct. 2. Secondly, *If you would work out your own Salvation, as you muſt look to the actings of Grace, as well as to the performance of Duties, ſo you muſt labour to grow and increaſe in thoſe Graces that are moſt active and working, and they are Two, the Grace of Faith, and the Grace of Love.* To grow ſtrong in theſe Graces is the moſt compendious way for a Chriſtian to diſpatch his great Work; I may call them the two Hands of a Chriſtian; and he that is moſt active in theſe, works out his Salvation with both Hands earneſtly.

(1.) Firſt, *The actings of Faith is of mighty advantage to the working out of our Salvation. Two Senſes* there are in which Salvation may be ſaid to be wrought out. *Firſt*, In Title: And, *Secondly*, In actual Poſſeſſion and Enjoyment. Now Faith is a working out of the one, and a compendious furtherance towards the working out of the other.

(1.) *Firſt*, Upon our believing Salvation is already wrought out for us in Right and Title. *He that believeth ſhall be ſaved*; here is the Title. The great Work is then done and finiſhed, when once Faith is wrought: And therefore, when the *Jews* came to enquire of our Saviour, *How they ſhould do to work the Works of God?* Our Lord tells them, *This is the Work of God, that you believe on him whom he hath ſent.* Nay further, as a Faith of Adherence or Acceptance gives a Right and Title to Salvation, ſo a Faith of full Aſſurance is this Salvation it ſelf: For, *Faith is the ſubſtance of Things hoped for, the Evidence of Things not ſeen:* In its juſtifying Act it gives a Title to Salvation, in its aſſuring Act it gives the ſubſtance of the Thing it ſelf; for it is much at one to a ſtrong Faith to believe Heaven, and to enjoy it.

John 6. 24, 29.

Heb. 11. 1.

(2.) *Secondly*, Faith doth compendiouſly further and promote the working out of our Salvation in actual poſſeſſion; and that becauſe Faith is that Grace which fetcheth all that ability and ſtrength from Chriſt, whereby a Chriſtian is enabled to work: Faith is not only a Grace of it ſelf, but it is a Steward and Purveyor for all other Graces, and its Office is to bring in Proviſion for them while they are working; and therefore as a Man's Faith grows either ſtronger or weaker, ſo his Work goes on more or leſs vigorouſly. When other Graces are in want, and cry Give, Give, then Faith betakes it ſelf to Chriſt, and ſaith *Lord*, ſuch a Grace ſtands in need of ſo much Strength to ſupport it, and ſuch a Grace ſtands in need of ſo much Support to act it, and I have nothing to give it my ſelf, and therefore I come to fetch Supplies from thee: And certainly this Faith that comes thus empty-handed unto Chriſt, never goes away empty-handed from Chriſt. What is it that you complain of? Is it that the Work ſtands at a ſtay, and you cannot make it go forward? Is it that Temptations are ſtrong and violent, that Duties are hard, irkſome and difficult? Why ſet Faith on work to go to Chriſt, and there you may be ſure to have Supply, becauſe Faith is an omnipotent Grace; *All things are poſſible to him that believeth*, and that becauſe all things are poſſible to that God, and to that Chriſt, on whom Faith is acted. There is no Grace, nor no Supply, nor Mercy laid up in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, but it is all in the Hands of a Believer's Faith,

Faith, and he may take from thence whatſoever he needs to ſupply the preſent Wants and Neceſſities of his Soul.

(2.) Secondly, *Another working Grace is the fervent Actings of Love.* Love is the great Wheel of the Soul that ſets all the reſt a moving, and makes it like the *Chariots of Aminadab*, to run ſwiftly towards its deſired *Object*. There is a mutual dependance between Faith and Love in their working; Love depends upon Faith to ſtrengthen it, and Faith depends again upon Love to act it. As we love not that which we do not know, and our knowledge of God and of the Things of Eternity is by Faith, not by Viſion, ſo thoſe Things which we do know and which we do believe, yet if we love them not we ſhall never endeavour after them: The *Apoſtle* therefore tells us, that *Faith worketh by Love.* Now there is a threefold ſpiritual Love required to expedite our great Work.

(1.) Firſt, *A trancendent Love of God.*

(2.) Secondly, *A regular Love of our ſelves.*

(3.) Thirdly, *A complacential Love unto and Delight in our Work it ſelf.* Now when the Affections go out after theſe *Objects* of Love, this will much facilitate our great Work.

(1.) Firſt, *The Love of God is a great help to our Duty.* Our Saviour therefore urgeth Obedience upon this very account; *If ye love me, keep my Commandments.* John. 14. *And*, ſays the *Apoſtle*, *this is the Love of God*, that is, this is a certain Sign, or it 15. is the conſtant effect of our Love to God, *that we keep his Commandments, and* 1 John *his Commandments are not grievous*; they are not grievous becauſe they are his 5. 3. Commandments who is the Love and Joy of our Souls. Divine Love always conforms it ſelf to divine Precepts, and that for two Reaſons:

(1.) *Firſt*, Becauſe this Grace, as it deſires the beatifical Union to God in Glory hereafter, for Love is the deſire of Union; ſo now it cauſes an unſpeakable Union of Will, and a ſupernatural ſympathy of Affection betwixt God and the Soul; which Union cannot be a Union of Equality or Entity as is in the Perſons of the Bleſſed Trinity, and therefore it is a Union of Subordination of a Chriſtians Will to the Will of God. Now what is this Will of God? Why the *Apoſtle* tells us; *This is the Will of God*, ſays he, *even your Sanctification.* And the 1 Theſ. ſame *Apoſtle* tells us, in another place, *We are his Workmanſhip created in Chriſt* 4. 3. *Jeſus unto good Works, that God hath before ordained that we ſhould walk in them.* Eph. 2. 10. And is this God's Will, and ſhall it not be our Work? Hath God ordained that we ſhould walk therein, and ſhall we be averſe from or ſlothful thereunto? How can we pretend we love God, while we neglect the only Thing he requires from us, Holineſs and Obedience? God wills our Holineſs, becauſe there is no better a thing that he can Will next unto himſelf; the Image of God, next to himſelf, is the moſt excellent and chiefeſt Good; every thing, the nearer it approacheth unto God, the more deſirable it becomes in it ſelf; Now that which comes moſt near unto God, and advanceth the Soul in ſome reſemblance and ſimilitude to him, his Holineſs and Endeavours after Obedience, whereby we become conformable unto God, and attain ſome faint Shadows and Eſſays of the divine Perfections: The Soul wills in order unto God's Will; God now wills Holineſs becauſe it is moſt deſirable, and we muſt will our own Holineſs, becauſe if we love God as we pretend to do, our Wills muſt be conformable to his holy Will.

(2.) *Secondly*, Love to God is a Help to Duty, becauſe it is in and by Duty that we enjoy the Preſence of God, and have Communion and Fellowſhip with him. Theſe are the Lattices through which God appears to the longing Soul; and though he many times vouchſafes but half Smiles and little Glances, yet in theſe reſerved Communications the Soul finds ſo much ſweetneſs, as engageeth it to a conſtant performance of Duties all its Days: Here, *ſays the Soul*, God was wont to walk in his Sanctuary, here have I heard his Voice, here have I ſeen his Face, his Spirit hath here breathed upon me, his Conſolations have here refreſhed me, and therefore here will I wait upon him as long as I live. I remember well, *ſays the Soul*, when in Prayer and Meditation my Heart hath been filled by him, poured out to him, and accepted with him: I remember when he filled me firſt with Sighs, and then with Songs, and both alike unutterable; and therefore I will keep to the performance of theſe

Duties, waiting for the further Discoveries and Manifestations of my God unto me.

(2.) Secondly, *As Love to God, so a regular Self-love will much help and further our Obedience and Duty.* And then is Self-love truly regular, when Men love their own Souls as God loves them. Now God's love to the Souls of Men is such, that though *He wills all Men to be saved*, yet he wills that none shall be saved, *but through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the Truth.* And whilst we love our selves, if we observe the same method and order, this Self-love is always commendable and necessary. Desires after Eternal Happiness and Salvation are natural to that Soul that is truly conscious of its own Immortality, and eternal, unalterable State and Condition; and when these Desires are directed to future Happiness through present Holiness, then are they regular and become gracious. We are not so straitly limited by God's Sovereignty over us, but while we fix one Eye upon our Work, we may fix the other on our Reward: God is not so strict in his Prerogative over us, as to require Service from us from what we have already received from him: He is not as a cruel Lord and Master to say, Obey me, though afterwards you Perish; see to it that you love and glorifie me, though I eternally punish you; though considering that infinite distance we stand at from God, we could object nothing against the Equity of his Proceedings: No, but God hath so graciously twisted his Glory and our Duty together, that while we promote the one we do also promote the other, and while we work for God we do but work for our selves. Now are there any that need to be persuaded to love themselves? Is it not the great and general Sin that all Men love and seek themselves? And do not Men by becoming Self-lovers, become Self-destroyers? Yes, they do so; but it is because they seek themselves out of God's way, that therefore they lose themselves for ever. *Religion* and *Holiness* are not such severe things, as to exclude Self-love; nay, right Self-love is that which is no where to be found separate from true Grace. Ministers call upon Men to exercise Self-denial and Self-abhorrence; and this the foolish World mistakes as if so be they exhorted them to divorce themselves from themselves, to lay aside all respect and consideration of Self, and to offer violence to the most common Principles of Self-preservation. No, Would to God we all sought our selves more earnestly and constantly than we do, and that we all knew wherein our greatest Interest and Concernment did lie; then should we not leave our great Work undone, nor gratifie the Sloth of our corrupt Humors, and the sinful propensions of our carnal part, nor should we think what we do for Sin and Satan we do for our selves; no, all this is to hate our selves: And wicked Men at the last Day shall know, they have been their own most bitter and most implacable Enemies, that they would not be content with any thing less than their own eternal Ruin. A true Christian is the only selfish Man in the World; all others, they are not Self-lovers but Self-destroyers: What shall I say more than this? The *Apostle* asks. *Did ever any Man hate his own Flesh?* Did ever any Man delight to gash and burn, to wrack and torture himself? Truly I may ask the quite contrary. Do almost any love their own Spirits, their spiritual part, their Souls? This they wound and gash by many a bloody Sin, this they burn and sear by hardness and impenitency, this they go about to torture and torment in *Hell* for ever. Oh therefore be persuaded at length to take pity on your selves, considering you are but destroying while you think you are embracing of your selves; and that will be found but Self-murder at last, which you now call Self-love.

Love to our Work makes it easie.

(3.) Thirdly, *A complacential Love to, and Delight in your Work, is a great furtherance of it.* A wicked Man serves God grudgingly, he murmurs at Duties, and looks upon them only as Tasks and Burthens, thinking every thing he doth for God too much, too heavy and weighty. The Commands of God are all of them hard Sayings and grievous Impositions that he cannot bear; he could believe Christ sooner in any thing than when he tells him, *My Yoke is easy and my Burthen is light.* Here he cannot believe Christ. Thus much time, saith the *slothful Sinner*, must I spend in my Prayer, and there must I humble my self to God whom I hate, and confess before him those Sins that I love, and beg that Grace that I have slighted; so much time must I spend in reading the Law that

Mat. 11. 28.

that I never mean to obſerve, peruſing over only the Sentence of my Condemnation; and ſo often muſt I fix and dwell upon holy and ſpiritual Thoughts, which never at any time darted into, or paſſed intranſiently, but they did diſcompoſe me, and leave me a damp and ſadneſs upon my Spirit behind them; and therefore becauſe there is not a holy complacency and delight in the Service of God, all ſuch Mens Endeavours are both faint, inconſtant and languiſh while they are about them, and ſeldom do they re-aſſume them again. But a true Chriſtian works with abundance of Delight and Chearfulneſs in the Service of God, in every Duty his Soul is filled full of holy Affections, by which it ſoars up to Heaven: Duties are Meat and Drink to him, ſpiritual *Manna*, in which he takes more ſatisfaction and contentment than wicked Men do in their Sins, and therefore he performs theſe Duties ſo earneſtly, becauſe he doth it with complacency: All that he repines at, is, that natural Neceſſity, ſinful Weakneſs and Infirmities and worldly Employments, that do purloin ſo much of his time from this great Work. Now when once the Heart is brought to ſuch a frame and temper as this, thus to delight in Obedience and in the Work and Service of God, then will this working for Salvation go on with Power.

Working for Salvation muſt be with Fear and Trembling.

(3.) Thirdly, *Another Direction is that in the Text, Work for Salvation with Fear and Trembling.* A trembling Hand beſt performs a Chriſtian's Work. Now this Fear is not a Fear of diſtruſt or deſpondency, for that is ſo contrary to this Duty of working for Salvation, as that it ſtupifies and benums all Endeavours, and is a great Enemy to the performance of this Duty. But,

(1.) *Firſt*, It is a Fear of Solicitude and Carefulneſs at is ſtands oppoſed to carnal ſecurity, and that preſumption, that is the common and ordinary Deſtruction of moſt Men. This holy Fear is the beſt preſervative of true Grace: The *Apoſtle* therefore tells us, *Thou ſtandeſt by Faith; be not high-minded but fear*; implying, they would not ſtand long, though they ſtood by Faith, unleſs they were upheld with Godly Fear: And the Reaſon is, becauſe it is the property of Fear to fore-ſee and fore-caſt Dangers, and to put the Soul in a poſture of defence and ſecurity before they approach: For as the *wiſe Man* tells us, *The prudent Man fore-ſeeth the Evil and hideth himſelf, but the Simple paſs on and are puniſhed.* They are raſh and confident in their Undertakings, and ſo they paſs on and are puniſhed. Fear makes a Chriſtian circumſpect and conſiderative with himſelf, how he may keep from Miſcarriages in the performance of his great Work. If God call me to ſuch a Duty, how ſhall I perform it? If to bear ſuch a Croſs and Affliction, how ſhall I glorifie him under it? If to conflict with ſuch Temptations, how ſhall I reſiſt and overcome them? Yea, how ſhall I do to break through all Difficulties, Duties and Oppoſitions that I who am but a weak and feeble Chriſtian may meet withal, and how ſhall I do to bear up? And thus pondring what may be his Duty, and fore-caſting what Duties God may call him unto, he is enabled to do what is his Duty at preſent, and what alſo may by Providence hereafter become his Duty: Nothing overtakes ſuch a Man unexpected, nor doth any thing ſurprize him unprovided for it. And thus a careful Fear enables him in the performance of his great Work.

Rom. 11. 20.

Prov. 20. 3.

(2.) *Secondly*, A Fear of Humility and holy Reverence of God, conduceth much to the working out of our Salvation, and that in three Particulars.

(1.) *Firſt*, It much helps us in our great Work to fear God as our Lord and Maſter that ſees and overlooks all our Works, obſerving both what we do, and how we do it alſo. That Servant muſt be deſperately bold that will dare to be idle, or ſlight and perfunctory in his Work, while his Maſter's Eye is upon him. Why Chriſtians ſhould conſider God's Eye is always upon them, in Praying, in Hearing, and in every Duty that they perform, yea, in every Action of their whole Lives: And if the Eye of a Maſter, that is but a Fellow-Creature, nay, but a Fellow-Servant, can have ſuch awe and influence upon his Servant as to make him careful how he works and what he works, and to make him diligent in his Work: Should not much more the conſideration of God's Eye being upon us, who ſtands at an infinite diſtance from us, cauſe a holy Fear and Dilgence in us, in doing what our Lord and Maſter commands us?

(2.) *Secondly*, Fear God alſo as him from whom you have all your Power and Ability to work; Fear him, leſt at any time through any neglect or miſcarriage of yours, he ſhould be provoked to ſuſpend his Influence and withdraw his Grace

from

from you, and to leave you to your own Weakneſs and Impotency, upon whoſe influence all your Obedience doth depend. This is the *Apoſtle's Argument* in the Text, *Work with Fear, for God works in you both to Will and to Do.* Holy diligence in Obedience cannot be more ſtrongly enforced on an ingenuous Spirit, than by conſidering all that Strength and Ability that we have to work, is received from God, and therefore ſhould be improved for God, leſt, for our Sloth, he deprives us of that we make no uſe of.

(3.) *Thirdly*, In working, fear God alſo, as he that will be the Judge and Rewarder of your Works for ever. You perform them unto him who is to paſs Sentence upon them, and upon you for them; and will you then dare to do them ſlothfully and negligently? God will try every Man's Work with Fire, and will call every Action to a ſevere and ſtrict account; every Man's Work ſhall be ſeen through and through, and then it ſhall be known who hath wrought the Works of God, and who hath fulfilled the Will of Satan; and the final Doom and irreverſible Sentence ſhall then be pronounced according to Mens Works. *God will*, ſays the Apoſtle, *render unto every Man according to his Works, to them who by patient continuance in well doing ſeek for Glory and Immortality*, to them he will render *Eternal Life*; *but to them that are contentious and obey not the Truth, but obey Unrighteouſneſs*, he will render unto them *Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguiſh, upon every Soul that doth Evil.* Now would you but thus fear God as an upright and impartial Judge, that will render unto every one according to his Works, How would this prevail with you ſo to work that at laſt you might be found of God in well doing, and receive the bleſſed Reward and Sentence of the diligent and faithful Servant, *To enter into your Maſter's joy?*

Rom. 2. 7, 8, 9.

(4.) *Fourthly* and *Laſtly*, If you would work for Salvation ſucceſsfully, *then work ſpeedily without delay, and conſtantly without ceſſation.*

(1.) *Firſt*, Work ſpeedily without delay. Delays in all Affairs are dangerous, but in Soul Affairs uſually they are damnable. For,

(1.) *Firſt*, The longer you procraſtinate and delay, the greater and more difficult will your Work be at laſt; Corruption will be grown more tough, ill Humours will be grown more ſtubborn, your Heart will be more hardned, your Affections being more habituated will be more firmly engag'd to Sin, the *Devil* will plead right to you by Preſcription, and it is hard keeping an Enemy out that hath had long Poſſeſſion.

(2.) *Secondly*, Conſider what a deſperate Folly it is to put off your Work till to Morrow; you are not ſure that you ſhall live to ſee another Day. And oh! What Hazards do thoſe Men run, whoſe hopes of Heaven depend upon no better a bottom then their hopes of Life; and whoſe eternal Savation is ſubject to as many Caſualties and Accidents, as their preſent Beings in this World are ſubject to. Man's Breath is in his Noſtrils; and yet how do Men ſuffer their Souls and their everlaſting Happineſs to depend upon nothing ſurer than their Breath, that Breath that every moment goes forth from them, and they know not whether ever it ſhall return to them again?

But ſuppoſe your Life and Days ſhould continue, and you ſhould reach unto that time whereof you have boaſted and promiſed to mind the concernments of your Soul's eternal Happineſs in; yet conſider,

(3.) *Thirdly*, The Grace of God is not at your diſpoſal; for then either,

(1.) *Firſt*, The outward Call may ceaſe or it may grow more faint and low; you may not be ſo daily importun'd and ſolicited for Heaven as now you are: Ordinances and Opportunities may ceaſe, or you for your contempt may be given over to a contempt and neglect of them.

(2.) *Secondly*, The inward Dictates of your own Conſciences, and the motions of the holy Spirit may ceaſe: Conſcience may be brib'd to a ſilence, and the holy Ghoſt may be commiſſionated to depart after this preſent opportunity, and never more may you have its Breathings and Movings upon your Hearts, if you do not now liſten to them.

(3.) *Thirdly*, If inward Motions do continue, are you ſure after this moments refuſal that you ſhall obtain that Grace from God that may make you willing to cloſe with thoſe Motions? Leave not therefore the eternal Salvation of your precious and immortal Souls at ſuch Hazards and Delays. *Now is the acceptable time, now is the day of Salvation; to day therefore if you will hear his voice, even while it is called*

called to day, harden not your Hearts; for this is the only Time and Seaſon for working.

(2.) Secondly, *As you muſt work ſpeedily without delay, ſo you muſt work conſtantly without ceſſation or intermiſſion.* To ſtand ſtill is to backſlide, and to ceaſe working is to undo and unravel what you have wrought. You are not like Men that row in a ſtill Water, that though they ſlack their Courſe, yet they find themſelves in the ſame ſtation; but you are to go againſt Tide and Stream; the Tide of your own Corruptions, and the Stream of other Mens Actions and Examples; and the leaſt intermiſſion here will be to your Loſs; hereby you will be carried down the Tide much, yea, and much Pains and Labour will ſcarce ſuffice to regain what a little Sloth hath loſt. So much for this Text. The Lord make what hath been ſpoken profitable. *Amen.*

SERMON XXV.

THE ASSURANCE OF Heaven and Salvation, &c.

HEB. xii. 28, 29.

Wherefore we having received a Kingdom that cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may ſerve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a conſuming fire.

THIS *Text* contains in it a Doctrine, a Uſe, and a Motive: The Doctrine is, *We have received a Kingdom that cannot be moved.* The Uſe or Inference from thence is this, *Therefore let us ſerve God.* And the Motive to enforce this Exhortation is in theſe Words, *For our God is a conſuming fire.*

(1.) In the firſt part, which is the *Theſis* or Poſition, *We have received a Kingdom that cannot be moved.* We muſt know, there is a twofold *Kingdom*; a *Kingdom of Grace*, ſet up in the Heart of a Saint where Chriſt alone reigns as ſole Monarch and Sovereign; and a *Kingdom of Glory* prepared for us in the higheſt Heavens, where we ſhall reign as Kings with Chriſt for ever. If we take it in the former ſenſe for the *Kingdom of Grace*, ſo the *Apoſtle* ſaith, *we have a Kingdom*, that is, we have it already in Poſſeſſion. Chriſt hath eſtabliſhed his Dominion over every Believer, and though he ſits perſonally upon his Throne in Heaven, yet he Rules in us by the Vice-gerency and Deputation of his Spirit that received Commiſſion from him, and alſo by the Law of his Word enacted by it. If we underſtand it in the latter ſenſe for the *Kingdom of Glory*, which ſeems moſt congruous to the Deſign of the *Apoſtle*, ſo alſo, *we have a Kingdom*, and that in a fourfold ſenſe.

Saints have a Kingdom in a fourfold Reſpect.

(1.) Firſt, *By Grace giving us the earneſt of it*; by Faith realizing of it, by Hope embracing it, and by the Promiſes aſſuring of it.

(1.) Firſt, *We have a Kingdom of Glory in the Earneſt and firſt Fruits of it.* The Comforts and Graces of the Spirit are very often in *Scripture* called *the Earneſt of our Inheritance*: So you have it in 2 *Cor.* 1. 22. and in *Eph.* 1. 14. Now an Earneſt

Saints have a Kingdom in the firſt Fruits of it.

neſt you know is always part of the Bargain: So God to aſſure us that he is in earneſt when he promiſeth Heaven and Glory to us, hath already given us part of it in the Graces of his Spirit. Grace and Glory are one and the ſame thing in a different Print, in a ſmaller and a greater Letter; here we have Heaven in ſeminal Inchoation, hereafter we ſhall have it in conſummate Perfection; Glory lies couched and compacted in Grace, as the beauty of a *Flower* lies couched and eclipſed in the Seed; therefore the *Palmiſt* ſaith, *Pſal.* 97. *That Light is ſown for the Righteous*; that is, the Light of Joy and of a future Life are in the Graces of God's Children as in their Seed, and they ſhall certainly bud and ſprout forth into perfect Happineſs.

Faith realizeth it.

(2.) Secondly, *We have a Kingdom of Glory, becauſe Faith realizeth things future, and gives an exiſtence and being to things that are not.* This is that Grace to which nothing is paſt nor nothing future; it contracts all things into preſent time, and makes all actually exiſtent; it draws Things that are at a great diſtance from it near to it ſelf; and thus the *Galatians* Faith repreſented the death of Chriſt ſo viſibly to them, that the *Apoſtle* told them, *He was crucified among them*, Gal. 3. 1. It dives down into the gulf of future times, and fetcheth up things that as yet are not. It is much at one to a ſtrong Faith to have Heaven or to believe it; this Grace makes Heaven as really preſent as if it were already in Poſſeſſion, and therefore it is called in *Heb.* 11. 1. *The evidence of things not ſeen, and the ſubſtance of things hoped for*; it is the very being of things hoped for, the being of thoſe things that as yet have no being.

Hope embraceth it.

(3.) Thirdly, *We have a Kingdom as in the view of Faith, ſo alſo in the embraces of Hope.* And therefore Hope is called, *The Anchor of the Soul that entreth into that within the Vail*, Heb 6. 19. that is, into Heaven; it lays hold on all that Glory that is there laid up and kept in reverſion for us. Hope is in it ſelf a ſolid and ſubſtantial Poſſeſſion, for it ſtirs up the ſame Affections, it excites the ſame Joy, Delight and Complacency as Fruition it ſelf doth. It is the Taſter of all our Comforts, and if they be but temporal, it not only taſts them, but ſometimes quite devours them, and leaves us in ſuſpence whether it be not better to be Expectants than Enjoyers. Heavenly Hope gives the ſame real contentment and ſatisfaction that antedates our Glory and puts us into the Poſſeſſion of our Inheritance whilſt we are yet in our Nonage, only it doth not ſpend and devour its Object before-hand as earthly Hope doth.

God hath aſſured them of it by Promiſe.

(4.) Fourthly, *We have a Kingdom of Glory, becauſe God hath aſſured to us the poſſeſſion of it by his immutable word of Promiſe.* And therefore it is called, *Eternal Life, which God that cannot lie hath promiſed*, Tit. 1. 2. God's Word is as good Security as actual Poſſeſſion. It is this Word that gives us Right and Title to it, and this Right we may well call ours. Hence we have it, and it is obſervable, *Mark* 16. 16. *He that believeth ſhall be ſaved.* Here is aſſurance of Salvation for the future: But in *John* 3. 18. there it is, *He that believeth not, is condemned already.* He that believeth ſhall be ſaved, he that believeth not is condemned already; why Unbelievers are no more actually condemned than Believers are actually ſaved; only what God promiſeth, or what God threatneth, it is all one whether he ſaid it is done or it ſhall be done; for Damnation is as ſure to the one, and Salvation as certain to the other, as if they were already in their final Eſtate. So then *we have a Kingdom*, that is God, who cannot lie, hath promiſed it, and his Promiſe is as much as actual Poſſeſſion it ſelf.

The Saints Kingdom is immoveable.

It follows, in the Text this Kingdom is diſcribed to us to be *immoveable*, *we have a Kingdom that cannot be moved*; it is not like the Kingdoms of the Earth, that are all ſubject to Earth-quakes and Commotions, but *we have a Kingdom that cannot be moved.* And if we underſtand this of the *Kingdom of Grace* in the Hearts of Believers, then the ſenſe is, it can never be ſo moved as to be utterly removed; though it be ſhaken and batter'd, yet the *Foundation of God ſtandeth ſure*, having this *Seal* on it, *the Lord knoweth who are his*, as the *Apoſtle* ſpeaks, 2 *Tim.* 2. 19. Indeed as all Earth-quakes are cauſed by ſome Vapours included in the Bowels of the Earth, ſo is there enough in us to cauſe Shakings and Earth-quakes, there are thoſe corrupt and ſinful ſteams of Luſts that are ſtill working and heaving in our Breaſts; that were not God's Truth, Wiſdom and Power all engaged to keep and preſerve us, we ſhould be ſoon moved from our Standing, and over-thrown. If we underſtand by it the *Kingdom of Glory*, that is certainly immoveable, *we have a Kingdom*

that cannot be moved; there we ſhall be free from the Temptations of *Satan*, from the Infirmities and Corruptions of the Fleſh, from the mutability and fickleneſs of our own Wills, and have a bleſſed neceſſity impoſed upon us to be for ever holy, and to be for ever happy. So much for the *Theſis, We have a Kingdom that cannot be moved.*

(2.) *Secondly*, From the Theſis the *Apoſtle* proceeds to draw a practical Inference; wherein we may obſerve both what he exhorts us unto, and how we ought to do it. The Matter of the Duty to which he exhorts us, is, *Let us have Grace whereby we may ſerve God.* The manner how we ought to ſerve God is ſet down in one word and that is *acceptably*, *Let us ſerve God acceptably*; which that we may do, he directs us to the means, and that is, in all our ſerving of God let us addreſs our ſelves to him, *with reverence and godly fear*; let us ſerve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. I ſhall only, as I paſs along, take a taſte of this part of the *Text*, before I fix upon what I principally intend. The Word here tranſlated *Reverence* ſignifies ſhame-facedneſs or baſhfulneſs, ſuch as is commendable in Inferiours while they are in the preſence of their Superiours; and it implies in it two Things. Firſt, *Conſciouſneſs of our own Vileneſs and Unworthineſs.* And then it implies; Secondly, *An over-awing ſenſe of anothers excellency.* For Modeſty or Reverence conſiſts in theſe two Things, in low and debaſing Thoughts of our ſelves, and in a high Eſteem of others. Why now this the *Apoſtle* exhorts us to in the *Text* by the word Reverence; whence obſerve this, *That a due ſenſe of our own vileneſs and of God's glorious Majeſty, is an excellent qualification in all our Services to make them acceptable.* Let us ſerve God acceptably, with Reverence and godly Fear.

(3.) *Thirdly*, You have in the *Text* the Motive whereby the *Apoſtle* inforceth this Exhortation, *For our God is a conſuming Fire.* Theſe Words are cited out of *Deut.* 4. 19. where *Moſes*, to bring the *Iſraelites* from Idolatry, repreſents God to them as a jealous God and a conſuming Fire. And here the *Apoſtle* makes uſe of them to compoſe Men into a holy Awe and Reverence of God in ſerving of him: Whence obſerve,

(1.) Firſt, *That an irreverent and fearleſs Worſhip of the true God, provokes him and deſerves his conſuming Wrath, as well as the Idolatrous Worſhip of a falſe God.* *Moſes* makes uſe of the ſame Words to deter the *Iſraelites* from Idolatry and worſhipping of a falſe God, as the *Apoſtle* makes uſe of to excite us to a Reverence and worſhipping of the true God.

(2.) Secondly, *Whereas it is ſaid that our God is a conſuming Fire*; obſerve, *That our peculiar Intereſt in God is no Encouragement to caſt off our moſt awful fear of God.* Our God is a conſuming Fire; though he hath laid down his Enmity againſt us, yet he hath not laid down his Sovereignty and Majeſty over us. Indeed theſe two Expreſſions, *Our God, and a conſuming Fire*, at firſt bluſh and glance ſeem to look ſtrangely and wiſtly one upon another; but the *Holy Ghoſt* hath excellently tempered them: He is *our God*, this corrects that deſpairing Fear that otherwiſe would ſeize upon us, from the conſideration of God as a conſuming Fire: And he is a *conſuming Fire* alſo, that corrects that preſumptuous Irreverence, that elſe the conſideration of our Intereſt in God might poſſibly embolden us unto.

You ſee now, from the Explication of theſe Words, what an excellent copious Portion of *Scripture* I have unfolded unto you, wherein indeed is contained the true Art and Method of ſerving of God acceptably. It is the Fear of God that quickens us to ſerve him, and this Fear of God is preſſed upon us and wrought in us by two ſtrong Principles, we have a Kingdom; and what is ſtrange too for thoſe that have a Kingdom of God, our God is a conſuming Fire, and therefore let us fear him. Now this is ſuch a Principle that carnal Men are not apt to apprehend; they ſay, if we have a Kingdom that cannot be moved, why then ſhould we fear? And if God be ſuch a conſuming Fire, why ſhould we ever expect that Kingdom, ſince we are but as Stubble? But our Apoſtle hath well conjoyned them together, and from that Conjunction I ſhall raiſe and proſecute this one Propoſition.

That even thoſe who ſtand higheſt in the love and favour of God, and have the fulleſt aſſurance thereof, and of their intereſt in him as their God, ought notwithſtanding to fear him as a Sin-revenging God, and a conſuming Fire. Doctrin.

In the proſecution of this I ſhall ſhew you.

(1.) Firſt, *What fear of God it is that a Believer ought always to over-awe his Heart with.*

(2.) Secondly, *Upon what Grounds and Conſiderations he is thus to do it.* What there is in a reconciled God that may be a Ground and Motive to over-awe our Hearts with a fear of his Majeſty.

What Fear is.

Firſt, *What fear of God it is that a Believer ought to over-awe his Heart with.* Fear in general is deſcribed to be a Paſſion or an Affection of the Mind, ariſing from the apprehenſion of ſome great Evil difficultly avoidable: And, as it is obſerved by ſome, it uſually carries in it three Things.

(1.) There is in Fear a doubtfulneſs and uncertainty of the Event what it may prove, and this is always a Torment to the Mind.

(2.) There is in it a Terror that ſprings and ariſeth from the greatneſs of the Evil apprehended and feared.

(3.) There is in it a careful flight and averſion of it.

Three things in Fear.

1. A doubtfulneſs of the Event.

(1.) *There is in Fear a doubtfulneſs and uncertainty of the Event*; and this is a Torment when a Man is wrackt in Suſpenſe and Doubt what to expect, whether or no the Vengeance of God will not fall heavy upon him, whether or no he be not Fuel on which this conſuming Fire will for ever prey. Now this is not that Fear to which the *Apoſtle* in this *Text* exhorts us to ſerve God withal; no, to *Serve God with Reverence and godly Fear*, is not to ſerve him with a doubtful, anxious and ſolicitous Fear of what the Event may prove; nay, ſuch a Fear as this is, is inconſiſtent with actual Aſſurance, and thoſe who are perplexed with it cannot ſay *we have a Kingdom*, nor cannot fear their God as a conſuming Fire. There may be a genuine, awful Fear of God as a conſuming Fire, where there is not the leaſt doubt remaining concerning our final State, where the Soul is fully aſſured that God will be to him not a Fire to conſume him, but a Sun to cheriſh him for ever. I will give you one or two remarkable *Scriptures* to this purpoſe. In *Heb.* 4. 1. *Let us fear*, ſays the *Apoſtle*, *leſt a Promiſe being leſt us of entring into his Reſt, any of you ſhould ſeem to come ſhort of it.* Here the *Apoſtle* quickens them to the exerciſe of Holineſs, from the fear of falling ſhort of Heaven; yea, though they had aſſurance by God's Promiſe of it; leſt a Promiſe being left us of entring into his Reſt, yet you ſhould fall ſhort of it. And ſo the *Apoſtle* triumphs in his Aſſurance, in 2 *Cor.* 5. 1. *We know that we have an Houſe eternal in the Heavens*; and yet in *Verſe* 11. he quickens himſelf to the diſcharge of his Miniſterial Office, from the Fear of God's Wrath, *Knowing the Terrors of the Lord we perſuade Men.* Though he was aſſured of Glory, yet he quicken himſelf to the diſcharge of his Miniſterial Function, by the Fear of God's Wrath. So that it is evident there may be a Fear of God's Wrath exciting unto Duty, where yet there is a full Aſſurance beyond all doubting and heſitation of eſcaping Wrath. So that this is not that Fear that the *Apoſtle* excites them that have aſſurance unto.

2. There is in Fear a Terror ariſing from the Evil feared.

(2.) *There is a Fear of Terrour, a ſhivering in the Soul upon the apprehenſion of the greatneſs of the Evil feared, but avoided too*; and this is conſiſtent with full Aſſurance. Thus the Terror of paſt Dangers ſometimes cauſeth as much Terror as if we were again to encounter with them. So when Believers look back upon that Wrath and fiery Indignation that they have narrowly eſcaped, upon that *Lake of Brimſtone* that boils and burns behind them, wherein thouſands of others are for ever ſwallowed up, this cannot but affect them with a holy Horror and Fear of God's Wrath againſt Sinners, though they have full aſſurance of his Love.

3. There is in Fear a flight and averſation of the Evil feared.

(3.) *There is alſo in Fear a flight and averſation from the Evil feared*; and this alſo is conſiſtent with full aſſurance. *Noah* had full aſſurance from the Promiſe of God for his preſervation from the *Deluge*, and yet it is ſaid, *That Noah being moved with fear built him an Ark.* Full aſſurance to eſcape Evil is far from hindring (as ſome calumniate it) the uſe of means to prevent that Evil; yea, the aſſurance that we have to eſcape *Hell* and *Wrath* is of the greateſt and moſt effectual influence to make us careful to uſe thoſe means whereby we may eſcape it. See this in 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. *Having theſe promiſes, let us cleanſe our ſelves from all filthineſs both of Fleſh and Spirit, perfecting Holineſs in the fear of God.* So in *Tit.* 2. 11, 12. *The Grace of God that bringeth Salvation, teacheth us to deny Ungodlineſs and worldly Luſts, looking for that bleſſed hope and glorious appearing of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* So in 1 *John* 3. 3. *Every one that hath this Hope in him, purifieth himſelf as God is pure.*

Thus you ſee what Fear it is the *Apoſtle* exhorts Believers to, who have a Kingdom;

dom; not a Fear of perplexing Doubtfulneſs, but ſuch as is conſiſtent with their full aſſurance; that is, ſo to fear the Wrath of God, as to have our Hearts affected with Terror at the greatneſs and inſupportableneſs of that Wrath though they have eſcaped it, and to fear ſo, as to avoid all Sin, and all that expoſeth to that Wrath; in theſe two Senſes they that are aſſured that God is their God, ought to fear him as a conſuming Fire.

(2.) *Secondly*, Let us now ſee upon what Grounds and Conſiderations a Believer who is aſſured of God's love and favour to him, ought yet to fear him as a conſuming Fire. *Why Believers, who are aſſured of God's love, ought to fear him as a conſuming Fire.*

(1.) And Firſt, *The conſideration of that mighty and dreadful Power that God puts forth in the puniſhing and afflicting of the damned; this may ſtrike Fear into the Hearts of thoſe that are fully aſſured of God's love and favour to them.* Such a Fear as this is, the *holy Angels* themſelves have; though they are ſecured by Chriſt in that bleſſed State and Condition that they enjoy, yet to ſee God ſtripping and making bare his Arm, to lay on weighty ſtrokes of everlaſting Vengeance upon their Fellow *Angels* that are fallen, makes them to Tremble and ſtand aſtoniſhed at the Almighty Power of God; and this keeps them at a due diſtance in their Thoughts and Apprehenſions of his dreadful Majeſty. And ſhould it not much more make us to tremble with an awful reſpect of the Power of God, to conſider how he cruſheth and breaks the Damned in *Hell* by his own Almighty Arm ſtretched out in the full Power of his Wrath to their everlaſting Deſtruction. It is from this Power of God that Chriſt himſelf enforceth the Fear of God, *Mat.* 20. 28. *Fear him who is able to deſtroy both Body and Soul in Hell.* Though God ſhould aſſure you that he would never deſtroy you in Hell, yet becauſe he is able to do it, therefore you ſhould fear him. *Becauſe of that Power that he puts forth in puniſhing of the damned.*

(2.) Secondly, *This Fear may ariſe in the Hearts of the Children of God, who are moſt aſſured of his Love, from the conſideration of the Wrath and dreadful Severity of God, as well as of his Power.* If a Father corrects his Slave in his Wrath, this will cauſe Fear and Dread in the Son, though he knows that Wrath ſhall never fall upon him. So when a Child of God, who is aſſured of the tender love and favour of God to himſelf, yet when he ſadly conſiders that Wrath and Indignation that is in God againſt the damned; when he ſees his heavenly Father angry, though it be not againſt him; yet this muſt needs ſtrike a reverential Fear and Awe into his Soul. Now this reverential Fear will remain for ever, *The Fear of the Lord endureth for ever*; yea, when the Children of God ſhall be made for ever happy in Heaven, yet this Fear ſhall then be encreas'd, and not at all diminiſhed; the more they ſee of the Power of the Wrath and Severity of God executed upon the damned, the more they fear and reverence this powerful, this Sin-revenging God; and this kind of Fear is no prejudice to their full Aſſurance and Joy, nor ſhall it be prejudicial to their compleat and perfect Happineſs in Heaven. *Becauſe of God's Wrath and Severity.*

(3.) Thirdly, *The conſideration of the deſert of Sin, ſhould cauſe a holy Fear of God, even in thoſe that are fully aſſured of his Love.* When a Child of God looks upon Sin, and ſees what Wrath and Torment he hath deſerved by it, though he be aſſured by the Teſtimony of the Spirit of God that he is pardoned, yet it cannot but fright him to conſider that he ſhould deſerve ſo great Condemnation. As a *Malefactor* though he be pardoned, yet if he be preſent at the Execution of his Fellow Offenders, it muſt needs ſtrike him with Fear and Horror, that he ſhould be guilty of the ſame Crimes that they are to ſuffer ſuch ſharp and cruel Puniſhments for. What the *Thief* on the Croſs ſaid unto his Fellow Thief, *Doſt thou not fear God, ſeeing thou art in the ſame Condemnation?* The ſame may I ſay to Believers; Do not you fear God, ſeeing you deſerve at leaſt to be in the ſame Condemnation with thoſe Wretches that lie frying and howling in Hell? *Becauſe of the deſert of their Sins.*

(4.) Fourthly, *Another Ground of fear is, that it is in it ſelf poſſible that all this Wrath ſhould be your Portion for ever, even you, who are moſt aſſured of Glory.* And is not this juſt cauſe of Fear, if not of Expectation yet at leaſt of Terror? Indeed as God hath been graciouſly pleaſed to bind himſelf in a Covenant of Grace and Mercy to you, ſo it is impoſſible that this Wrath ſhould fall upon you; but yet ſuch a Suppoſition as this is, is enough to cauſe Fear in the moſt aſſured Heart, to think that if God had not engaged himſelf by Promiſe to deliver him *Becauſe in it ſelf it is poſſible all this Wrath might have been their Portion.*

from that Wrath, what then would have been his Condition to all Eternity? Would not ſuch Thoughts as theſe are make you tremble? Suppoſe a Man were faſt chained to the top of ſome high Rock hanging over a bottomleſs Gulf, though he knew and was aſſured that he ſhould not fall into it, being immoveably faſten'd there, yet when he looks down that deep and dangerous Precipice, and ſees the Gulf foaming and raging under him, will not a cold Fear drill through his Heart to think, O! if I were not here faſtned by a ſtrong Chain to this immoveable Rock, what would become of me? Even ſo Believers, you that are moſt aſſured to eſcape Hell, this is your Condition; you are faſtned to the Rock of Ages by the unchangeable Promiſe of God that will ever hold you faſt; but yet every time you look down into the bottomleſs Gulf that is under you, were thouſands are ſwallowed up to all Eternity; doth not ſuch a Thought as this is fright you to think? O! if I were not faſtned to this immoveable Rock, if God had not made an everlaſting Covenant with me, ordered in all things and ſure, I ſhould alſo have been ſwallowed up with the reſt of the World, and have gone down quick into Hell. Why, alas, we are all of us held over the Lake of Fire and Brimſtone in the Hands of God; ſome he holds in the left Hand of his common Providence, and others of them he holds in the right Hand of his ſpecial Grace; thoſe whom he holds only in the Hands of his Providence he lets fall and drop one after another into Hell, where they are ſwallowed up and loſt Eternally; thoſe that he holds in the Hands of his Grace, it is true it is impoſſible upon that Suppoſition that ever they ſhould fall into Hell, yet when they think, O if we were not upheld, yea, how poſſible it was that they ſhould not have been upheld; this apprehenſion muſt needs ſtrike them with Fear and Terror, though not with a perplexing Doubtfulneſs concerning the ſafety of their Condition, yet with a doubtful apprehenſion of the poſſibility of what would have been their Condition if God had held them over Hell only, by the Hand of his common Providence.

Becauſe they eſcape very narrowly.

(5.) Fifthly, *Conſider though you are aſſured that you ſhall eſcape this Eternal Death, yet it will be a narrow eſcape, and that may cauſe Fear:* It will be an eſcape with very much Labour and Difficulty, though you are held in the Hands of God, yet he leads you along to Heaven by the Gates of Hell, and this is ſufficient to cauſe Fear. Our way to Heaven is ſo ſtrait, the Rubs in it ſo many, our Falls by them ſo frequent, our Enemies ſo potent, that though our aſſurance may make us not to fear but that in the end, we ſhall eſcape *Hell*; yet it will be high preſumption for us not to fear how we may eſcape it. The *Apoſtle* brings in the Salvation of the Elect themſelves with a ſcarcely, 1 *Pet.* 4. 18. *If the Righteous ſcarcely be ſaved.* Why now this *ſcarcely* doth not imply that there is any uncertainty in the End, but only it implies the great difficulty in the means of obtaining of it. So then the End is certain, that is, a Believer's Salvation from Hell, and that is juſt cauſe of rejoycing; but the Means are very difficult and laborious, and that is juſt cauſe of Fear.

Well then, briefly to apply it in one Word; *Though you are aſſured, through Faith, of the Pardon of your Sins, yet tremble at the thought of that Wrath and Hell that you have eſcaped.* It is obſerved that thoſe are the fixed *Stars* that tremble moſt. So Chriſtians, who are fixed immoveably in the unchangeable Love of God, as *Stars fixed* to the Heavens in their Orbs, yet they are moſt of all in Trepidation and Trembling when they reflect upon themſelves and think, that inſtead of being *Stars* in Heaven, they might have been *Firebrands* in Hell. Thoſe to me are ſuſpicious Profeſſors that make a great blaze with their Joys in the apprehenſions of their Right to Heaven, but never tremble under the apprehenſions of their Deſerts of Hell.

What there is in the conſideration of God as our God, that may cauſe us to fear him.

Having ſhewed you upon what account God is to be feared as he is a conſuming Fire, in the next place I ſhall ſhew you what there is in the conſideration of God, as our God, that may enforce a holy Awe and Fear of him; and indeed if ever it was neceſſary to preſs Men to a due Fear and Awe of God it is ſo now, ſince on the one Hand the open Prophaneneſs of ungodly Men, and on the other Hand the pert Saucineſs of ſome notional Profeſſors, are apt to think that Communion with God conſiſts in a familiar Rudeneſs, doth plainly teſtifie to all the World that there is little Fear or Reverence of him in their Hearts. And now whilſt I am ſhewing what reaſon there is that God's deareſt Children ſhould fear him as a reconciled

reconciled Father, let wicked Men in the mean while ſadly conſider with themſelves, what great cauſe then they have to fear him who is their ſworn Enemy; if God's Smiles are tempered with that Majeſty that makes them awful, ſurely his Frowns then muſt needs carry in them an aſtoniſhing Terror, that makes them inſupportable. We may obſerve how unexpectedly ſometimes, from the Goodneſs and Mercy of God, that is, the ſweeteſt and moſt natural attractive of Love, the *Scripture* draws an Inference to fear God, *Pſal.* 130. 4. *There is forgiveneſs with thee that thou mayeſt be feared.* Not only a Sin-revenging, but a Sin-pardoning God is here ſet before us as the Object of our Fear; theſe two Siſter Graces Fear and Love are nouriſhed in the Soul by the ſame Attribute, God's pardoning Mercy. The great Sinner in the Goſpel is ſaid *to love much, becauſe much was forgiven her*; and here much Fear as well as much Love, is the reſult and iſſue of God's pardoning Grace. And ſo you have it in *Hoſ.* 3. 5. *They ſhall fear the Lord and his goodneſs.* And in *Exod.* 15. 11. *Moſes* deſcribing the moſt glorious Attributes of God, tells us, *That he is glorious in Holineſs, fearful in Praiſes*; even then when we are to praiſe God for his Mercy, yet are we to fear him, as being fearful in Praiſes. And therefore *Nehemiah*, in *Neh.* 1. 5. praying to God, ſays he, *O Lord, the great and the terrible God.* Wherein? Is it in overwhelming Kingdoms, in bringing upon them decreed Deſtruction? Is it in the fierce execution of of his Wrath againſt Sinners? No; ſays he, *O Lord, the terrible God, that keepeſt Covenant and Mercy for them that love him.* So again in Chap. 9. 32. *O God, the mighty and terrible God, that keepeſt Covenant and Mercy.* Let us now conſider what there is in the Mercy and Favour of God, as he a is reconciled God unto us and in Covenant with us, that may juſtly render him to be the Object of our Fear.

That dreadful way that God took to manifeſt his mercy to us, may juſtly cauſe us to fear him.

(1.) Firſt, *The conſideration of that dreadful way and method that God took to manifeſt his Mercy towards us, is ſufficient to affect our Hearts with Fear, though we ſtand fully poſſeſſed of his favour.* In *Gen.* 28. when God had made many gracious Promiſes all along that Chapter unto *Jacob*, of *bleſſing* of him, and *keeping him in all his ways*, of *multiplying his Seed as the duſt of the Earth*, you would think this was no terrible Thing; and yet becauſe God reveals this Mercy to him in an awful and amazing manner, a *Gap* is opened in Heaven, a bright *Ladder* reaching from Earth to Heaven; God on the top of it, *Angels* on every Round of it; though the Meſſage was joyful, yet the ſtrange kind of delivering of the Meſſage, makes *Jacob* cry out, *How dreadful is this place, it is no other than the Gate of Heaven!* The very Gate of Heaven becomes dreadful when it is repreſented in ſuch a Majeſtical manner. But now the way that God took for his Mercy to arrive at us, is much more dreadful than any ſuch *Dream* or *Viſion*, and therefore we ſhould be the more deeply affected with Fear and Trembling, even then when God ſpeaks Peace and Pardon to us; for if we conſider either the Terms upon which he is become ours, or the way by which he diſcovereth himſelf to be ours; both of them are full of Dread and Terror.

The terms upon which God becomes ours, are full of Terror.

(1.) Firſt, *It cannot but ſtrike our Hearts with Fear to reflect upon thoſe dreadful Terms upon which God is contented, to be induced to become our God.* His Mercy towards us is procured upom Terms of infinite Juſtice and Severity. Divine Vengeance arreſts our *Surety*, and exacts from him the utmoſt Satisfaction; that Curſe that would for ever have blaſted and withered the Souls of all Mankind, ſeizeth upon Chriſt in all its malignity; that Wrath, ſome few Drops of which ſcalds the Damned in Hell, was given him to drink off in a full and overflowing Cup, *He did bear the chaſtiſement of our Peace, and by his Stripes we are healed*; nor would God upon lower Terms have conſented to a Reconciliation betwixt wretched Man and himſelf, than the precious Blood of his only Son. As of Old, Friendſhip betwixt two Perſons was wont to be atteſted and ſealed by a Sacrifice, as we find it both among *Heathen Authors*, and alſo in *Scripture*; an Inſtant of which we have of *Laban*, in *Gen.* 31. 54. where *Laban* and *Jacob*, returning to Amity, make a Ratification of it by a Sacrifice. So the Atonement that God made betwixt us and himſelf is ſolemnized by a *Sacrifice*, even the Sacrifice of his own Son, *As a Lamb without ſpot or blemiſh*; in this Blood the Treaty betwixt God and Man ſtand ratified and confirmed. Oh! dreadful Mercy, that claſps and embraces us about with Arms died red in the Blood of Jeſus Chriſt. But now is not this Ground enough to cauſe a holy Fear of God to ſeize upon every Soul that ſhall but ſeriouſly conſider

ſider this ſad *Tragedy* of pardoning Grace? If a *King* reſolve to forgive a *Malefactor*, upon no other Terms than a Pardon writ with the laſt drop of the Heart blood of his deareſt Friend, who is there that is ſo hardned, that will not tremble at ſuch a Mercy as this is, though it ſave him? So is the Caſe betwixt God and us; the Contents of the Pardon are joyful, but it is written all with the Blood of Jeſus Chriſt reaking warm from his very Heart; and who then would not fear even a forgiving God?

The way by which God diſcovers himſelf to be ours, is dreadful, and may make us to fear him.

(2.) Secondly, *Conder the way and method that God takes with us when he becomes our God, and that is moſt dreadful, and muſt needs make the moſt confirmed Heart to ſhake with Fear and Trembling.* Indeed, God deals not with us in ſuch Rigour as he dealt with Jeſus Chriſt his Son; but yet uſually when he becomes our God, when he enters upon us as his Poſſeſſion; firſt, he ſhakes all the Foundations of our Hearts, breaths in Flames of Fire into our very Marrow, cramps our Conſciences and unjoints our Souls; O the Tempeſts and Storms of Wrath that God pours into a wounded Conſcience, when it is under ſearching Convictions! O the Smart and Anguiſh of a wounded Spirit, when God inſtead of Balm ſhall only chafe it with Brimſtone! And yet this is the common method that God uſeth to prepare Souls for himſelf; he ſeems to arm himſelf in all his Terrors againſt them, ſingling them out to the Conflict, and when they give up themſelves for loſt, lying gaſping for Hope ſcarcely, at length is adminiſtred ſome few reviving Comforts. It is with theſe as it was with the *Children of Iſrael* upon *Sinai*, firſt they were aſtoniſhed with a confuſed noiſe of Thunder, the Air full of Lightning, the Mountains all on a Flame, and the Earth trembling under them, before they heard that comfortable Voice in *Exod.* 20 2. *I am the Lord thy God.* So is it with convinced Sinners: God diſchargeth his Threatnings againſt them that ſpeak more dreadfully to them than a Voice of Thunder; he ſpeaks to them out of the midſt of Flames, and every Word ſcorcheth up their Hearts; and when they ſtand trembling and deſpairing, once at length they hear thoſe reviving Words, *I am the Lord thy God.* What Hearts are there now that ſuch a dreadful Mercy as this is, would not over-aw? Thoſe Diſcoveries of God's Love that break in upon the Soul in the midſt of a doleful and gloomy Night of Deſpair and Deſpondency, work naturally a ſweet kind of Terror and a ſhivering Joy; and that's the firſt Conſideration. The dreadful method that God takes to procure Mercy for us, even by the Death of his Son and to apply Mercy to us, even by the Terrors of a convinced Conſcience, is a ſufficient Ground to affect our Hearts with Fear, though we ſtand fully poſſeſs'd of his Favour.

Reaſ. 2. *We ought to fear God, tho' he be our God, becauſe it is poſſible to loſe his Love and the Senſe of it.*

Secondly, *Though God be our God, yet to conſider that it is poſſible to loſe his Favour and the Senſe of it, this is enough to affect the Heart with a holy fear even of a reconciled God.* It is true, God's Original and Fountain Love can never be dried up, *Whom he loves, he loves unto the End*, John 1. 13. *And my loving Kindneſs will I never utterly take away from him*, Pſal. 89. 33. But yet the Streams of this Fountain Love may be very much obſtructed from flowing freely down upon us; though we ſhall never again be Children of Wrath, yet we may be Children under Wrath; every preſumptuous Sin we commit raiſeth God's diſpleaſure againſt us, he is angry with us upon every more notorious and known Sin we commit; and ſince then we are in danger every Day of falling into groſs and foul Sins, and are kept only by his almighty and free Grace from the worſt, what cauſe have we to fear, leſt we forfeit his Favor and turn his Diſpleaſure againſt us? Yea again, though we ſhould be preſerved from Sin and continue in his Love, yet we cannot aſſure our ſelves that we ſhall continue in the Senſe and comfortable Apprehenſion of it: Comfort is moſt arbitrary and at God's free Diſpoſe, neither hath he ingaged himſelf to beſtow it upon any by any abſolute Promiſe; though now his *Lamp* ſhines clearly upon thy *Tabernacle* and thou rejoyceſt in his Smiles, yet how quickly may he wrap thee up in a dark Night of Deſertion, and turn all thy *Songs* into *Mourning?* Thou, therefore, that art now aſſured that God is thy God, fear leaſt ere long thou mayeſt not think him to be ſo; certain thou art he is ſo now, yet before it be long, poſſibly, through thy Miſcarriage, thou mayeſt not think him to be ſo, and it is all one as to Comfort or Diſcomfort, whether God be thy God or not, if thou doſt not apprehend him to be ſo, and therefore fear him.

Thirdly,

Reaſ. 3. *Why we ſhould fear God, becauſe every Frown of our God touches to the quick.*

Thirdly, *Conſider every Frown and Stroke toucheth to the Quick, that cometh from a reconciled God and a loving Father, and therefore the rather fear becauſe he is thy God.* Every little Blow from a Father ſtrikes deeper and cauſeth more Smart than greater Blows from other Perſons; others ſtrike the Body, but when a loving Father ſtrikes, he wounds the Heart: So is it here; the nearneſs of the Relation betwixt God and us, puts an Anguiſh and Sting into every Correction. As the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks in his own Caſe, *Pſal.* 55. 12. *It was not an Enemy that reproached me, neither was it he that hated me, then I could have born it; but it was thou a Friend, mine Equal, my Guide, and mine Acquaintance.* Theſe are ſad Accents; and ſo is it here: The Blood of a Sin-revenging God may indeed break the Back, but the Blows of a gracious and reconciled Father break the Heart. Fear therefore, leſt through ſome Miſcarriage of thine (and ſuch Miſcarriages thou art every Day guilty of) thou ſhouldeſt provoke thy God to lay ſome heavy Stroke upon thee, which will be the more ſmart from the aggravation that provoked Love puts upon it. And thus you ſee now in theſe three Particulars, what ground there is from the conſideration of God as our God, to enforce a holy Fear of his divine Majeſty upon our Hearts. He is our God, therefore fear him becauſe the way that he became ours is moſt dreadful; he is our God as yet, fear leſt we may not apprehend him ſo long; he is our God therefore fear him, becauſe every Stroke and Frown from a God in Covenant, comes with an aggravated ſmart and ſting.

Why now this holy Fear, as it is no Enemy to full aſſurance, as I have ſhewed you, ſo neither,

Holy Fear is not contrary to the Love of God. 1 Joh. 4. 18. Opened.

(2.) Secondly, *Is it any way prejudicial to a moſt ardent love of God.* Filial Love and Filial Fear are two Twins; but not ſuch as *Jacob* and *Eſau*, that ſtrive to ſupplant one another. The pure Flame of divine and heavenly Love is like other Flames, the higher it mounts the more it vibrates and trembles. Indeed St. *John* tells us, 1 *John* 4. 18. *That perfect Love caſteth out Fear.* It ſhould ſeem then that all Fear of God is ſwallowed up in thoſe Hearts that are once brought into an holy Love. But the *Apoſtle* doth very well explain himſelf in the reaſon that he gives of this Aſſertion in the next Words, *Perfect Love caſteth out Fear, becauſe Fear hath Torment in it.* Hence therefore we may diſtinguiſh of a twofold fear of God. The one is tormenting, cauſing unquiet rollings and eſtuations in the Heart, in a ſad ſuſpenſe of what our future and eternal State may prove, and this is ſlaviſh. Now this Fear perfect Love caſteth out and expels; for where divine Love is perfected in the Soul, there are no more ſuch Suſpences, Heſitations and Doubtings, what will become of it to Eternity. Now by *perfect Love* may be ment, either that ſtate of Perfection to which we ſhall attain in Glory, where our whole Work to all Eternity ſhall be to love and pleaſe God, or elſe that Perfection that conſiſts in its Sincerity in this Life: If we take it for that Perfection of Love that ſhall for ever burn in our Hearts when we our ſelves ſhall be made perfect, ſo it is certain it will caſt out all tormenting Fears; for certainly if in Heaven Hope it ſelf ſhall be aboliſhed, much more ſhall Fear be aboliſhed, for there every Saint ſhall have much more than a full aſſurance, even a full fruition of Glory, and they ſhall know themſelves to be for ever confirmed in that bleſſed ſtate which ſhall prevent *all doubts* and fears. If we underſtand it of that perfection of Love that we may attain to in this Life, ſo alſo the ſtrong and vigorous actings of Love to God, caſteth out all tormenting Fears. It is not poſſible that that Soul that actually loves God with a vigorous and moſt ardent Affection, ſhould at the ſame time be rack'd with diſtracting fears of Hell and Damnation; for it is the ſenſe of God's Love unto the Soul that draws from it reciprocal Love again unto God. *We love him*, ſays the Apoſtle, *becauſe he firſt loved us.* That is, as ſtrong as our apprehenſions are of God's Love to us, ſo ſtrong will our Love be in its returns to God again. Water riſeth naturally as high as its Spring; wherefore the aſſurance of God's Love being the Spring from whence our Love flows, ſuch as is our Love, ſuch will be our aſſurance alſo: If then our Love be ſtrong in its actings it muſt needs caſt out Fear, becauſe it flows from that aſſurance with which tormenting Fear is utterly inconſiſtent. But then there is another kind of Fear that is not tormenting, and that is an awful frame of Heart ſtruck with reverential apprehenſions of God's infinite Majeſty, and our own vileneſs and unworthineſs; and this perfect Love doth not caſt out, but perfects this awful, ſedate, calm fear of God. The *Angels* and the glorified Saints in Heaven,

Heaven, whoſe Love is ſo perfect that it can neither admit of an increaſe or abatement, yet they ſtand in awe and fear of the terrible Majeſty of the great God; the ſame infinite Excellencies of the divine Nature that attract their Love, doth alſo excite their Fear. See how the Prophet makes this an Argument to fear God, *Jer.* 10. 7. *Who would not fear thee, O King of Saints? For*, ſaid he, *in all the Earth there is none like unto thee.* One would rather think God's unparallel Excellencies and Perfections ſhould be a Motive to Love; who would not love thee, O King of Saints, ſince there is none in all the Earth like thee? Yea, but filial Fear and filial Love are of ſo near a kin and cognation, that they may well be enforced by one and the ſame Argument. *Who would not fear thee? for in all the Earth there is none like thee.* This is the Excellency of divine Love, it is an attractive of Love, and it is an excitement unto Fear. Well then, though we have no chilling *Fear* of a hot and ſcorching Hell, yet let us have an awful, reverential *Fear* of the glorious God, whoſe Excellencies are ſuch as cannot be matched, nor ſcarcely imitable by any in Heaven or in Earth.

A holy Fear of God is not contrary to the Spirit of Adoption.

(3.) Thirdly, *The Fear of God is not contray to that free Spirit of Adoption which we receive in our firſt Converſion.* It may perhaps ſeem to ſome that the *Apoſtle* oppoſed them in *Rom.* 8. 15. *You have not received the Spirit of Bondage again to Fear, but the Spirit of Adoption, whereby you cry Abba, Father.*

To this I *Anſwer*; That by the Spirit of Bondage here, the *Apoſtle* means the legal Work of the holy Ghoſt in Conviction that is preparatory to Converſion, which Work uſually is accompanied with dreadful Terrors, apprehending God not as a reconciled Father but as an incenſed and ſevere Judge; why now, ſays the Apoſtle, *You have not received this Spirit of Bondage* again thus to fear; this is not that *Fear* that the conſideration of God, as your God and reconciled *Father* excited you to, this is not that Fear that the Apoſtle exhorts Chriſtians unto, but an awful, reverential *Fear* of God, whereby we ſhould ſtand in awe of his dread Majeſty, ſo as to be preſerved from whatever may be an offence to his Purity; and if in any Night of Deſertion it ſhould happen that the Hearts of true Believers ſhould be overwhelmed with diſmal *Fears*, apprehending God as enraged and incenſed againſt them, ſtanding in doubt of the goodneſs of their ſpiritual Condition; if this ſeize upon them after they have had the *Spirit of Adoption*, let them know this *Fear* is not from a Work of the Holy Ghoſt in them; they have not received the *Spirit of Bondage* again ſo to fear; it is not a Work of the Holy Ghoſt to excite in them doubts and fears of their ſpiritual Condition, after they have once had aſſurance of the goodneſs thereof, but it ariſeth either from ſome Ignorance, or from ſome Sin that they have committed, that interpoſeth betwixt them and the clear ſight of the diſcoveries of God's Love.

Now for the better underſtanding of this place, becauſe I judge it pertinent to my preſent purpoſe, I ſhall open it to you ſomewhat largely in theſe following Particulars.

The Work of Converſion is uſually carried on by legal Fears and Terrors.

(1.) Firſt, *The preparatory Work of Converſion is uſually carried inon the Soul by legal Fears and Terrors.* I call that a legal *Fear* that is wrought in the Soul by the Dread Threatnings and Denunciations of the Law. The Law, if we take it in its native Rigour, without the merciful qualification of Goſpel-grace, thunder'd out nothing but Execrations, Wrath and Vengeance againſt every Tranſgreſſor of it, repreſenting God armed alſo with his almighty Power to deſtroy them; this is that Glaſs that ſhew'd them their old Sins in moſt ugly Shapes; now they ſee them ſtare ghaſtly upon their Conſciences, that before allured them; the Scene is quite changed, and there are nothing but dreadful Apparitions of Death and Hell fleeting now before them, Hell belch'd in their very Faces, God brandiſhed his flaming Sword over them ready to reeve their Hearts aſunder; they that lately were ſecure and fearleſs, now ſtand quaking under the fearful expectations of that fiery Wrath and Indignation, that they neither have hope to eſcape, nor yet have they Strength or Patience to endure. This is that *legal Fear* that the Curſe and Threatnings of the Law, when ſet home in their full acrimony, work in the Hearts of convinced Sinners.

Slaviſh Fear engenders unto Bondage.

(2.) Secondly, *This legal Fear is ſlaviſh, and engenders unto Bondage.* There is Bondage under the reigning Power of Sin, and there is a Bondage under the terrifying Power of Sin: The former makes a Man a Slave unto the Devil, and the latter makes a Man a Slave unto God: And ſuch Slaves are all convinced Sinners

Sinners that have not yet arrived to the free and filial *Spirit of Adoption*, but are kept under Bondage under the Wrath of God, and manacled in the Fetters of their own Fears. So ſaith the Apoſtle, *Heb.* 2. 15. *To deliver them, who through fear of Death*, and of *Hell* that follows after it, *were all their Life-time ſubject unto Bondage.*

Slaviſh Fear is wrought in the Soul by the Spirit.

(3.) Thirdly, *This ſlaviſh Fear is wrought in the Soul by the Spirit of God, though it be ſlaviſh*; for it is his Office to convince as well as to comfort, and to caſt down by the Terrors of the Law as well as to raiſe up by the Promiſes of the Goſpel: In *John* 16. 8. *He ſhall convince the World of Sin*; and therefore it is ſaid in this place, *Rom.* 8. 15. *We have not received the Spirit of Bondage again to fear*, implying that thoſe Terrors that ſeize upon the Conſcience are the Work of the Holy Ghoſt. We bring our ſelves into Bondage under Sin, and he brings us into Bondage under Fear. If therefore at any time, thou who art a ſecure Sinner, art ſuddenly ſurprized with fearful and trembling Thoughts concerning thy preſent ſtate of Sin and thy future ſtate of Wrath, beware thou liſten not to any that would perſuade thee it is nothing but a Fit of *Melancholy* or a Temptation of *Satan*, to drive thee to Deſpair, but know aſſuredly thy Conſcience is now under the Hand of the Holy Ghoſt himſelf, he raiſeth thoſe Tempeſts of Fear in thee; and as uſually it is fatal to divert and huſh them, ſo is it no leſs than ignorant Blaſphemy, to impute his Works to Melancholy, or to the Temptations of Satan.

When the Spirit hath been a Spirit of Bondage, it becomes a Spirit of Adoption.

(4.) Fourthly, *When the Soul is prepared for the Work of Grace by the Work of Conviction, when it is prepared for Comfort by the Work of Humiliation, the ſame Spirit that was before a Spirit of Bondage, becomes now a Spirit of Adoption*; that is, the Holy Ghoſt perſuades and aſſures us of the love and favour of God, and enables us, through divine Light beaming in upon our Conſciences, to behold him as a gracious and a reconciled Father, whom before we trembled at as a ſtern and terrible Judge. The ſame Wind that in a raging Storm toſſeth the Sea to and fro in reſtleſs Heaps, in a Calm doth only gently move and fan it with pleaſing Purles. So is it here; that Spirit of God that in Conviction raiſeth a Tempeſt in the Conſcience, afterwards the ſame Spirit breaths forth a ſweet Calm of Peace and Comfort upon it: The ſame Spirit that before was a *Spirit of Bondage*, when the Soul is ſufficiently thereby prepared for Grace, becomes a *Spirit of Adoption*. This is that Spirit of Adoption that is here ſpoken of, and is called ſo, becauſe it witneſſeth with our Spirits, that we are the Children of God by Adoption. God hath but one Son by eternal Generation, and that is Jeſus Chriſt, called therefore, *The only begotten of the Father*, John 1. 14. He hath many Sons by Creation, even all Mankind; ſo *Adam* is called, *The Son of God*, Luke 3. 38. He hath many Sons alſo by Adoption, even all that are effectually called according to the purpoſe of his Grace; all that are ſanctified, who are of Strangers made *Heirs of God*, and *Co-hiers with Jeſus Chriſt* himſelf, who is the natural Son of God, as it is *Rom.* 8. 17. Now becauſe it is the Work of the *Holy Ghoſt* to teſtifie to us this our great Privileges, that we are enrolled in the Family of Heaven and become the Children of God, therefore he is called the *Spirit of Adoption*; that is, the Spirit that witneſſeth to us our *Adoption.*

Where the Spirit hath once been a Spirits of Adoption, it never more becomes a Spirit of Bondage.

A twofold Conviction of Sin.

(5.) Fifthly, *To whom the Spirit hath once been a Spirit of Adoption, it never more becomes to them a Spirit of Bondage and Fear*: That is, it never again proclaims War, after it hath ſpoken Peace; it never repreſents God as an inraged Enemy, after it hath repreſented him as a reconciled Father. It is true, the Spirit of God always keeps up his convincing Office in the Soul of the moſt aſſured Saints; it convinceth them of Sin, and of Wrath due to them for Sin. But now there is a twofold Conviction, there is a Conviction of the Evil of particular Actions, and there is a Conviction of the Evil of our ſtate and condition: Why now, though upon particular Miſcarriages of God's Children, the Holy Ghoſt ſecretly ſmiteth their Conſciences, ſhewing them the Guilt and Evil of their Sins, thereby bringing them to Repentance and a godly Sorrow; yet the Holy Ghoſt never again teſtifieth to them, that they are in a graceleſs, unregenerate and ſinful Eſtate and Condition, and in a State of Wrath and Condemnation; it brings them to a deep Humiliation, by convincing them of the Evil of their Actions, but it never brings then into legal Terrors, by convincing them of a ſinful State; neither indeed can it be ſo, for the Spirit of God is a Spirit of Truth; and to witneſs that we are yet Children of Wrath, who are indeed the adopted Children of God, this

were a falſe Teſtimony, and therefore utterly abhorred by the Spirit of God, who is a Spirit of Truth: Doth the ſame Fountain ſend forth ſweet Water and bitter? Doth there proceed from one and the ſame Mouth, Bleſſings and Curſes? Certainly the ſame Spirit that hath once pronounced us to be in the Love and Favour of God, never after pronounceth us to be Curſed, and under the Wrath of God.

Object. *But you will ſay, Have not the beſt of God's Children ſometimes concluded themſelves to be reprobated and caſt away? Have they not lain under ſad and fearful apprehenſions of God's Wrath? Have not ſome of them, who formerly walked in the Light of God's Countenance and flouriſhed in their Aſſurance, yet afterwards have been ſo dejected, that they would not entertain any comfort or hopes of Mercy and Salvation?*

Anſw. To this I *Anſwer*; It is true, it may indeed ſo happen that thoſe Saints, whoſe Joys and Comforts are at one time freſh and verdent, at another time wither and drop off, ſo that they look upon themſelves as rotten Trees, deſtinated to make Fuel for Hell. Whence proceeds this? It is not from the Spirit of God; but as carnal Men are apt to miſtake the firſt Work of Conviction for Melancholy or for Temptation, ſo this really proceeds from one of theſe two Cauſes. When the Children of God, after full aſſurance, come again not only to entertain Doubts of their Condition, but alſo to deſpair of themſelves, looking on themſelves as Perſons that God hath ſingled out to Deſtruction; this proceeds not from the *Holy Ghoſt*, but from Melancholy or Temptation. Sometimes natural Melancholy obſtructs the ſenſe of divine Comfort: As it is in clear Water, when it is ſtill and tranſparent the Sun ſhines to the very bottom, but if you ſtir the Mud, preſently it grows ſo thick that no Light can pierce into it: So is it with the Children of God, though their apprehenſions of God's Love be as clear and tranſparent ſometimes as the very Air that the *Angels* and *glorified Saints* breath in, in Heaven, yet if once the muddy Humor of Melancholy ſtirs, they become dark, ſo that no Light or Ray of Comfort can break in to the deſerted Soul. And then ſometimes the *Devil* cauſeth theſe Trajedies by his Temptations, that ſo, if it were poſſible, he might drive them to Deſpair; he hates their Graces, he envies their Comforts, and therefore he would perſwade them that all their former Joys were but Deluſions, proud Dreams and preſumptuous Fanſies, and that they are ſtill in the *Gall of Bitterneſs, and in the Bond of Iniquity*; and by ſuch Suggeſtions as theſe are, when he cannot hinder the Work of Grace, he ſtrives what he can to hinder the Senſe of Comfort. When, therefore, thoſe that have once rejoyced under the comfortable Perſuaſions of God's Love to them, the *Holy Ghoſt* witneſſing himſelf to them to be a *Spirit of Adoption*, by being in them a Spirit of Sanctification; if they now find themſelves under the Bondage of *legal Fears and Terrors* and ſlaviſh Dejections, looking upon themſelves as under the revenging Wrath of God, and as Perſons devoted to Deſtruction; let them know ſuch Fears proceed not from the Convictions of the Spirit of God, who hath been a Spirit of Adoption, but they proceed from the Deluſions of Satan; for thoſe that once receive the *Spirit of Adoption*, never receive the *Spirit of Bondage* again to fear; that is, to fear with a ſlaviſh, tormenting Fear.

We ought to fear God, tho' we know him to be our God.

(6.) Sixthly, *A reverential, filial Fear of God, may and ought to poſſeſs our Souls, while the Spirit of God, who is a Spirit of Adoption, is, by the cleareſt Evidences, actually witneſſing our Sonſhip to us.* Let Men boaſt what they will of their high Goſpel-attainments, yet certainly they have not the genuine Diſpoſition of God's Children, whoſe Love to him is not mingled with Fear, and whoſe Fear of him is not encreaſed by their Love. Love! It is the Gage and Meaſure of all our Affections, and according to the proportion of our Love to God, ſuch will be our Fear; that is, the more we love God the more we ſhall fear his Diſpleaſure and the Loſs of his Favour. It is in vain for us to pretend love God as our Father, unleſs we fear him alſo as our Lord and Maſter. Chriſt who was *his only begotten Son*, and certainly had much more clear aſſurance of the love and favour of God, than any *adopted Sons* can poſſibly have, yet the *Scripture* aſcribes an holy, awful, reverential Fear of God even unto him; *Heb.* 5. 7. *When he offered up Prayers with ſtrong Cries and Tears, and was heard in that he feared*; it may be render'd, he was heard becauſe of his godly Fear. So in *Iſa.* 11. 2. *The Spirit of the Lord ſhall reſt upon him, the Spirit of Knowledge and of the Fear of the Lord*, ſpeaking of Chriſt. If therefore he feared God, who was himſelf to be feared as God equal to him and his eternal

Son,

Son, how much more ought we to fear the great God, who are, as it were, but Up-ſtarts in the Family of Heaven; we wretched and forlorn Out-caſts, that were but lately raked out of the Dunghil, and by meer Pity taken up into the Boſom of God, and nurtured as his Children? And thus you ſee the Fear of God is not in the leaſt contrary to the free Spirit of Adoption.

A Fear of God is no Impediment to a holy Rejoycing in God.

(4.) Fourthly, *An awful Fear of God is no Impediment to a holy Rejoycing.* Indeed ſlaviſh Fear damps all true Joy. Thoſe that Fear and expect the Revengings of God cannot have any true Joy; they may have a kind of mad Jollity that ſpends it ſelf in Noiſe and Tumults, that may roar out Songs of Mirth, only to drown the loud Roarings of their own Conſciences. Such as theſe are like your new Liquor that works over into Foam and Froth, when the bottom is thick and troubled. So in this falſe Joy, the Countenance runs over with Laughter, when yet the Heart is brim full of the Wrath of God; of ſuch the wiſe Man ſpeaks, *Prov.* 14. 13. *Even in Laughter the Heart is ſorrowful.* But now a *filial fear of God*, puts no check at all upon our holy Rejoycing in him; ſpiritual Joy is not of that flaſhy Nature, but it is a ſober and a ſevere Grace, it is Joy mix'd with Fear; and becauſe of the mixture of theſe two together, the fear of God with joy in the Lord, therefore we find theſe two are promiſcuouſly aſcribed each to other; ſo in *Ia.* 60. 5. *Their Hearts ſhall fear and be enlarged.* You know it is the property of Joy to extend and enlarge the Heart; Fear contracts and draws it together, but hear Fear is ſaid to dilate the Heart, to denote to us, that a Chriſtian's Fear is always conjoined and mingled together with his Joy. And ſo on the other Hand it is ſaid, *Pſal.* 2. 11. *Serve the Lord with Fear, and rejoyce with Trembling.* Fear with Trembling is more proper and natural; but becauſe of the mixture of theſe two Graces in the Heart of a Chriſtian, therefore the *Holy Ghoſt* thus expreſſeth it, *Rejoyce with Trembling*; for great Joys as well as great Fears, cauſe a kind of trembling and fluttering in the Heart: As it was with the two Women, whom the *Angels* aſſured of Chriſt's Reſurrection, *Mat.* 28. 8. *They departed from the Sepulchre with Fear and great Joy.* So is it with thoſe Chriſtians, who by the Eye of Faith looking upon the Death and into the Sepulchre of Jeſus Chriſt, are aſſured that he is riſen for their Juſtification, cannot but have their Hearts filled with a quaking and a fearful Joy: Even a Chriſtian's ſtrong Praiſes are breathed out with a ſhaking and trembling Voice; ſo that godly Fear is no Impediment to a holy and a ſevere Rejoycing in God as our Saviour.

Godly fear lays no check on our freedom and boldneſs with God.

Fifthly, *Godly Fear lays no check upon our holy freedom and boldneſs with God.* God hath eſtabliſhed a Throne of Grace whereon he ſits, and unto which he invites his People to approach with a becoming Confidence, *Heb.* 4. 16. *Let us come boldly to the Throne of Grace.* As that *Emperor* counted his Clemency diſparaged when any delivered a Petition to him with a ſhaking Hand, as though he doubted of his Favour, ſo God Loves when we make our Addreſſes to him, that we ſhould do it with full aſſurance of Faith, nothing doubting of acceptance with him, and of an Anſwer from him. He that asks timorouſly, only begs a Denial from God. But yet that this boldneſs may not degenerate into rudeneſs and irreverence, he requires that our Freedom with him be tempered with an awful Fear of him. We muſt come in all Humility and Proſtration of Soul, with broken Hearts and bended Knees, to touch that golden Scepter that he holds forth to us.

Thus you ſee in theſe five Things, how conſiſtent the Grace of Fear is with other Graces of the Spirit; it is no Impediment to a full Aſſurance, it's no Hindrance to Love, it's no Impediment to a Spirit of Adoption, nor to a holy Rejoycing, no, nor to a holy Boldneſs.

Wherein ſlaviſh and filial Fear differ.

Now becauſe I have made Frequent mention of *filial* and *ſlaviſh Fear*, that you may the better underſtand what each of theſe means, I ſhall briefly give you the difference betwixt them. Now they differ in their Concomitants, and in their Effects.

Concomitants and in their Effects.

In their Concomitants.

(1.) Firſt, *Slaviſh Fear* hath always two dreadful Concomitants; and they are *Deſpair*, and *Hatred* or *Enmity* againſt God.

In ſlaviſh Fear there is always ſome degree of Deſpair.

(1.) *In ſlaviſh Fear there is always ſome degree of Deſpair:* Now this ſlaviſh Fear is joined with dreadful expectations of Wrath. A Slave that hath committed a Fault, expects no other than to be puniſhed for it without Mercy. So thoſe that lie under this ſlaviſh Fear, apprehend and account of God no otherwiſe than the ſlothful

ſlothful Servant, as a ſevere Lord and a cruel Tyrant, that will exact Puniſhment from them to the utmoſt of their Deſerts; they expect no other but that certainly God's Wrath will kindle upon them and burn them eternally, and this makes them live as the *Apoſtle* ſpeaks in *Heb.* 10. 27. *In certain fearful Expectations of Wrath and Indignation, that ſhall devour them as Adverſaries.* This kind of horrid Fear I doubt not but is common to moſt wicked Men; and though they brave it out, and moſt of them ſpeak high Matters of their hopes of Heaven and Salvation, yet at the ſame time their own Hearts and Conſciences tell them ſad and miſgiving Stories of Hell and everlaſting Wrath. But now a true and filial Fear of God looks at the Wrath of God with Dread and Terror, but not with Expectation; there's the Difference. *Slaviſh Fear* looks upon the Wrath of God, and expects it; *Filial Fear* looks upon it as due, but not with Expectations that it ſhould be inflicted upon it.

Slaviſh Fear is accompanied with hatred of God.

(2.) Secondly, *Slaviſh Fear is always accompanied with ſome degree of Enmity and Hatred againſt God.* It is natural for us to hate thoſe that we fear with a ſlaviſh Fear. He that thinks God will certainly puniſh him, muſt out of Self-love needs be provoked to hate God: Hence is it, that the Soul that lies under the Terrors of the Law, wiſheth that there was no ſuch thing as Hell and eternal Damnation, nay, that there was no God to inflict this upon it: This proceeds from this *ſlaviſh Fear* of God. But now a reverent Fear of God is joined with a holy Love, as Children who love their Parents, but yet ſtand in awe of them. So much for the Concomitants of this Fear.

They differ in their Effects. As to Sin.

(2.) *Secondly*, For their Effects; and that both as to Sin, and as to Duty.

(1.) As to Sin; *Slaviſh Fear dreads nothing but Hell and Puniſhment, but godly Fear dreads Sin it ſelf:* The one fears only to burn, the other fears for to ſin. As *Auſtin* ſaith well, *He fears Hell only who fears not to ſin, but fears to burn; but he fears to ſin, who hates ſin as he would hate Hell.*

(2.) *Slaviſh Fear uſually reſtrains only from external, and thoſe alſo the more groſs and notorious Acts of ſin*; but holy Fear over-awes the Heart from inward and ſecret Sins, yea, from the leaſt Sins whatſoever.

As to Duty.

(2.) And then as for Duty alſo, in two Things briefly.

(1.) Firſt, *A ſlaviſh Fear of God makes Men to conſult how they may fly from God:* As *Adam* did, when he had brought Guilt upon his Conſcience by his Fall, he hides himſelf from God in the Garden. Guilt loves not the preſence of its Judge: But godly Fear is ſtill exciting the Soul to approach near to God in Duty. And therefore *David* ſaith, *Pſal.* 5. 7. *In thy Fear will I worſhip towards thy holy Temple.* The Fear of God encourageth the Soul in the performance of Duty.

(2.) Secondly, *Slaviſh Fear contents it ſelf with external Performances.* Juſt ſo much as will ſerve the turn, to ſatisfie the Demands of Conſcience; but holy Fear ſanctifies the Lord in Duty as well as ſatisfies Conſcience: And therefore you have it in *Iſa.* 8. 13. *Sanctify the Lord of Hoſt in your Hearts, and let him be your Fear and your Dread.* Thus much briefly for the difference betwixt filial and ſlaviſh Fear.

Uſe 1.

I come now to the Application: And the firſt Uſe ſhall be by way of Corollary. If the conſideration of God as a conſuming Fire ought to affect the moſt aſſured Chriſtian with a holy Fear and Dread of God, how much more then may it ſhrink and ſhrivel up the Hearts of Ungodly Sinners? If it make God's own Children to tremble to look into Hell, and to ſee thoſe heaps of miſerable Wretches that are there burning for ever, ſhall it not much more make you to tremble, who are liable every moment to be bound in Bundles, and to be caſt in to burn among them? When a *City* is on Fire it is terrible to ſee it rage afar off, to ſee it ſpue up Smoak and Flames, tho' at a diſtance, and he that is not affected with it is Inhuman; but he is more than ſtupid, that doth not tremble to ſee it devour whole Streets before it, ruining all till it approach near his own Dwelling: Why, Sirs, this conſuming Fire hath already ſeized upon Millions of others, and burnt them down into the loweſt Hell: Do not you hear *Dives*, in the *Goſpel*, cry *Fire, Fire?* The greateſt part of the World is already burnt down; and if their Caſe makes not your Hearts to ſhake and tremble, yet methinks your own ſhould: This Fire is catching and kindling upon your Souls, and the next moment may make you Brands in Hell. But, alas! what hope is there to affright Men that are faſt aſleep? Such a dead Security hath ſeized upon the Hearts of moſt, that it is almoſt impoſſible

ſible to rouze them, and but little hope but that they will be burnt in this their Sleep: Yet if it may be poſſible to awaken you, conſider,

God's Wrath againſt Sinners, makes him terrible to his Saints.

(1.) Firſt, *That it is only God's Wrath againſt Sinners, that makes him terrible to his Saints.* They are afraid of that fiery Indignation that burned againſt the Wicked; and ſhall not the Wicked then much more be afraid, that muſt themſelves feel it? *Our God*, ſays the Apoſtle, *is a conſuming Fire*; but to whom is he ſuch a conſuming Fire? Not to thoſe certainly whoſe God he is; *He ſhall burn up all the Wicked of the Earth as Stubble.* That God doth not always ſtile himſelf a gracious God and a reconciled Father, but ſometimes puts on dreadful Titles, his Children owe it to the Wicked; againſt them alone it is that he arrays himſelf with all his Terrors: As a Father may affright his Children, by putting on thoſe Arms that he uſeth only againſt his Enemies: So God daunts his own Children by appearing in his dread Power, his ſevere Juſtice and conſuming Wrath; but how much more may it apale his Enemies, upon whom he intends to execute all this in the utmoſt rigour and extremity?

God himſelf is this conſuming Fire.

(2.) Secondly, *Another Conſideration that may make the moſt ſecure Sinner to tremble is this, That God himſelf will be the immediate Inflicter of their Puniſhments.* They ſhall be conſumed by Fire, and offered up as a burnt Sacrifice to the Wrath and Juſtice of God; and that Fire that ſhall for ever burn them is God himſelf, God is a conſuming Fire. I do not deny but that there is another material Fire prepared and blown up in Hell for the puniſhment of the Damned, but certainly their moſt ſubtle and exquiſite Torture ſhall be from God himſelf, who is this conſuming Fire. This Wrath of God, which ſhall for ever burn and enflame the Souls of the Damned, is called *fiery Indignation*, *Heb.* 10. 17. That Fire that deſtroyed *Nadab* and *Abihu* was but a Type of this, and the Antitype infinitely tranſcends the Type; the dreadfulneſs of their temporal Death by Fire was but a faint reſemblance of the Death of the Soul; what Fire muſt that be, of which that extraordinary Fire that fell down from Heaven it ſelf, was but a meer Shadow? As the Fire that came down upon *Elijah*'s *Sacrifice* did lick up the Water that was poured into the Trenches; ſo this *fiery Indignation of God* ſhall, in Hell, melt down the Damned, as it were, and then lick up their very Spirits and Souls. It is ſaid, *Pſal.* 104. 4. That God *makes his Angels a flaming Fire.* It is the neareſt repreſentation that is given of the Angelical Nature, that abounds both in ſubtilty and force; *He makes his Angels a flaming Fire.* Now when Chriſt ſaith, *Go into thoſe flames of Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels*; why the *Devils* themſelves are Flames of Fire, and what Fire can be more piercing than themſelves, who have power over Fire? Yet there is a greater Fire than they, God is a conſuming Fire, a Fire ſo infinitely ſcorching as will burn and torment even Fire it ſelf. It would be unſpeakable, terrible Wrath in God, if he ſhould make uſe of his Creatures for the puniſhment of the Damned. Who could bear it, if God ſhould only keep a Man living forever in the midſt of a Furnace, though but of a groſs, earthly Fire and Flames? Or, if God ſhould bind a Man Hand and Foot, and caſt him into a deep Pit full of *Toads*, *Adders* and *Scorpions*, and there let him lie for ever? God knows all the ſeveral Stings that are in his Creatures, and he can take out of them the moſt ſharp and piercing Ingredients; the ſharpneſs of the Sword, the inflammations of Poiſons, the ſcorchings of Fire, the anguiſh of Pains, the faintneſs of Diſeaſes, and of all theſe can make a moſt tormenting Compoſition, what intolerable Anguiſh would this cauſe? If then Creatures can cauſe ſuch Torture, oh! what a dreadful thing is it to fall into the Hands of God himſelf? When God conveys his Wrath by Creatures, it muſt needs loſe infinitely in the very conveyance of it: It is but as if a *Giant* ſhould ſtrike one with a *Straw* or a *Feather*; ſo when God takes up one Creature to ſtrike another with, that Blow can be but weak; and yet how terrible are thoſe weak Blows to us? What will it be then, when God ſhall immediately cruſh us by the unrebated Force of his own Almighty Arm? You, therefore, that perſevere in Sin and in Security too, conſider who you have to deal with, not with Creatures but with God himſelf; and do you not fear that uncreated Fire that can wrap you up in the Flames of his eſſential Wrath, and burn you for ever? *Can thine Heart endure*, or *can thine Hands be ſtrong*, ſays God, *in the day that I ſhall deal with thee?* The very Weakneſs of God is ſtronger than Men; God can look a Man to Death. The Breath of a Man's Noſtrils is a ſoft and quiet Thing, and yet the very Breath of God's Noſtrils

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can blaſt the Soul, and burn it to a very Cinder: Oh! then tremble to think what Wrath his heavy Hand can inflict upon thee; that Hand that *ſpreads out the Heavens, and in the hollow of which he holds the great Waters of the Sea*; that Hand of God in which his great Strength lies; oh! what Wrath will it inflict upon thee, when it falls upon thee in the full Power of his Might?

This conſuming Fire is unquenchable.

(3.) Thirdly, *Conſider this conſuming Fire, after it hath once ſeized upon the Soul, is for ever unquenchable.* Indeed thou mayſt hinder it from kindling upon thy Soul. As when a Houſe is on Fire, they uſed to ſpout Water upon the Walls of the neighbouring Houſes, to keep the Flames from catching hold of them: So you may, by ſprinkling the Blood of Jeſus Chriſt, and by moiſtning your ſelves with the Tears of true Repentance, prevent this conſuming Fire from preying upon you; but if once it kindles, it will there burn everlaſtingly; it is not like your *ſublunary Fires*; theſe ſpend the Matter they feed on, and be they of never ſo great force they muſt at length themſelves ſtarve for want of Fuel; yea, the ſooner they conſume, the ſooner are they themſelves conſumed, as in Straw and other light combuſtible Matter; but God is ſuch a Fire as conſumes without diminiſhing, and his Power is ſuch a Power as deſtroys the Soul, and yet perpetuates it; he is ſuch a wiſe and intelligent Fire as conſumes the Damned and yet repairs them, and by tormenting ſtill nouriſhes them for future Torments. As *Minutius* ſpeaks; the ſame Breath of God that deſtroys the Soul, ſtill keeps it alive, that it may be eternal Fuel for it ſelf. Hence is it that Hell-Fire is deſcribed to be ſuch as ſhall never be quenched, *Mark* 9. 44. And why? But becauſe the *Breath of the Lord, like a fiery Stream, is ſtill kindling of it.* Why now into the midſt of this devouring Fire muſt the Damned dwell, without any Period either to their Being or to their Torment, and when they have lain there frying Millions and Millions of Years, ſtill is it but a beginning of their Sorrows, and they are as far from a Releaſe and Diſcharge as they were at the firſt. Think with your ſelves, how long and how tedious a little time ſeems to you when you are in Pain; you complain then, that Time hath leaden Feet, and wiſh that the Days and Hours would roll away faſter: Oh! what will it be then, when you ſhall lie Sweating, Swelting and Frying in Hell, when the intolerableneſs of Pain ſhall make every Hour ſeem an Age, and every Year ſeem a long Eternity it ſelf, and yet you muſt lie an Eternity of thoſe Years there? This makes their Torments doubly everlaſting. Methinks the dreadful Thoughts of this eternally conſuming Fire, ſhould make the ſtouteſt Heart to quake; or at leaſt to cauſe a cold Fit of fear, before this burning and ſcorching Torment begins.

God is ſuch a conſumeing Fire as will prey upon the Soul.

(4.) Fourthly, *God is ſuch a conſuming Fire as will prey upon the Soul, that tender and ſpiritual part of Man.* The more groſs the Subject is, the more dull are the Pains that it ſuffers; but where the Subject is ſpiritual, there the Anguiſh muſt needs be extream; the ſharpeſt Torments that the Body is capable of, is but a dull Thing in compariſon of what the Soul can feel; when God himſelf ſhall laſh the Soul, that more refined part, drawing Blood at every ſtroke, all compariſons fall ſhort of expreſſing the Anguiſh of it: To ſhoot poiſon'd Darts inflam'd into a Man's Marrow, to rip up his Bowels with a Sword red hot, is as nothing to this. Think what it is to have a drop of boiling, ſcalding Oil, or melting Lead fall into your Eyes, and make it boil and burn till at laſt it falls out of your Heads; ſuch Torments, yea, infinitely more than this, is it to have the Wrath of God fall upon your Souls. The Soul it is the Principle of all Seats, the Body is a kind of Fence to it, it damps and deadens the Smart, as a Blow upon a cloathed Man is not ſo painful as upon one that is ſtark Naked; why now if the Soul ſometimes feels ſuch Smart and Pain through the Body, what ſhall it feel when God ſhall pour his Wrath upon it ſtark Naked?

The longer we live in Sin, the more we prepare our Souls to be Fuel for this conſuming Fire.

(5.) Fifthly, *Conſider the longer thou liveſt in thy Sins impenitently, the more doſt thou prepare thy Soul to be fit Fuel for this conſuming Fire to devour:* This is but like the Oiling of a *Barrel* of *Pitch*, which of it ſelf was apt enough before to burn. Thoſe whom the Wrath of God ſnatches away in the beginning of their Days, are made Fuel for that conſuming Fire; and if it be done ſo to the green Tree, what will be done to the dry and rotten Tree? Thou that haſt ſtood many Years rotting in the World, when God ſhall come and cut thee down and caſt thee into unquenchable Fire, how ſoon wilt thou kindle and how dreadfully wilt thou burn, having no Sap left in thee to allay and mitigate thoſe Flames? Certainly would

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but the moſt hardened Sinner here preſent, call his Thoughts aſide a while, and ſeriouſly bethink himſelf what he hath been doing ever ſince he came into the World, this muſt needs ſtrike him as cold as a Stone, making him to Fear and Tremble to conſider, that all this time he hath, by his Sinning, been treaſuring up Wrath againſt the Day of Wrath, heaping up Coals, yea, burning Coals upon his own Head. Every time you ſin, what do you elſe but caſt in another Faggot to that Pile of much Wood, prepared to burn you for ever? Oh! that theſe dreadful and amazing Conſiderations might, at length, rouze and awaken your Hearts to fear this conſuming Fire, and to tremble at that Wrath that is now kindling in God's Breaſt againſt you, and which will, if you repent not, ere long kindle upon you.

Queſt. *But you will ſay, to fear God only becauſe he is a conſuming Fire, meerly becauſe of his Wrath and fiery Indignation, is but, at beſt, a ſlaviſh Fear; it is but to fear him as the* Devils *do, for they believe and tremble; and of what uſe and benefit will ſuch a Fear as this is be?*

Anſw. 1. *It is better to fear God ſlaviſhly, than to periſh ſecurely.*

I *Anſwer*; It is true, *Firſt*, to fear God meerly upon the account of Wrath is but a ſlaviſh Fear; but yet it is far better to fear God ſlaviſhly, than to periſh ſecurely; that will come with redoubled Terror which comes unexpectedly. How intolerable will Hell be to thoſe, eſpecially, that never fear it till they feel it? When Sinners ſhall ſee themſelves ſurrounded with Flames of Fire, before ever they thought themſelves in any danger; when they ſhall awake with the Flames of Hell flaſhing and flaming about them, what Screechings and Yellings will this cauſe? This is to periſh as a Fool periſheth, to go on ſecurely in Sin, till unexpectedly a Dart ſuddenly ſtrikes through his Liver. Whatever the Event be, yet it becomes the Reaſon of a Man to be affected with Fear, proportionable to the Evil that he lies obnoxious to; therefore whether this ſlaviſh Fear ends in Torment or not, yet it is more rational to fear that we are expoſed to it, than to be ſecure and go down into Torments, and never to fear them till we feel them.

Slaviſh Fear will deter Men from ſcandalous Sins.

(2.) *Secondly*, This Fear, though a ſlaviſh Fear, is of great efficacy to deter Men from the outward Acts of more groſs and ſcandalous Sins. He that puts Hell betwixt him and his Sins, will ſcarce be ſo daring as to venture through a Lake of Fire and Brimſtone to commit them. God thought he had ſet a ſufficient Guard upon the Tree of Life, when he placed *Cherubims* and a *flaming Sword* to keep Men from it; but to keep Men from Sin, he hath placed a Guard far more dreadful than *Angels* or a *flaming Sword*; he hath placed himſelf, a conſuming Fire, to deter Men from Sin; and they certainly that have any Fear or Dread of God upon their Hearts, will judge it too too hot a Work to break through this Fire to their Luſts. The Thoughts of Hell and thoſe everlaſting Torments due to Sin, have doubtleſs been often uſed with good ſucceſs to repel *Satan's Temptations*; when no other Arguments poſſibly could prevail, yet when the *Devil* hath caſt fiery Darts at them, they have caſt Fire-brands again at him, and ſo have overcome him.

Slaviſh Fear will mitigate Wrath.

(3.) *Thirdly*, Where the fear of *Wrath* doth prevail to *reſtrain Men* from *Sin*, this is a good Effect, for it doth leſſen and mitigate that *Wrath* that they fear. Thoſe that add Iniquity to Iniquity without Fear, upon them God will heap Plague upon Plague, without meaſure; he proportions Mens Puniſhments to their Sins, and thoſe that Fear moſt ſhall feel leaſt; that Fear of theirs that kept them from the groſs Acts of Sins that others boldly ruſh into, that Fear ſhall likewiſe keep them from the foreſt Torments that others ſhall for ever ſuffer.

Slaviſh Fear is preparatory to, and inductive of filial Fear.

(4.) *Fourthly*, This ſlaviſh Fear is Iſagogical; that is, it is preparatory to and inductive of a filial and holy Fear of God. We uſually fear God firſt as a revenging Judge, before we come to fear him with a reverential, filial Fear, as a reconciled Father. As the *Poet* of Old fabulouſly fanſied, that the Giants heaped Mountain upon Mountain, that they might ſcale Heaven. This is true in Chriſtianity, the way to climb Heaven is by laying one Mountain upon another, even *Mount Sion* upon *Mount Sinai*. Thoſe commonly prove the moſt ſtable and ſtayed Chriſtians, that have been moſt harraſſed by legal Terrors before they enjoy the ſenſe of Comfort; for the Structure of Grace in the Heart is quite contrary to other Buildings; it ſtands firmeſt when it is laid upon a ſhaking and a trembling Foundation. It is a Seed that never thrives ſo well as where the Heart is moſt broken up, and where the Wrath of God hath made long and deep Furrows in it.

Well

Well now to conclude this, methinks what hath already been ſpoken, ſhould fill the Heart of every carnal Wretch with Fear; methinks this ſhould make them cry out with thoſe Sinners in *Sion*, Iſa 33. 14. *Who among us ſhall dwell with devouring Fire? Who among us ſhall dwell with everlaſting Burnings?* Can the *Drunkard* hear theſe things, and yet put his intemperate Cups to his Mouth with a ſteady Hand? Can the *Swearer* hear theſe things, and yet his Tongue move ſteady in his Mouth, and not tremble when he raps out *Oaths?* Certainly how ſecure and confident ſoever Men may now be, yet there is a time coming when the Wrath of God ſhall melt down their Hearts like Wax, in the midſt of their Bowels. *Death* is a thundring Preacher, and it will make you fear the dreadful Repreſentations of that fiery Indignation, that ſhortly it will diſplay before your Eyes in all its Terrors. Oh! when your Eyes ſhall ſwim in the Night and in the Dark, and it cannot be long firſt, when you ſhall meet with thoſe dreadful Shapes and Viſions of a flaming Hell and a more flaming God, it will be too late then to Fear, and alas! It will be too late then to Hope, God will then laugh at your Calamity; and mock at you when this unſeaſonable Fear cometh. Be perſuaded, therefore, to entertain a Fear of God at laſt, though but a ſlaviſh Fear; this is the preparation that the Holy Ghoſt works in the Heart, in order to a ſillal and a holy Fear of God.

Uſe. 2. *Secondly*, Another Uſe that we may make of this Point is this: If God be a conſuming Fire, how highly doth it concern us to look out for a Screen that may fence us from thoſe everlaſting Burnings? We are Stubble and Fuel fully prepared, our Sins have made us ſo, and for us to ſtand it out againſt God, is no other than for dried Stubble to challenge the devouring Fire. Now God, that he might not break forth upon us and deſtroy us, hath himſelf prepared a Screen to hide and ſhelter us from this flaming Wrath, and that is Chriſt the Mediator. We have a lively Type of this in *Aaron*, *Numb.* 16. 48. When the rebellious *Iſraelites* mutined againſt *Moſes*, God did ſuddenly break forth upon them, and ſlew almoſt fifteen thouſand of them Dead upon the Place. As Fire runs on a Train of Powder, ſo did this Wrath of God paſs ſwifty from one to another, till *Aaron* interpoſed and ſtopt it; there ſtood that mighty Prieſt as a Bulwark betwixt the living and the dead, and intercepted the reſt from this deſtroying Wrath; and though it overwhelmed ſo many Thouſands, yet it could not bear down his powerful Interceſſion; he alone was the Fence and Safeguard of a periſhing People. Chriſt upon the Croſs maintains the ſame Station, interpoſing betwixt the Living and the Dead; the Wrath of God conſumes all before it that is not under the Protection of that Screen, there it ſtops; and though it ſeized fiercely upon him too, yet it never burnt through him to reach thoſe that fled for Security to that Refuge ſet before them. In a general Conflagration, even Chaff and Stubble may be ſecure, under the Covert of an Adamantine Wall. Though all the Wicked of the World ſhall burn together, and all Believers be in themſelves as combuſtible Matter as they, yet Chriſt interpoſed as a Wall of Adamant betwixt Stubble and Stubble; and when the Wrath of God hath conſumed the one, he ſtands and keeps off the Impreſſions of it from the other. Indeed there is a Wall that ſtands betwixt God and every wicked Man, but it is a Wall of *Partition*, as the *Apoſtle* calls it, *Epheſ.* 2. 14. It is a Wall that ſeparates them from the Love and Favour of God, and hides his Face from them. A Partition of dry and rotten Boards may keep off the Light and kindly Influences of the Sun, but it is no Fence againſt the Rage of Fire, but rather encreaſeth and augments it. So wicked Men are ſeparated from the Love and Favour of God by their Sins, *Iſa.* 59. 2. *Your Iniquites have ſeparated betwixt you and your God*; yea, and they keep off his cheriſhing Influences, but they contribute to his fiery Wrath. Why now Chriſt is a Wall of Defence, that ſeparates his from the Wrath and Indignation of God. A Wall of *Cryſtal* is a ſafe Defence againſt the force of Fire, yet it is no obſtruction to the warm Beams and cheriſhing Light of the Sun. Such a Cryſtal Wall is Chriſt, that keeps of God's fiery Indignation from us, but yet conveys to us the cheriſhing and reviving Influences of his Love. Let me now perſuade and prevail with you to betake your ſelves to this ſhelter. The ſame Storm of Fire and Brimſtone that deſtroyed *Sodom*, hovers over all the Wicked of the World, and we are as *Lot*, ſtill lingring behind; let me therefore haſten you, as the *Angel* did him, to your *Zoar*, to get under the Protection of Chriſt, whether the fiery Indignation of God cannot purſue you. In the former Inſtance, when the *Iſraelites* ſaw ſo many of their Fellows

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ſlain by an un-perceived Stroke, what running and crowding was there, think you, to get behind the *Prieſt?* Why we are all in the ſame Danger, but we have a more prevalent *High-Prieſt:* There are Thouſands dying and periſhing under the Wrath of God; and ſhall not we then with Fear and Trembling, preſs cloſe behind our *High Prieſt*, that by him we may be hid from this conſuming Fire?

Thirdly, *The next Uſe ſhall be to exhort you to a holy Fear and Reverence of this great and terrible God.* I lately gave you ſeveral Conſiderations, enough to daunt the boldeſt Sinners, and to bring them at leaſt to a ſlaviſh Fear: Be perſuaded now to advance it a Degree higher, and to over-awe your Hearts with a *holy, filial Fear* of God. It is the ſame Exhortation that *Solomon* gives us, *Prov.* 23. 17. *Be thou in the Fear of the Lord all the Day long.* This is a true Chriſtian's frame, when in all the Affairs and Actions of our Lives, in what Company ſoever we are in, or whatever we are doing, the Fear of God is ſtill upon us, when in all our Converſe in the World this Fear of God doth ſtill fill and poſſeſs our Hearts. I ſhall only give you a few Particulars, and leave them to your ſerious Conſideration. *Uſe* 3.

(1.) First, *This holy Fear of God will keep you from a vain and frothy Spirit.* The Heart of Man is the great Receptacle of Thoughts; the moſt part of them are light and feathery, they fly up and down as thick, and to as little purpoſe, as Moats in a Sun-beam. It is ſtrange to obſerve what a giddy Thing the Mind of Man is: As an empty Veſſel rolls to and fro, and is toſſed up and down by every Wave never ſailing ſteadily; ſo is the vain Mind of Man driven by every fooliſh and impertinent Thought, till the fear of God, that is, the Ballaſt of the Soul, poiſe it and makes its Courſe ſteady and even. Certainly if any thing be of force to compoſe the Heart into a ſober, ſerious Frame, it is the conſideration of God's great and dreadful Majeſty, the fear of which will fill us with noble and ſubſtantial Thoughts how we may eſcape his Wrath, and how we may ſecure to our ſelves eternal Happineſs. Theſe are important Thoughts, and they ought to be our great and only Care, that ſo we may approve our ſelves to God, and be at the laſt Day found of him in well-doing. Before the Heart is ballaſted with this Fear of God, it runs after every vagrant Thought that comes croſs us or fleets before us; as Children run after every Feather that the Wind drives. But now the Fear of God fixeth this fleetineſs, and brings the Heart to a holy conſiſtency and ſolidity in its Thoughts: It is this Fear that united the Heart, and therefore *David* prays, *Pſal.* 86. 11. *Unite my Heart unto thee, that I may fear thy Name.* *The Fear of God will keep you from a vain and frothy Spirit:*

(2.) Secondly, *The Fear of God is an excellent Preſervative againſt all Sin.* Slaviſh Fear may keep wicked Men from committing groſs and flagitious Crimes; but this holy Fear ove-awes the Heart from ſecret and hidden Sins, yea, from the Sins of the Heart, that none can ſee but only God, and a Man's own Conſcience; and therefore it is ſaid, *Pſal.* 19. 9. *The Fear of the Lord is clean*; that is, it keeps the Soul clean from the defilement of Sin. Now there are Defilements of two ſorts; Defilements of the Fleſh, when Men wallow in groſs and ſenſual Sins; and Defilements alſo of the Spirit, and ſuch are they that reſide in the Heart, and break not forth into outward Act: Now from both theſe the Fear of God cleanſeth us. So in 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. *Let us cleanſe our ſelves*, ſays the Apoſtle, *from all Filthineſs both of Fleſh and Spirit, perfecting Holineſs in the fear of God.* And indeed where-ever the Fear of God is implanted, it will over-awe us, as well from offending God in our Thoughts as in our Actions, and make us that we ſhall be as afraid of Sinning againſt him by Unbelief and Impenitency, as well as by Murder and Blaſphemy. *The Fear of God is an excellent Preſervative againſt all Sin.*

(3.) Thirdly, *This holy Fear of God is a moſt ſovereign Preſervative againſt Hypocriſie.* What is Hypocriſie, but only a mocking of God to his Face? It is a deſign to put a ſolemn Cheat upon God. Certainly where the Fear of God over-awes the Heart, we ſhall not dare to abuſe his holy and reverend Name as Hypocrites do, in their making mention of him. When we ſpeak of him with our Lips, but never think of him with our Hearts, this is to abuſe the holy and reverend Name of God; and it is a ſure Argument that they ſtand in no dread of God, whoſe Hearts meditate Vanity with Eyes and Hands lifted up to Heaven. Will any dare in the preſence of a Prince, while they pretend Reverence to him, to uſe antick Geſtures? Would not this juſtly be interpreted a Contempt of him? Why all the religious Geſtures of Hypocrites are but Antick; and while they move their Lips in Prayer, without the correſponding motion of the Heart, they do but make Mouths at God; and how can they fear him, that are thus audacious to ſcoff at him? *The Fear of God is a moſt ſovereign Preſervative againſt Hypocriſie.*

him? Yea, the *Scripture* ſets it down as a remarkable Matter, when Hypocrites begin to fear God; *Iſa.* 33. 12, 14. *Hear ye and acknowledge my Might*, ſays God: Why what's the matter? *The Sinners in Sion are afraid, fearfulneſs hath ſurprized the Hypocrites.* It is much eaſier to terrifie and daunt profligate Sinners than groſs Hypocrites; becauſe Hypocrites, by often dallying with God, wear off all Senſe and Dread of God, and arrive at length to a plain contempt and ſcorn of him. If therefore you would in every Duty approve your Hearts in Sincerity unto God, nouriſh in you this holy Fear of his Majeſty. This Fear is that which makes a Chriſtian ſingle-hearted; and, as the *Apoſtle* commands *Servants*, Col. 3. 22. *to obey their Maſters not as Men-pleaſers, but in ſingleneſs of Heart, fearing God.* So where this holy Fear of God poſſeſſeth the Soul, it will cauſe all our Obedience to be performed in the ſingleneſs and integrity of our Hearts, not ſo much to be ſeen of Men as be accepted of God. It is a remarkable place, that in *Joſh.* 24. 14. *Now therefore fear the Lord, and ſerve him in Sincerity.* The Fear of God is of a mighty influence to Sincerity in all our Services and Performances that we render unto God; it is that that will make the Heart ſincere in them. *Fear the Lord, and ſerve him in Sincerity.*

The Fear of God will put us upon all Endeavours to pleaſe God.

(4.) Fourthly, *This holy Fear will put us upon all Endeavours to pleaſe God, and to gain favour with him.* This is the moſt natural effect of Fear, to engage us to procure their Love whoſe Power we dread. The *Devil* knew no ſuch way to get himſelf Worſhip and Adoration, as by terrifying the *old Heathens*; and ſtill he uſeth the ſame Artifice in thoſe parts of the World where his Kingdom yet remains, he appears in dreadful Shapes, and terrifies them on purpoſe that he may extort from them a blind, ſuperſtitious Worſhip. So where the Soul is affected with a holy Fear of God, it will engage it to pleaſe him, and to avoid whatever may kindle his Anger. And therefore ſays the Apoſtle, 2 *Cor.* 5. 9, 10. *We labour that we may be accepted of him*; and why ſo? *Yes*, ſays he, *for we muſt be judged by him.* The Fear of being judged by God at the Tribunal of Chriſt at the laſt Day, engaged the *Apoſtle* to labour to pleaſe God and to be accepted by him.

The Fear of God is an excellent Corrective of the baſe and degenerous Fear of Men.

(5.) Fifthly, *The Fear of God is an excellent Corrective of the baſe and degenerous Fear of Men.* Our Saviour ſays, *Luke* 12. 4. *Be not afraid of them that can kill the Body, and after that have no more that they can do; but fear him, who after he hath killed, hath Power to caſt into Hell; yea, I ſay unto you, fear him.* It is well obſerved by a learned Author, that Men may be conſidered either as they bear upon them ſome reſemblance and impreſs of the divine Majeſty, as they are inveſted with Authority and Power, and conſtituted Magiſtrates and Rulers over us: This reſemblance is ſo great that the *Scripture* ſtiles them Gods, *I have ſaid ye are Gods*; and ſo we are to fear them with a Fear of Reverence and Obedience, and to obey them in that which is lawful. And they may be conſidered alſo as ſtanding in oppoſition to God, abuſing their Power by commanding things that are unlawful, and by Perſecution endeavouring to terrifie Men from the Ways and Service of God: And ſo they may be feared with a Fear of flight and eſchewal. *When ye are perſecuted in one City, flee you to another*, *Matth.* 10. 23. We may ſo fear them as to labour to avoid their Rage, and to conſult our own Safety. But the Fear that is here forbidden is, *Fear not them that can kill the Body*; that is, with a diſtruſtful, perverting Fear, ſuch a Fear as cauſeth Men for the ſecuring of their temporal Life to deſert the Profeſſion and Practice of Godlineſs; with ſuch a Fear, Fear not Men. He will not, that truly fears God, thus fear Men; no, the Fear of God lays a check upon this ſinful Fear of Men, he that truly fears God will not immoderately fear Men; for it is the property of holy Fear to repreſent the diſpleaſure of God, as an infinitely greater Evil than the loſs of Eſtate, Liberty, nay of Life it ſelf, or whatever the Rage and Power of Man can either inflict or threaten, and this makes them chooſe Affliction rather than Sin. See this fearleſs Spirit in thoſe three Heroick Champions, *Dan.* 3. 16. who though they ſaw a *burning, fiery Furnace* before them, into which they were threatned to be caſt, yet all the Terrors of it did not fright them to an Idolatrous Worſhip; with what a holy Contempt and Slighting did they anſwer King *Nebuchadnezar? We are not careful*, ſay they, *to anſwer thee in this matter.* And whence proceeded this undaunted Courage, but only becauſe they were more afraid of God, who is a conſuming Fire, than they were of a fiery Furnace? A Man that truly fears God, reputes with himſelf, that

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to gain the favour of Men with the diſpleaſure of God, to redeem a temporal Life by an eternal Death, is the fooliſheſt Bargain that can be made; he knows the rage of Man is under the reſtraint of God, and that a Hair of his Head ſhall not fall to the Ground without his heavenly Father's Knowledge and Permiſſion; and if God doth ſuffer wicked Men to inflict the utmoſt that their Rage and Spight can prompt them unto, yet it reacheth only their earthly part, the dull part of Man, the Body; they may perſecute, torment and kill us, but yet they cannot hurt us; one momentany Gripe of Hell's Torments is infinitely more intolerable, than all the Cruelties that Men can poſſibly invent or inflict; one Frown from an angry God hath more Dread and Terror in it, than all the Rage and Threatnings of the moſt barbarous and cruel Tyrants; and that Chriſtian that makes ſuch an account as this is, can never certainly ſo fear Torment or Death, as to be drawn to Sin againſt God, whoſe Diſpleaſure he more fears than he fears either Torment or Death.

Now to ſhut up this whole Subject, I ſhall only briefly mention a few Particulars to you, whereby you may take a brief View of what there is in the Nature of God, that may juſtly affect us with a holy Fear and Awe of him.

What there is in God that may affect us with an Awe and Fear of him.

(1.) Firſt, *The Conſideration of God's glorious Majeſty may ſtrike us into a holy Dread and Terror.* And therefore ſays *Job* 33. 22. *With God is terrible Majeſty.* This is that which daunts the *holy Angels* in Heaven, *they cover their Faces with their Wings*, as not being able to bear the piercing Rays of that Glory wherewith he is cloathed. An earthly Prince, when he is ſet forth in the Royalty and Grandeur of his State, caſts an awe upon thoſe that approach near him. And how much more ought we to fear the great and glorious Majeſty of Heaven, who is always *clad with Light as with a Garment*; that Light which no mortal Eye can approach, being always ſurrounded with an innumerable Hoſt of glittering Attendants, each of which maintains more Pomp and State than the greateſt Potentate on Earth.

His glorious Majeſty.

(2.) Secondly, *God's Almighty Power ſhould cauſe us to fear before him.* He is the uncontroulable Sovereign of all the World, to whoſe Beck all things in Heaven and in Earth, yea, and in Hell too are ſubject; and therefore ſays *Job* 25. 2. *Dominion and Fear are with him*; not that God hath any Fear, or ſtands in Fear, but the Dominion and Sovereignty of God cauſeth Fear; it ſtrikes the Heart with an awful Fear, when we conſider that Dominion and Fear are with God. That Power and Authority of God, by which he exerciſeth his Dominion, cauſeth a Fear of him.

His Almighty Power.

(3.) Thirdly, *The ſevere and impartial Juſtice of God, whereby he renders to every one according to his Works; this ſhould kindle in us a holy Fear of God.* So the Apoſtle, 2 *Cor.* 5. 10, 11. *We muſt receive*, ſays he, *according to what we have done in the Body.* Whence he infers, That *knowing the Terrors of the Lord, we perſuade Men.* It is terrible to receive from God's Juſtice, according to what we have done in the Body.

His ſevere Juſtice.

(4.) Fourthly, *The Conſideration of God's Omnipreſence and Omniſciency, may cauſe in us a holy Fear of him.* His Eye is always upon us, his Preſence is always with us where-ever we are, and he ſees and obſerves whatever we do, and therefore let us fear him, his Eye is awful.

His Omniſciency and Omnipreſence.

(5.) Fifthly, *The Conſideration of our abſolute dependance upon God, ſhould cauſe us to ſtand in Fear of him*; leſt by provoking him who maintains our Souls in Life, in whom we live and move, and have our beings, in whoſe Hands are our Breath, our Life and all our Ways; he ſhould turn his Hand upon us, and deprive us of all thoſe Mercies and Comforts that now he heaps upon us. So much for this Time and Text.

Our abſolute dependance upon him.

SERMON XXVI.

A DISCOURSE OF THE *Nature, Corruption* and *Renewing* OF THE CONSCIENCE.

ACTS. xxiv. 16.

Herein do I exercise my self, to have always a Conscience void of Offence towards God and towards Man.

IN this Chapter St. *Paul* gives an account to *Felix* of the general course and Demeanor of his former Life, being accused by *Tertullus*, a flattering Orator, as one who was Prophane and Seditious: After that he had purged himself in sundry Particulars, he comes to the *Text*, to shew, that he was far from those Crimes that were laid to his Charge, having made it his constant Exercise all his Life-time to keep a good Conscience.

The Words have little or no Difficulty in them; and therefore, instead of giving you an elaborate Exposition, I shall only run them over with a brief *Paraphrase*.

The Explication of the Words.

Herein do I exercise my self; that is, I make it my constant Care and Imployment, *to have a Conscience void of Offence*; that is, to keep my Conscience clear that it may not justly accuse me of any *Offence* done either against God or against Men; that is, I labour conscientiously to practise as well the Duties of the *second*, as the Duties of the *first Table*; to be Just towards Men as well as to be Religious towards God, knowing that the one without the other, to be without Offence towards Men only is but *meer Morality*, and to be without Offence only towards God is but *vain Hypocrisie*. Without farther Explication, the Words do, of their own accord, deliver to us this Doctrine:

Doctrin. *That it should be our continual Care and Employment, in all Things whether relating to God or Man, to keep clear and inoffensive Consciences.*

What Conscience is.

Conscience is nothing but a practical Syllogism or Argumentation, and always infers a personal Conclusion, either excusing or accusing; and it hath three Offices.

The Office of Conscience.

1. *It informs what is Sin, and what is Duty.*

First, It discovers to us what is Sin and what is Duty, and the Reward that is entailed upon both, and thus it gives in its Verdict according to that Light that shines into it: If it hath only the twilight of Nature to illustrate it, as the *Heathens* had no other, then it can pass Judgment only upon natural Duties and unnatural Sins. Thus the *Consciences* of *Heathens*, through some remainders of original Knowledge, informed them that Worship was due to God and Justice to Men, and that all Impieties against God, and all Injuries against Men, should in the end be severely punished. But if *Conscience* enjoys the superadded Light of *Scripture*, it judges then of those Duties and those Sins that could only be known by *Divine Revelation:*

Revelation: Hence it is that *Conſcience* is enabled to form ſuch a Propoſition as this, *He that believes ſhall be ſaved, he that believes not ſhall be damned.* This Propoſition it forms not from natural Light, but from the ſuper-induced Light of *Scripture.* This is the firſt direct Act of *Conſcience*, whereby it pronounceth of Men's Works, whether they be ſinful or not, and what the Reward or Puniſhment is that ſhall follow them, according as it finds it written in the dark and imperfect *Law of Nature*, or in the ſuperadded *Law of God.*

(2.) *Secondly*, When Conſcience hath thus pronounced whether the Action be good or bad, and what Reward or Puniſhment belong to it, it's next Office is to *witneſs and depoſe*, we have done ſuch or ſuch Actions; this is a reflex Act, whereby when *Conſcience* hath diſcovered what is Sin and what is Duty, it teſtifies that either we have performed the one, or that we have committed the other: The *Scripture* reveals, that Faith ſhall be rewarded with eternal Life, and Unbelief puniſhed with Death eternal; hereupon *Conſcience* makes reflection upon it ſelf and applies the *Propoſition*, but I believe or I do not believe, and that is its witneſſing or depoſing Office. 2. *It witneſſeth and depoſeth.*

(3.) *Thirdly*, It hath beſides this, the *Office of a Judge* to acquit or condemn; and this it doth by inferring a comfortable or a terrifying Concluſion from the former Premiſes, applying the Reward or Puniſhment to our ſelves, according as thoſe Actions have been ours to which they belong: If it hath proved us Unbelievers, ſtrait it pronounceth us condemned Perſons, or if it evidences our Faith to us, preſently it juſtifies and acquits us: Hence it is that wicked Men are haunted with pale Fears and ghaſtly Reflections, becauſe they are always *Maleſactors* arraigned at a Bar, a Bar that they carry about with them in their own Breaſts, where they hear a thouſand *Witneſſes* ſworn and examined, where they hear their *Judge* Ten thouſand times a Day pronouncing them Curſed and Damned. And hence it is alſo that there is ſometimes diffuſed into the Hearts of God's Children ſuch ſweet Joy, ſuch ſolid Peace, ſuch calm Stayedneſs, and ſome Prelibation of heavenly Bliſs, becauſe they carry in their Breaſts a *Court of Judicature* where their *earthly Judge* Conſcience acquits them, and aſſures them that their *heavenly Judge* will do ſo alſo. This is *Conſcience*, that faithful Regiſter in every Man's Boſom, that writes down the Actions, Diſcourſes and Cogitations of every Hour and Minute. 3. *It acquits or condemns.*

Now this being promiſed concerning the Nature and Offices of *Conſcience*, I ſhall come in the next place to enquire into theſe following Particulars, into which I ſhall digeſt the method of this Subject.

(1.) Firſt, *What it is that doth corrupt and vitiate Conſcience.*

(2.) Secondly, *What it is to have a clear Conſcience.*

(3.) Thirdly, *Of what Importance and Conſequence it is that our Conſciences be kept clear and void of Offence*; under which I ſhall give you the Reaſons of the Point.

(4.) Fourthly, *I ſhall lay down ſome Rules and Means whereby we may attain unto and keep a pure and clean Conſcience.*

(1.) Firſt, *What is it that doth corrupt and vitiate Conſcience in executing of its Offices.* Now this I ſhall couch under Two Particulars; and they are, Ignorance and wilful Sinning. *What vitiates and corrupts Conſcience.*

(1.) *Ignorance corrupts the Conſcience.* Conſcience is the Guide of Life, and Knowledge is the Eye of Conſcience, which if it be darkned, the Blind leads the Blind till both fall into the Ditch. *Conſcience* is a Guide that leads apace, and therefore had need ſee its Way before it, which ſome not being well able to diſcern, have wound themſelves into inextricable Wandrings, purſuing every glaring Deluſion, and running after every skipping Light that danceth before it, till at laſt they have loſt both themſelves and their Conſciences too: How many are there that have thus bewildred themſelves in their own Fanſies and Opinions, and ſo have fallen upon the Precipice of damnable Errors, and into Bogs of Mire and filthy Luſts, only through an *ignorant Conſcience* and ſelf-conceited Pride that is always a Companion of it; this *Ignorance* fills the *Conſcience* with falſe Preſumptions, and draws it to wrong Determinations and Concluſions, which though they ſeem to be but little miſtakes in the Notion, yet are they moſt deſtructive and pernicious in a Man's practice: As a ſmall miſtake in the levelling of an Arrow at the Hand, makes a wide diſtance at the Mark; ſo a ſmall miſtake in the Notion of Truth, makes a wide Error in the practice of Godlineſs. A *miſperſwaded Conſcience* 1. *Ignorance.*

ſcience uſually gives riſe to *miſguided Zeal*, and *Zeal* without Knowledge is but a *Religious Phrenſie*, that faſhions out to it ſelf ſtrange ſhapes of Sin and Duty, of Good and Evil, and uſually it takes the one for the other, until it falls under that Woe denounced by the Prophet, *Iſa.* 5. 20. *Woe to them that call Good, Evil; and Evil, Good; that put Darkneſs for Light, and Light for Darkneſs; that put Bitter for Sweet, and Sweet for Bitter.* Now *Ignorance* doth vitiate and corrupt the *Conſcience* two ways; either it makes it unneceſſarily ſcrupulous, or elſe it makes it daringly preſumptuous.

Ignorance vitiates the Conſcience two ways.

1. *By making it unneceſſarily ſcrupulous.*

First, *Ignorance* fetters and binds up the *Conſcience* either to the doing of, or abſtaining from that concerning which God hath laid no Law and Obligation at all upon it: This is an *encroaching Conſcience* that makes that an encloſure that God hath left common, and rigorouſly exacts from us what God hath permitted as indifferent. It is a very ſad Judgment to be given up to the domineering Impoſitions of a *ſcrupulous Conſcience*; ſuch a *Conſcience* as this is will certainly make much more Sin than ever the *Law* made; for whatever we do againſt the Commands of *Conſcience* is Sin, though it be not immediately and directly againſt the Commands of God: Why now ſome there are that do ſo needleſly pin and coop up themſelves that they cannot ſtir, nor moderately uſe that lawful Liberty that God hath indulged them, but preſently they are entangled in Sin, becauſe of the imperious Prohibitions of their own *Conſciences.*

Rom. 14. 23.

2. *By making it licentious, and daringly preſumptuous.*

Secondly, Sometimes *Ignorance* makes *Conſcience* licentious, indulging it ſelf in thoſe Actions that the Law of God condemns, making it daringly preſumptuous; and this is a quite contrary extream; and yet as oppoſite as theſe are, we oftentimes find them joyned together in the ſame Perſons, the ſame Perſons that have a needleſly *ſcrupulous Conſcience*, have alſo a daringly *preſumtuous Conſcience*, and this proceeds from an Ignorance of their due Bounds and Limits. Who ordinarily ſo prophane as the Superſtitious? Their Ignorance makes them ſcrupulous Obſervers of little Circumſtances, and yet bold Adventures upon notorious Sins. What a ſtrange *wry Conſcience* have ſuch Men, that tie up themſelves ſtrictly where God gives them ſcope, and yet run riotouſly where God's Commands and Threatnings reſtrain, dreading more the tranſgreſſing one Law of Man, than they do the tranſgreſſing of the whole *moral Law* of God. This is now from *Ignorance*, whereby Men do not know the due Bounds either of that Liberty that God indulgeth them, or that Reſtraint that God lays upon them. And this is the firſt Thing that corrupts *Conſcience*, namely *Ignorance.*

2. *Wilful Sinning corrupts Conſcience, and that two ways.*

Secondly, *Wilful Sinning corrupts and vitiates the Conſcience*; and that two ways.

1. *By ſtupifying and deadning of Conſcience.*

Firſt, Sometimes ſuch Sins ſtupifie and deaden the *Conſcience*, eſpecially if they become frequent and cuſtomary, and therefore we uſually call them *Conſcience*-waſting Sins. Believe it, through a continued courſe of known and preſumptuous Sins, you will bring your *Conſciences* into very ſad Conſumptions, that they will pine away under Iniquities; and how many are there that have their *Conſciences* already lying Speechleſs, Senſeleſs and Gaſping, ready to give up the Ghoſt? The *Apoſtle* in *Eph.* 4. 19. ſpeaks of them, *that being paſt feeling, have given themſelves over to Laſciviouſneſs.*

2. *By terrifying and inraging of Conſcience.*

Secondly, *Sometimes ſuch Sins do affright, terrifie and enrage the Conſcience, filling it with dreadful Thoughts of eternal, future Vengeance.* Wilful and known Sins ſometimes terrifie and enrage the Conſcience; and this is a Corruption of the Conſcience, when the Terrors of it are ſo overwhelming as to ſink Men into Deſpair; for mark it, it is its Office to accuſe and to threaten for Sin, and the greater the Sin is, the more ſharp and ſtinging ought to be its Reproofs; but be the Sin never ſo great for which Conſcience reproves, if yet it denounceth Wrath without making mention of Repentance and hopes of Mercy, it exceeds its Commiſſion that God hath given it, and becomes an evil and corrupt *Conſcience.* And therefore we have that Expreſſion, *Heb.* 10. 11. *Let us draw near*, ſays the Apoſtle, *having our Hearts ſprinkled from an evil Conſcience.* By an *evil Conſcience* here is meant a *deſparing Conſcience*, from which we are freed only by the Blood of Sprinkling; to be convinced of Sin and not at all to be convinced of Righteouſneſs, is ſuch a Conviction as conſtitutes one part of the Torments of the damned

ed in Hell, whoſe Worm never dies; and certainly that Conſcience muſt needs be very evil and very corrupt, that breeds in it this *helliſh Worm*, while we are here upon Earth. And ſo much for the firſt Thing, what it is that corrupts the Conſcience.

Secondly, The next Thing propounded is to ſhew you, *What it is to have a clear Conſcience.* 2. *What it is to have a clear Conſcience, and that in two Things.*

Now there are two Things that demoninate a *Conſcience to be clear*, when it is *pure*, and when it is *peaceable*; when it is free from all known and wilful Defilements, and when it is not juſtly burdned with the guilt of Sin, then is it a *clear Conſcience.*

(1.) *Then a Man hath a clear Conſcience, when it is free from all known and wilful ſins*; I ſay, from all known and wilful Sins; for it is impoſſible, while we are encompaſſed about with Infirmities and oppreſſed with a heavy Body of Sin and Death, to keep our ſelves free and pure from all Sin, *For in many Things we offend all*, ſays St. *James* 3. 2. But theſe Sins of daily Weakneſs and ſudden Surreption, as they are uſually ſmall Sins and ſcarce diſcernable, ſo are they no Obſtructions to a *clear Conſcience*, no more than the Moats of the *Sun-beams* are Obſtructions to a clear Day. As for thoſe Quotidian Weakneſſes and Sins of daily Infirmity, they neither leave Guilt nor Defilement upon the Conſcience of God's Children; but as their more foul Sins are done away by particular Acts of *Repentance*, ſo theſe are done away by a general *ſtate of Repentance*, which ſtate the Children of God are always in; and there is alſo a conſtant out-flowing of the Blood of Chriſt and of the Mercy of God upon the Soul, to remove the Guilt and Filth of thoſe Sins as we fall into them. Then is the *Conſcience clear*, when all former Sins being pardoned to us, we daily labour to pleaſe God, though it be with manifold Imperfections and Weakneſſes; this doth not hinder but that our *Conſciences* may be both pure and peaceable, while we thus ſincerely ſtrive to keep our ſelves from all wilful and from all preſumptuous Sins, our *Conſciences* are clear, notwithſtanding the Sins of daily Infirmity. So ſays the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 19. 13. *Keep back thy Servant from preſumptuous Sins, then ſhall I be upright, and I ſhall be Innocent from the great Tranſgreſſion.* That's the firſt thing; *Conſcience* is clear, when it's free from all known and wilful Sins. 1. *When it is free from all known and wilful Sins.*

(2.) *Then a Man hath a Clear Conſcience when it is not juſtly burdned with the Guilt of Sin*; I ſay not juſtly burdned, becauſe ſometimes we may burden our ſelves without cauſe, when God hath already forgiven us. Many times, through Temptations and Deſertions, God's Children reflect back upon their old Sins with new Troubles, and rip up their old Wounds and make them bleed afreſh; they remember againſt themſelves what God hath forgotten, and with great Terrours accuſe and condemn themſelves for what God hath already remitted to them. Now here I ſhall lay down two Things. 2. *When it is not juſtly burdened with the guilt of Sin.*

(1.) Firſt, *That every quiet Conſcience is not a clear Conſcience.*
(2.) Secondly, *That every troubled Conſcience is not an evil Conſcience.*

Firſt, *Every quiet Conſcience is not a clear Conſcience.* Some are lull'd aſleep in ſecurity, and their Conſciences are quiet meerly becauſe they are inſenſible; it may be they have ſo harraſſed and waſted their Conſciences by dreadful Sins, ſo often mortally wounded them, that now they have not Strength enough to become quarrelſome and troubleſome, and this they call *Peace*; indeed it is ſuch a Peace as *Galgathus* reproaches the *Romans* with in *Tacitus*, when they had laid all waſt, then they called it *Peace*: So theſe Sinners think they have good peaceable Conſciences becauſe they do not meanace, torment and worry them; and, alas, how can they? Their Conſciences are murdered, there is no Senſe nor Life left in them. This is no *Peace*, but a meer *Solitude* and *Deſolation* of Conſcience; and yet, believe it too, theſe quiet and peaceable Conſciences will not be long ſo; at the Hour of Death, or if not then, the next moment after Death, theſe *peaceable Conſciences* will be ſtartled out of their Sleep, and with fearful Screeches fly in their Faces and roar ſo loud, that *Heaven* and *Hell* ſhall hear them. As in ſtill Weather many times Matter is gathering for a Storm; ſo while *Conſcience* ſeems ſo ſtill and quiet, it is only gathering Matter for a Tempeſt, that will one Day pour upon your Heads; and O! How grievous will it be when thoſe Conſciences, that never gave them 1. *Every quiet Conſcience is not a clear Conſcience.*

an ill Word before, ſhall on a ſudden drag them before the Tribunal of God, and there bitterly accuſe them of thoſe horrid Sins that once they ſeem'd to take no notice of, and call for the ſevereſt execution of divine Wrath and Vengeance upon them? And poſſibly many that ſpeak of the Peace of their Conſciences, do not find it ſo neither, they are as far from a peaceable Conſcience, as they are from a raving and a raging Conſcience: A raving Conſcience ſoon diſcovers it ſelf in helliſh Deſpair, but there are many whoſe Conſciences do not rave and yet are never quiet, they give them many a ſecret twitch and guird at the very Heart, not outwardly diſcernable by others; as *Thunder* rumbles long in the Entrails of a Cloud, that never breaks forth into dreadful and terrible Cracks; ſo a Man may have a rumbling and a grumbling Conſcience, a Conſcience that may murmur and ſcoul upon him, and yet he may carry it as if all were calm and ſerene with him: However, though all within may be quiet, yet a *quite* Conſcience may be a *polluted* Conſcience, as a ſtanding Puddle may be as foul as the *raging Sea*, when it caſts out its *Mire* and *Filth*.

2. *Every troubled Conſcience is not an evil Conſcience.*

Secondly, *As every quiet Conſcience is not a clear Conſcience, ſo every troubled Conſcience is not an evil Conſcience.* Hypocrites and wicked Men may indeed, and do often, ſo judge: Would God ever ſuffer ſuch ſtrange Terrors to ſeize upon Men, were they not notorious Sinners? As thoſe *Barbarians* at *Malta*, ſpoken of in the *Acts*, when they ſaw the *Viper* faſten upon the Apoſtle's Hand, preſently they concluded that he was ſome wicked Perſon, *whom divine Vengeance would not ſuffer to live.* So theſe Men, when they ſee the Worm of Conſcience faſten upon others, preſently they judge them guilty of notorious Crimes, ſuch Crimes for which the Vengeance and Wrath of God purſues them; but this is a wrong Cenſure and moſt unjuſt. For the moſt part it is ſeen, that thoſe that have the beſt Conſciences are moſt troubled, at leaſt for a time, untill the *Holy Ghoſt* perſuade them of the Love of God, and of the Pardon of their Sins. It is the greateſt Fault of a tender Conſcience, that it miſ-interprets every thing againſt it ſelf; and oftentimes when God rejoyceth over it, it apprehends he frowns upon it, miſtaking the firing of a *Bone-fire* for the firing of a *Beacon*, and give an Alarm when they ſhould proclaim Peace and Joy; many times it is ſo with them that have tender Conſciences; a Man may be long troubled for thoſe Sins that are already pardoned to him. *Nathan* comes to *David*, and tells him, upon his Confeſſion, that he had ſinned, 2 *Sam.* 12. 13. *I have Sinned*, ſays he; and God by *Nathan* tells him, that he had *put away his Sin* from him; and yet his Conſcience, though it were clear in reſpect of any Guilt that God charged upon him, yet it was not clear in reſpect of what he himſelf charged upon himſelf; he thought himſelf guilty in his own apprehenſion, as you may perceive by his penning of the 51ſt *Pſalm*, yet he was not guilty in God's Account, for he aſſures him, by his *Prophet*, that he had pardoned him.

Queſtion. Why now it being ſo, that both a quiet Conſcience may be impure, and that a troubled Conſcience may be a clear Conſcience, how ſhall we know whether when our Conſciences are troubled, it be from the Guilt of Sin remaining upon them; or whether, when they be clear and quiet, it be from the removal of that Guilt?

How a Man may know when his Conſcience is troubled from the guilt of Sin remaining upon it or not. For *Anſwer* unto this; firſt it may be known when a Man's Conſcience is troubled from the guilt of Sin remaining upon it, by conſidering the effects of this Trouble: Doth he find, that when Conſcience is diſquieted, he is apt to ſhift off the Trouble by diverting it, and doing what he can to lull Conſcience aſleep? Doth he neglect Prayer, Reading of the Word, and other Duties and Means that God hath appointed to bring him to a true Repentance for his Sin? If it be ſo, this Man hath great cauſe to fear that the trouble of his Conſcience proceeds from the Impurity and Defilement of it. Where God will ſave the Soul, this *trouble of* Conſcience works in another manner, and ſtirs up a Man to Pray, to Hear, to Meditate upon God's Word, where his condition will be ſtated to his Hand, to follow God in all his Ways and Ordinances, making him reſtleſs till he come to know that his Sins are pardoned, and his Wounds healed and cloſed up by the Blood of Jeſus Chriſt. Now many there are in whom the troubles of Conſcience never produce any good effects, but all their care is how they may divert all troubleſome and diſquieting Thoughts from themſelves, and ſo they wear off Convictions: Now this Trouble can never produce any ſaving effect, and is it ſelf produced meerly from that

that corroding and gnawing Guilt that lies upon Conſcience, which a true and genuine Trouble is a means by God appointed to remove.

How a Man may know when his Conſcience is quiet, whether it be becauſe guilt of Sin is removed or not.

Secondly, How may a Man know when Conſcience is quiet, whether it be quieted upon God's Grounds, becauſe the Guilt of Sin is removed from it?

To this I *Anſwer*; it muſt be conſidered, whether quietneſs of Conſcience comes after Trouble; and if Conſcience be quiet after Trouble, then you muſt conſider how it came to be quieted. Did you wear it away with other Buſineſſes? Or, did you ſeek to God by Prayer, and applying of the Promiſes to your ſelves? Did you, in the way of God, obtain Peace? Why now if a Man's quietneſs that he hath, be got after Trouble, and if got in God's way, that way that he hath appointed to ſtill and to quiet the Conſcience, you may then ſatisfie your ſelf in it. But when as you never have been troubled, or having been troubled have worn it off, you may be aſſured ſuch a *Peace* of Conſcience is far worſe and more dangerous, than the moſt horrid Troubles and Diſquietments of Conſcience that can be.

I come now to the *Third general Head propounded, and that was to ſhew you, What great Importance, and of what beneficial Conſequence it is to keep our Conſciences clear and inoffenſive.* And in ſpeaking unto this, I ſhall at once both give you the Reaſons of the Point; Why it ſhould be our continual Endeavour to keep clear Conſciences, and alſo give you Motives to perſuade you to the Duty. I ſhall only name *Six*.

The Excellency of a clear Conſcience opened, in ſix Particulars.

1. *It is a moſt comfortable Relief under falſe Reproaches.*

First, *A clear Conſcience is the moſt comfortable Relief under falſe Reproaches and Aſperſions that are caſt upon us.* A good Conſcience is only in our own Power, but a good Name is in the Power of every ſlanderous Tongue to blaſt; and indeed it is a thing almoſt impoſſible to keep at once both a good Conſcience and a good Name too: The World is ſhattered and fractured into ſo many Parties, and each of them of ſuch different Reliſhes of good and bad, that unleſs our Actions have as univerſal a Guſt, as according to the *Rabbin's Tradition*, the *Iſraelite's Manna* had, that it had the taſte of that which they beſt fanſied, unleſs our Actions have ſuch a univerſal Guſt, we muſt of neceſſity fall under Miſ-conſtructions, Cenſures and Defamations; for indeed if you obſerve it, uſually our Similitude to others makes them think and ſpeak well of us: Whoſoever commends another, commends ſomewhat that he ſuppoſeth at leaſt he hath in himſelf; and this the reaſon of that Woe of our Saviour, *Luke* 6. 26. *Woe to you when all Men ſhall ſpeak well of you.* When wicked Men ſpeak well of us it is a Sign we are but too too like them. Even a *Heathen* could ſay, when he was highly applauded by the vulgar Rout, *What Evil have I done, that theſe Men praiſe me?* The very reproaches of ungodly Men, are the beſt Teſtimonials that can be given of an excellent and ſingular Chriſtian. In a ſtrict and holy Converſation there is that contradiction to the looſe Prophaneneſs of the World, as at once both convinceth and offends them, reproves them and galls them; and if we thus reproach them by our Lives, we muſt again expect that they will reproach us by their Lyings and Slanders. It is a ſinful tenderneſs of our eſteem among Men when we tack about with every popular Breath that blows; ſuch muſt needs prefer the Praiſe of Men before the Praiſe of God; and let me tell you, this is as fruitleſs as it is ſinful, ſince as the Wind always blows from contrary Points and Quarters, ſo while ſome extol us others will as much vilify and ſcorn us. It is miſerable to live upon the *Reports* and *Opinions* of others; let us not reckon what they ſay, but what Reports our own Conſciences make us; it is far better to offend the whole World than God and Conſcience: And if any ſtorm of Obloquy, Reproach, Railing or bitter Curſing at any time batters upon us, how ſweet then is it to retire inward to the calm Innocency of our own Hearts, where are a thouſand Witneſſes within us, that tell us we have not deſerved them? How comfortable is it to remit our Cauſe to God, and leave our Vindication to him for whoſe ſake we ſuffer Reproach? Thus we find the Prophet *Jeremy* appealing unto God, *Jer.* 20. 10, 12. *I heard the defaming of many; report, ſay they, and we will report it*; that is, let us raiſe a diſgraceful and a reproachful Report of him: But, ſays he, *O Lord of Hoſt, thou that trieſt the Righteous, thou that ſeeſt the Reins and the Heart,*

unto thee have I opened my Cauſe! Why thus if while wicked Men are maliciouſly conſpiring how to blot, ſully and ſtain our Names, if all this while we can keep our Conſciences clear, what need we much care how the Wind blows abroad, ſince we are harboured under the retreat of a peaceful Conſcience: They may poſſibly perſuade others to believe their Calumnies; but God, who ſearcheth the Heart and Conſcience, knows that we are injured, and he is haſtning forward a Day wherein he will clear up our Righteouſneſs; and then the Teſtimony of one good Conſcience will put ten thouſand Slanders to ſilence.

2. *It gives a Man advantage to reprove others with Authority.*

Secondly, *A clear Conſcience, as it will enable a Man to bear Reproaches from others with Patience, ſo it gives him advantage to reprove others with Authority.* It is a very true Rule, that he that reproves another, ought himſelf to be free from the Fault he reproves; for otherwiſe his Reproofs neither come with freedom from the Reprover, nor with efficacy to the Reproved.

(1.) Firſt, *A Reproof that comes from a guilty Conſcience, is but a ſtammering and a timorous Reproof.* Such a Man's own Conſcience muſt needs riſe up in his Throat, and choak his Reproofs. Conſciouſneſs of the ſame Miſcarriages will retort whatever we can ſay againſt others, more ſtrongly upon our ſelves, and will ſuggeſt to us that it is but Hypocriſie for us to blame that which we our ſelves practiſe. With what Face canſt thou preſs others to Repent and Reform? What Arguments canſt thou uſe to them, who by continuing in the ſame Sins, doſt thy ſelf judge thoſe Arguments are of no force at all? Thus *Conſcience* will ſuggeſt, and hereby Tongueties Reproofs.

(2.) Secondly, *This alſo makes Reproofs ineffectual.* It were indeed a Temper to be wiſh'd and pray'd for, that we could only reſpect how righteous the Reproof is, and not how righteous the Perſon is that gives it; and if we could be content to have the *Motes* pluck'd out of our *Eyes*, though it be by ſuch as have *Beams* in their *own Eyes*; for indeed there is no more reaſon to reject ſound Admonitions, becauſe they come from an unſound Heart, than there is to ſtop our Ears againſt good Counſel, becauſe delivered it may be with an unſavoury Breath. But yet ſo it is, when Men of polluted Conſciences and defiled Converſations come to reprove others, Men are apt to think of them, What, is ſuch a one in earneſt? Doth he not perſonate his Reproof? Doth he not do as bad or worſe himſelf? Or, doth he envy me my Sins, and would engroſs them all to himſelf? And ſo the Reproof takes no place at all upon him. But now when a Man of a clear and unſpotted Conſcience reproves wicked Men, his Reproofs break in upon them with Conviction, Authority and Power, if not to reform them yet at leaſt to daunt and ſilence them: Here is one that reproves Sin, who doubtleſs believes it to be Evil by his own avoiding of it: Here is one that denounceth Wrath if I repent not, who, doubtleſs, believes it to be as terrible as he repreſents it to be, by his own carefulneſs to eſcape it. And thus a *clear Conſcience* hath great advantage to reprove Sinners ſucceſsfully, at leaſt to work Conviction upon them, if not to work Reformation in them.

It gives boldneſs of acceſs unto God.

(3.) Thirdly, *A clear Conſcience gives boldneſs of acceſs unto God.* Guilt is the only thing that abaſhes the Soul, and makes it both aſham'd and afraid to appear in the Preſence of God; and therefore we find that as ſoon as *Adam* had ſinned againſt his Maker, *he hides* himſelf from him. We may obſerve it in our ſelves: What ſlaviſh deadneſs and dejectedneſs of Heart ſeizeth upon us when we come to God in Duty, after that we have wronged him by any known Sin? We come with ſuch a miſgiving kind of Fear, as if we would not have God take notice that we are before him, and we are ſtill in pain till the Duty be over. But when our Conſciences are clear, O with what delight do we haſt to God, and with what content do we ſtay with him! How doth the Soul dilate and ſpread it ſelf under the Smiles of God, beating full upon it? *Loe, O Lord, here's a Heart that I labour to make and keep void of Offence, do thou fill it with thy promiſed Grace and Spirit; it is not indeed a Manſion pure enough for the pure and holy God, yet is it ſuch as thou wilt accept of and dwell in; there are ſtill many hidden Corruptions in it, but do thou ſearch them out, and thou who haſt kept thy Servant from preſumptuous Sins, do thou alſo cleanſe me from ſecret Faults.* Thus a clear Conſcience, with a holy and reverend Boldneſs, addreſſes it ſelf to God, and ſweetly cloſeth up every Duty and every Prayer, with full aſſurance of being heard and accepted, and that it ſhall obtain Mercy

Mercy from God. So the Apoſtle tells us, *Heb.* 10. 22. *Let us*, ſays he, *draw near in full aſſurance of Faith.* How we may gain this full aſſurance, when we draw near to God? How, ſays he? Why, by *having our Hearts ſprinkled from an evil Conſcience*; get but a pure and clear Conſcience, and that will enable you to draw near to God in full aſſurance of Faith. And ſo in the like parallel place, 1 *John* 3. 21. *Beloved, if our Hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God.* If Conſcience be not evil to accuſe us, then have we confidence towards God: When the Face of a Man's Conſcience looks chearful and hath no Frowns and Wrinckles upon it, this makes us joyfully to apprehend that God's Face to us is calm and ſerene too, and that we ſhall be welcom at all times into our Father's preſence; this Conſcience ſuggeſts to us, and makes us come with a holy, yet with an awful boldneſs unto God.

It is the ſweeteſt Boſom Friend with which we may at all times freely and intimately converſe.

(4.) Fourthly, *A clear Conſcience is the ſweeteſt boſom Friend with which we may at all times freely and intimately converſe.* Wicked Men indeed of all Company in the World, do moſt hate themſelves for Companions; they have a lowring and a rumbling Conſcience at home that always threatens and diſquiets them, and therefore they love to keep abroad. Soliloquies and Heart-diſcoveries are a very Torment to them, and they wonder that the *Pſalmiſt* ſhould ever bid them *Commune with their own Hearts and be ſtill*, as it is in *Pſal.* 4. 4. Why alas, they are never leſs ſtill than when they diſcourſe with their own Hearts and Conſciences, which are grown ſo peeviſh and quarrelſom, that they thunder out nothing but Woes and Curſes againſt them, hurling about them Swords and Firebrands and Death, that they dare not ſo much as once look within Doors. But now a Chriſtian whoſe *Conſcience* is *calm* and *clear*, he finds it the beſt Companion of the World: In his ſolitary Retirements from the crowd and noiſe of the World, with what Delight doth he call his Heart aſide, and there are they ſweetly and peaceably conferring together! And God uſually comes in as a third Friend and joins himſelf in Society with them, and here paſs mutual Endearments between them; the Soul embraces and claſps about God with the Arms of Faith and Dependance, and God embraceth the Soul in the Arms of his everlaſting Love. Here are mutual unboſomings of Secrets; the Soul unlocks its Secrets before God, and God again reveals the Secrets of his Love unto the Soul: Here are mutual Rejoycings; the Soul rejoyceth in God its Saviour, and God rejoyceth over the Soul to do it good; and under theſe Intercourſes of Love and Sweetneſs, the Soul is ready to faint away and diſſolve with Joy. This is that *continual Feaſt*, as the *wiſe Man* calls it, that a *good Conſcience* entertains a *Chriſtian* with, where all is tranſacted with a ſtill and noiſeleſs Mirth.

It is the beſt Comfort and Support in the midſt of Dangers.

(5.) Fifthly, *A clear Conſcience is the beſt comfort and ſupport, when Fears, Troubles and Dangers are on every ſide encompaſſing us about.* It is a bleſſed Thing when we have Trouble without, to have Peace within in our own Boſoms, then to have Peace with God and Peace with our ſelves. And therefore ſays Chriſt, *John* 16. 33. *Theſe Things have I ſpoken unto you, that in me ye might have Peace; in the World you ſhall have Tribulation:* A ſtrange Paradox; but indeed a Chriſtian is made up of ſuch ſtrange Paradoxes, *as Sorrowful, yet always Rejoycing; as Poor himſelf, yet making many Rich; as having Nothing, and yet Poſſeſſing all Things*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks 2 *Cor.* 6. 10. Here is Tribulation in the World, and yet here is Peace alſo. When once the great and bloody Quarrel betwixt God and the Soul is taken up and compounded, when we are reconciled to God, and thereby our Conſciences become reconciled to us; all the Enmity and Perſecution of the World are but little peltring Differences, that cannot diſturb that ſolid and inviolable Peace that a Chriſtian enjoys: This is that Peace that as the Friendſhip of the World cannot give, ſo neither can the Enmity of the World ever take away. *My Peace I leave with you, my Peace I give unto you, let not your Hearts be troubled.* It is obſerveable of *Joſiah*, 2 *Kings* 22. 20. God promiſed there by the Mouth of *Huldah* the *Propheteſs*, that he ſhould be *gathered to his Grave in Peace*; and yet in the next Chapter, Verſe 29. it is ſaid there, *That he was ſlain the War* which he undertook againſt *Pharoah Necho* King of *Egypt*; he was ſlain in War, and yet died in Peace, and no wonder; for whoſoever dies in Peace with God and in Peace with his own Conſcience, dies peaceably, though he dies in the midſt of Wars and Tumults.

It is an unſpeakable Comfort in a dying hour.

(6.) *A clear Conſcience affords ſweet and unſpeakable Comfort in a dying hour.* When all Things muſt take their leave of us and we of them, when Death is ſetting all its Terrors in Array againſt us, O what a bleſſed Support will it then be to the departing Soul, ſtanding on Tip-toe ready to take its Flight into Eternity, to be able to make that Appeal which *Hezekiah* doth, *Iſa.* 38. 3. *Remember now, O Lord, I beſeech thee, how I have walked before thee in Truth with a perfect Heart, and have done that which is good in thy ſight.* Such a Teſtimony as this is, at ſuch a time as this is, is worth Heaven and Glory it ſelf; this is to have Heaven let down into us one hour, and to be our ſelves taken up into Heaven the next hour. Now poſſibly Men may frolick away their Days in Sin and Vanity, and live as if they ſhould never give an account; but believe it, the Day and Hour is coming, and it will come, wherein Conſcience will begin to open its Eyes, when it may be their Friends ſtand round about them to cloſe theirs, and then it will ſee theſe horrid Shapes of Death and Hell and Wrath eternal, ſuch as while they were ſecure Sinners they never imagined, and now that they are awakned Sinners, and poſſibly awakned too late too, they can never eſcape. If therefore you would enjoy *Peace* and Serenity in your Death, and hath the Teſtimony of your Conſciences to carry with you to ſhew to your Judge for your Acquittance, be ſure then to cheriſh a good Conſcience in your Life-time. Now it may be Conſcience may be bribed to give in a falſe and flattering Teſtimony, but when Eternity is in its view it will then ſpeak Truth; and O thrice happy are they to whom a true Conſcience becomes then an excuſing Conſcience. And ſo much for the third Thing propounded, namely, of what concernment it is to labour, *to keep Conſciences void of Offence.*

(4.) *Fourthly*, The next Thing propounded was, *To give you ſome Rules and Directions how you may get, and alſo how you may keep clear and inoffenſive Conſciences.*

Object. But you will ſay, It is in vain to give Rules for that which is impoſſible to be done; Doth not the *wiſe Man* challenge all the World upon this Point, *Prov.* 20. 9. *Who can ſay I have made my Heart clean, I am pure from my Sins?* Never did the raging *Sea* caſt up more Mire and Filth than the Heart of Man doth; and as ſoon may we empty the vaſt Waters of the great Deep, and ſcour the bottom of it from all its Dirt and Mud, as attempt to keep Conſcience clear, into which a ſinful Heart is continually emptying and pouring out its Filth and Mire.

Anſw. To this I *Anſwer*; Were it impoſſible, yet there is no releaſe to our Obligation: We are commanded *To be Holy even as God is Holy*, whoſe infinite Purity is ſuch as ſtains the Heavens themſelves, and puts the glorious *Angels* out of Countenance: This Perfection is much more impoſſible for us who are but Lumps of Dirt mingled and kneaded together with Sin, than for a thick Clod of Earth to be as tranſparent as the Sun that ſhines; but yet theſe acceſſive Commands have a uſe in them, even to raiſe up our Endeavours to a higher pitch and ſtrain, than if we were commanded only ſomewhat that were within our own Power; as he that aims at a *Star* is like too ſhoot higher, than he that aims only at a *Turf*. Thus, though it were impoſſible to keep *clean Conſciences void of Offence both towards God and Men*, and according to the exactneſs of God's Command, yet he that is careful to avoid all Pollutions, both of Fleſh and Spirit, ſhall certainly have a much cleaner Conſcience by far than he that wallows in thoſe Sins. In a foul way it is perhaps impoſſible to keep our ſelves from being beſpattered with Dirt, yet he that walks warily and carefully comes cleaner home than he that tumbles and rolls himſelf in it: But yet this Duty is not impoſſible; it is indeed difficult to keep a clear Conſcience, but yet it is a thing that is feaſible: And in general there are two ways to keep our Conſciences clear; either by preſerving them from being defiled, or elſe by cleanſing them when they are defiled.

(1.) *We may keep our Conſciences clear by preſerving them from being defiled.* You will ſay, How can this be? Is there any Man living, ſays the wiſe Man, *that doth good, and ſinneth not?* And doth not every Sin leave behind it a ſpot and ſtain upon the Face of Conſcience? How then can we keep them clear?

I *Anſwer*; Sins are of two ſorts; there are Sins that are *Crimes*, and there are Sins that are but *Faults*. *Crimes* I call thoſe Sins that are branded for infamous both by God and Man, as *Murder*, *Adultery*, *Blaſphemy*, and the like, at which even natural Conſcience recoils, ſuch carnal Sins as affright Conſcience and make it look pale and ghaſtly. A *Crime* I alſo call any ſin that is conſubſtantiated by an acceſs of Guilt by the dreadful Aggravations of being committed knowingly and wilfully.

willfully. By *Faults* I mean Sins of daily Infirmity and Surreption, ſuch as do frequently ſurprize the beſt and the holieſt Chriſtians, from which no Man's Piety nor Watchfulneſs can ſecure him. Why, now though we be overtaken with *Faults*, and every Day and Hour contract new and freſh Guilt upon our Conſciences, yet we may have clear and good Conſciences while we are careful to keep our ſelves from *Crimes*, from all Sins that are ſo in their own Nature by the horridneſs of the Fact, and from all Sins that are made ſo by greatning Circumſtances of being deliberate and wilful; while we keep our ſelves from theſe we have good Conſciences, notwithſtanding Sins of ordinary Weakneſs: That Man hath a good Conſcience who preſerves himſelf from all infamous and groſs Sins, and from all other wilful and deliberate Sins. Now this *clearneſs of Conſcience* is a thing poſſible to be attained; Men may, with care and caution, keep themſelves free from all ſelf-condemning *Crimes*, and live ſo evenly that when their Conſciences are moſt peeviſh and tutchy, yet they ſhall have nothing to accuſe them of, but what is common to all Men; of ſuch Men as theſe, this we may affirm, that they have been able with Joy to reflect back upon their paſt Lives in a dying hour, that poſſibly never knew any Guilt by themſelves, than what the Sins of common and daily Infirmity hath expoſed them unto. This now is to keep good Conſciences. *We live well*, ſays St. *Auſtin*, *if we live without Crimes; to live without Fault is impoſſible, and he that thinks he doth it, keeps himſelf not from Sin but from Pardon.*

(2.) Secondly, *Another way to keep our Conſciences clear, is by cleanſing them when they are defiled.* He keeps his Garments clean that keeps himſelf from falling; and next degree, he who being fallen haſtes to cleanſe himſelf from his contracted Filth: And thus, at leaſt, we may keep our Conſciences clear both from *Crimes* and from *Faults* alſo, while we labour to cleanſe them from their Defilements, and to rub out and waſh away thoſe Spots with which at any time we are occaſionally beſpatter'd. There is a twofold Blot Sin leaves behind it, there is a Blot of Diſcredit and a Blot of Defilement; the former is indelible: As the Scar remains when the Wound is healed; ſo this Blot remains upon the Soul, when the Guilt of Sin is removed. It is a Diſcredit to a *Malefactor*, though pardoned, that ever he ſhould do that which deſerv'd Death: And ſo it is a kind of Blot upon a Chriſtian's Name for ever, to have commited thoſe Sins that have deſerved eternal Death, though through the free Mercy and unſpeakable Grace of God he hath obtained the Pardon of them. But then there is another Blot, a Blot of Defilement, that renders Men loathſom and deformed in the Eyes of God; and thus every Sin we commit leaves a Blot and a Stain upon the Soul; a Stain that defaceth God's Image, and that defiles our own Conſciences; and when this Stain and Blot is cleanſed, then are we ſaid to have *clear Conſciences*, when we have taken off that Blot and Defilement that Sin hath left, whereby we are rendred deformed in the ſight of God, and whereby the Image of God is defaced upon the Soul. Thus you ſee in general there are two ways to keep a clear Conſcience; the one by preventing its Defilement, and the other by cleanſing of it when it is defiled. Now to help you in both theſe Caſes, I ſhall lay down ſeveral Particulars.

Directions for the getting and keeping of a clear Conſcience.

1. *Get Conſcience rightly informed.*

Firſt, *If you would have your Conſcience clear, get them righty informed.* How can Conſcience be clear, ſo long as the Foges and thicks Miſts of Ignorance and Error poſſeſs it? Labour, therefore, to let in ſpiritual Light into it, that you may ſee how to cleanſe it. It is as much Vanity to go about to cleanſe an ignorant Conſcience, as it is in vain to ſweep a dark Room. An ignorant, conſcientious Man, that knows not the Limits of Sin and Duty, may, after a great deal of pudder with his Conſcience, leave it much worſe than he found it, and caſt out Jewels inſtead of Rubbiſh: Indeed it is impoſſible for an ignorant Man to have a good Conſcience, whether we reſpect Duty or Comfort; in point of Duty I have ſhewed you formerly that Ignorance will make Conſcience unneceſſarily ſcrupulous, or daringly preſumptuous: Now neither can an ignorant Conſcience be good in reſpect of Comfort, becauſe through Ignorance Conſcience oftentimes quarrels at that which is a true Ground of Rejoycing. *Conſcience* is that Glaſs whereby we may both view our ſelves, and alſo our Actions: Now as a Glaſs, when falſly framed, repreſents a beautiful Face monſtrous and frightful, ſo Conſcience, when falſly informed, makes even lovely Actions appear miſhapen and terrifying, by diſtorted Repreſentations of thoſe Things that are lawful, and perhaps our Duty.

Therefore

Therefore in the *firſt* place, get an enlightned Conſcience if you would get a good Conſcience; for what ſays the wiſe Man, *Prov.* 19. 2. *That the Soul be without knowledge, it is not good*; or, as ſome Tranſlations have it, *a Soul without knowledge is not good*; it is indeed good for nothing, unleſs it be to make Men ſin conſcientiouſly, and to embolden them to commit the greateſt Wickedneſs in the World with Peace and Comfort. Thus, ſays our Saviour, *John* 16. 2. *Whoſoever killeth you ſhall think that he doth God good Service*, through the Error and Miſtake of their Conſcience. So in 1 *Cor.* 2. 8. *Had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory*. Knowledge betters the Conſcience two ways.

Knowledg betters the Conſcience two ways.

1. By inſtructing of it to diſcern betwixt Good and Evil.

Firſt, *It gives its direction what to chooſe and what to avoid, it inſtructs it to diſcern betwixt Good and Evil.* Ignorant Perſons often miſtake the one for the other, and eſchew what they ſhould follow; or if they chance to do that which is good, as it is not of great worth to do good only by chance and hazard, ſo they ſin alſo in doing good; while the Judgment is in ſuſpence, the Conſcience muſt needs be under Guilt. If I know not whether I ought to do an Action or to forbear, which way ſoever I take I am entangled in Sin, *for whatſoever is not of Faith is Sin:* That is, whatſoever is done with a wavering Conſcience that I know not whether it be ſinful or not, that thereby becomes Sin; and whatever a Man doth doubtingly, he is damned if he doth it; *He that eats doubtingly*, ſays the Apoſtle, *is damned if he eats*, Rom. 14. 23.

2. By giving it Strength to inforce us to the doing of Good, and to the avoiding of Evil.

Secondly, *Knowledge gives the Conſcience Strength to enforce us to the doing of that which it diſcovers to be Good, and to the Flight of that which it diſcovers to be Evil.* A knowing Perſon cannot ſin ſo eaſily as an ignorant Man may, but he muſt ſtruggle and wreſtle harder, and offer more Violence by far to his own Conſcience. A Man that ſees his Danger before him will hardly be dragg'd into Precipices, whereas one that is blind is eaſily led thither ſuſpecting nothing. So here, a knowing Perſon, that ſees the Danger of Hell and Damnation before him, if he Sins it muſt be with a great deal of inward reluctancy: An enlightned Conſcience ſtruggles and with-holds him; and if Temptation be ſo violent as to wreſt him out of the Hand of Conſcience, how is he wrackt and torn in pieces betwixt Conſcience and Temptations; and when Conſcience hath loſt its hold, ſtill it purſues him and follows him to his Sin and diſturbs his Pleaſure, and imbitters that Sweetneſs that he thought to have found in Sin before, and never leaves its Clamors till it hath at leaſt by a hypocritical and former Repentance, and by Engagements to be more obſerving of the Commands of Conſcience for the future, ſatisfied and appeaſed it. This force Conſcience hath when it is duly informed with Knowledge. But where Ignorance hath blinded it, it ſuffers Men quietly to ruſh upon God's Neck, and *upon the thick boſſes of his Buckler*; it ſees not, neither reſpects any Danger when it is even on the very brink of Hell. An ignorant Perſon is like your benighted or bewildred Traveller, which becauſe it cannot ſee its own Way before it, what is to be choſen and what is to be refuſed, it lays the Reins upon the Neck of Men's Luſts, and ſuffers them without controul to take their own courſe. And therefore if you would have good Conſciences, get them rightly informed with the knowledge of what is Sin, and what is Duty.

2. Caſt out the filth of Conſcience by a daily and frequent Confeſſion.

Secondly, *If you would have a clear Conſcience, then caſt out the filth of Conſcience by a daily and frequent Confeſſion.* Confeſſion, one of the Fathers calls it the Vomit of the Soul, whereby it eaſeth it ſelf when it is over-charged and glutted with Sin and Guilt. And ſo the Scripture alſo ſpeaks, when the Apoſtle ſpeaks of Apoſtates relapſing back again into their old Sins. In 2 *Pet.* 2. 22. he ſaith, *They return with the Dog to his Vomit*; that this, they return and do again lick up thoſe Sins which before they diſgorged and caſt up by Confeſſion. This indeed is the Way when Conſcience is burned with the Guilt of any Sin; when Sin lies unconcocted and heavy within, go then and pour out your Heart before the Lord in the Confeſſion of your Sin; ſee what ſudden Eaſe this will bring in to Conſcience. *David* was Sin-ſick, and he reſolves upon this courſe, *Pſal.* 32. 5. *I acknowledged my Sin unto thee, and my Iniquity have I not hid*; *I ſaid I would confeſs my Tranſgreſſion*, and ſuddenly there came Eaſe to his Conſcience, *and thou, O Lord*, ſays he, *forgaveſt the Iniquity of my Sin.* Are our Conſciences oppreſſed with the Burden and Weight of great and numberleſs Sins? Here we may, by an humble and penitent Confeſſion, unload them all before God; and this is the Myſtery of Confeſſion; the way to unload our Sins from off us, is by taking them upon our ſelves; when

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we charge our ſelves with them and impute them to our ſelves, God will not impute them to us, but charge them upon Chriſt; for he hath promiſed, *If we judge and condemn our ſelves, that we ſhall not be judged and condemned.* Thus in 2 *Sam.* 12. 13. as ſoon as *David* had there, by an humble Confeſſion, taken his Sin to himſelf, ſaying, *I have ſinned*; God, by the Prophet, tells him, *That he had taken away his Sin from him: The Lord*, alſo ſays the Prophet to him, *hath put away thy Sin.* And, indeed, have we not found it thus by manifold Experiences, that when Conſcience hath been bowed down by the unſupportable Weight of the Guilt of Sin, have ye not found that a ſorrowful and ingenuous Confeſſion of them unto God hath lightned the Burden? And whereas before, Conſcience was heavy and gloomy, now it looks chearfully upon you, under the apprehenſions of God's pardoning Grace, that God will pardon and forgive them to us. Now this eaſing of our Conſciences by Confeſſion muſt be frequently reiterated; our Conſciences are always filling with Sin and Guilt, and therefore we muſt be always caſting of it out by Confeſſion. As in the emptying of a Pond, where there are many Streams riſing and bubbling up, if we ſtop and intermit the Work, the *Pond* grows preſently full again. Truly our Hearts and Conſciences are like ſuch *Ponds*, in which there are many corrupt Streams ſtill ſpouting up; now Confeſſion is the Laving of it out, which if we do but a while intermit, our Conſciences again grow as full of Sin and Guilt as ever; and therefore it muſt be a frequent and daily Confeſſion of Sin, yea, our Confeſſion muſt be reiterated as often as we fall into and commit any Sin. And that is another Means to keep our Conſciences clear.

I might alſo add, *That an effectual Means to keep the Conſcience clear, is frequently to waſh it with repenting Tears:* But becauſe unfeigned Confeſſion of Sin doth alſo include and ſuppoſe a penitential Frame of Heart, I ſhall not, therefore, inſiſt upon this as a particular Head.

3. *Get a mean and low eſteem of the World.*

In the *Third* place, therefore, *If you would keep your Conſciences clear and inoffenſive, then labour to get a mean and low eſteem of the World.* The inordinate Love of the preſent World is utterly inconſiſtent with a good Conſcience: What is it that makes ſo many offer Violence to their Conſciences, to ſtretch and wrack them to any baſe compliance or ſinful practice, but only that they may thereby gain ſome ſecular Advantage, or that they may thereby avoid ſome worldly Inconvenience? This is that which fills the World with Fraud and Cozenage, with Rapine and Extortion, while all tug hard to get one from another, although they loſe their Conſciences in the Scuffle. This is that which makes Men ſo often ſhift their *Sails*, that they may run before every Wind that blows. If Times grow rough and tempeſtuous, and they muſt throw over-Board either their Gain or their Godlineſs, this inordinate Love of the World perſuades them to make *Shipwrack of Faith and a good Conſcience*, only that they may bear up in the World. Now they that have but a low and mean eſteem of the World, ſuch as it deſerves, eſcape this Temptation, and they can with a holy Generouſneſs ſcorn to proſtitute their Conſciences, and to batter their precious Souls for the Gain of any of theſe fading and periſhing Riches here below, Riches that periſh in the uſing. If therefore you would keep *good Conſciences*, learn to deſpiſe the Threats and Frowns, the Flatterings and Fawnings of this World; look upon it as of no great concernment to you, whatever in Adverſity or Proſperity can happen to you in this ſhort and frail Life. Reflect upon thoſe who groan under the Terrors of a wounded Conſcience; all the World cannot give them one moments Eaſe or Comfort; yea, had they the whole World at their diſpoſe they would give it all to procure Peace, yea, but a Truce for a while with their own Conſciences; ſuch a vain and contemptible Thing is the World in compariſon of inward Tranquility and Serenity of Mind. Why now thus to rate the World below the Peace and Quietneſs of our own Conſciences, is an excellent Means to preſerve them clear and peaceable.

4. *Strengthen your Faith.*

Fourthly, *If you would keep Conſcience clear, labour above all things to ſtrengthen your Faith.* Faith is a purifying Grace. *Acts* 15. 9. *Purifying their Hearts by Faith.* Now Faith hath a double Influence to purifie the Heart or Conſcience.

Faith purifies the Conſcience two ways.

1. *As it is a dogmatical Faith, and ſo it doth it morally.*

First, *A dogmatical Faith keeps the Conſcience clear and pure*, and that *morally*.

Secondly,

Secondly, *A juſtifying and a ſaving Faith purifies the Conſcience*, and that *miſtically*.

1. *What a dogmatical Faith is.*

First, *A dogmatical Faith keeps the Conſcience clear and pure.* A dogmatical Faith I call that which hath for its *Object* the whole revealed Truth of God; and it is nothing but a firm, undoubting Aſſent to the Verity and Certainty of whatever is contained in the Holy Scriptures, upon no other Account and Reaſon, than meerly the Authority and Veracity of God, who is the Author of it. This is a *dogmatical* or an *hiſtorical Faith*, which though it be not Juſtifying, as the *Papiſts* hold, yet is it of a mighty Influence to ſanctifie the Heart, and to keep the Conſcience and Converſation inoffenſive, and this it doth in a moral way: For did but Men believe that Heaven is ſo unconceivably glorious, ſparkling with Light, flowing with Pleaſure, reſounding with Praiſes, a Place where Joy and Bliſs ever dwells, and where we ſhall dwell too in an endleſs Eternity in the Smiles and Love of God, if now but for a few ſhort Years we ſtrive to live holily; did we but as really believe theſe Things to be true and certain, as we know thoſe Things to be true and certain that we ſee with our very Eyes, what manner of Chriſtians would this force us to be in all Holineſs and Godlineſs of Converſation, cleanſing our ſelves from all Pollutions both of Fleſh and Spirit? Wherefore is it that the Promiſe of ſome temporal Reward, the hopes of ſome mean Preferment from ſome great Perſon, is of Force ſufficient to make Men obſequious to them? And yet the Promiſes that God himſelf hath made of Heaven and Glory (in compariſon of which to promiſe Crowns and Scepters, is but to promiſe Pebbles and Gugaws) work ſo little effect upon the generality of Men, to allure them from Sin to a holy Life? Whence is it, but that Men believe not that Heaven is ſo glorious as the Scripture deſcribes it to be? Nay, indeed if they would ſpeak their Minds, they are not yet ſure whether there be a Heaven or not, it is from their Unbelief: Do Men but believe the inſupportable Wrath of God, thoſe Horrors and Torments, that Fire and Sulphur, that Stench and Darkneſs, thoſe burning Chains, and thoſe fiery Whips, the Woe and Anguiſh of the Damned in Hell, which are as far from being utterable as they are from being tollerable, did they as certainly believe theſe Things, as if they believe them not they ſhall certainly feel them, would they dare ſtill to venture on to *treaſure up Wrath to themſelves againſt the Day of Wrath?* Would they ſtill dare, by wounding their Conſciences, now to enrage them to their own Wounding and Smart for ever hereafter? Would they dare to do it, did they believe theſe Things? Did they but believe that Conſcience will be revenged ſevenfold on them for all the Wrongs and Violence that they have done it: This *Worm*, that they now carry in their Breaſts frozen and benum'd, ſhall be heated by the Fire of Hell, and fly upon them and ſting their Souls with a burning and flaming Anguiſh: Did they believe this, would they not be careful to give no *Offence* to their *Conſciences?* Would they not be as careful to avoid all Sin, that arms the Terrors of Hell againſt them, as they have Reaſon to think a *damned Wretch in Hell*, who hath had the Experience of theſe Things would do, if God would releaſe him out of it, with a Promiſe that he ſhall for ever eſcape it, upon the ſame Terms that he hath promiſed us? Think with your ſelves, what effect the Senſe and Feeling of thoſe dreadful Things would have upon ſuch a one, to make him rigorouſly conſcientious, that in nothing he provoke ſo terrible a God, or offend and irritate a revenging Conſcience, that will be ſure to repay him home ſevenfold into his own Boſom; why the ſame carefulneſs and circumſpection would it work in all of us, did we as firmly and ſtrongly believe thoſe Things to be true, as God hath evidently and clearly revealed them to be true in his Word. It is true, theſe Things we all know, and we perſuade our ſelves that we do believe them. Do we not profeſs to believe that *Jeſus Chriſt* ſhall *judge* both *Quick* and *Dead*, and that all ſhall receive Rewards according to their Works, thoſe that have done Well ſhall receive the Reward of eternal Life, and thoſe that have done Ill the Reward of eternal Death? Theſe Things we may indeed profeſs to believe, and theſe Things we may frequently repreſent to our own Thoughts; but the weak and ſmall Influence that theſe Things have to over-awe our Conſciences, evinceth clearly that this is not Faith but Fancy: It is a wavering, unevident Opinion that we have taken up, and that we call by the Name of Faith; for did we live in the Belief of theſe Truths, we ſhould no more dare to ſin againſt our Conſciences, than if we ſaw *Hell* flaming before theſe Eyes of ours, and knew that upon the next Sin we commit we were to be caſt into it. And thus you ſee a *dogma-*

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tical Faith is a great Help to purifie the Heart, and to keep the Conſcience clear and inoffenſive.

(2.) *A juſtifying Faith alſo is of great uſe to purifie the Conſcience:* And this it doth not morally, by any natural Influence or Efficacy of its own, but only *myſtically*, as it applies to the Soul the Blood of Jeſus Chriſt, that Blood alone that takes away the Defilement of our Sins. An *hiſtorical Faith* may keep the Soul from contracting Defilement, but this *juſtifying*, this *ſaving Faith*, waſhes out the Stains and Defilements that we have contracted, and makes us white and ſpotleſs in the Blood of the Lamb. Faith is that Conveyance that God hath appointed to bring the Blood of Chriſt to ſtream forth upon the defiled Soul and Conſcience; and upon every renewed Act of Sin we ought, by a renewed Act of Faith, to lay our ſpotted and defiled Souls under the fall of that Fountain that is ſet open to waſh and cleanſe us from our Filth and Pollution. Thus Faith cleanſeth the Conſcience myſtically; and by the Actings of Faith, we may thus get and keep our Conſciences clear and inoffenſive.

2. *As Faith juſtifies, ſo it purifies the Conſcience myſtically.*

Fifthly, *If you would keep your Conſciences clear, then ſet a ſtrict Watch and Guard upon your ſelves, both upon your inward and upon your outward Man.* Set a Guard to your Heart, and to all the Approaches to your Heart.

5. *Set a ſtrict Watch and Guard upon your ſelves.*

(1.) *Keep a narrow Guard upon your Heart.* The Heart is the greet meeting Place, where Objects, Thoughts and Affections do ſwarm and crowd together: And as much concourſe leaves Dirt behind it upon the Place, ſo this great Heart-Aſſembly uſually leaves it foul and polluted. Our Saviour, *Mark* 9. tells the *Jews*, That it was that which was within them, that Wickedneſs which lay latent in their Hearts, *that which proceedeth from the Heart that defiles the Man.* There is a Defilement in the Thoughts and in the Deſires, as well as in the more groſs and bulky Sins of the Life: Hence the Prophet *Jeremy* ſpeaks, *Jer.* 4. 14. *O Jeruſalem, waſh thine Heart from Wickedneſs!* Why, wherewith is it polluted? Why the next Words ſhew it; *How long ſhall thy vain Thoughts lodge within thee?* Vain Thoughts leave a Stain and Contagion upon the Soul; and certainly if a vain Thought, that is ſuch a fleeting and volitary Thing, breaths a kind of Contagion and Taint upon the Heart, they certainly then muſt have foul Hearts indeed and their Spots in Grain, who lie ſoaking and ſtewing themſelves in Unclean, Malicious and Covetous Thoughts and Deſigns. Since then that *Conſcience* is apt to receive Taint, but with the breathing of a vain and ſinful Thought upon it, how doth it concern us then to keep a watchful and circumſpect Eye over every Motion of our Hearts? It is the *wiſe Man's* Counſel as you have heard; *Keep thy Heart with all diligence, for out of it are the Iſſues of Life.* Look to it, therefore, that you ſuffer not your Hearts to be defiled with ſinful Thoughts or ſinful Affections, by thoſe inward and inviſible Corruptions that ſettle at the bottom of it; though the Life be never ſo clear and cryſtal, yet if that Mud be but ſtirred and raiſed, *Conſcience* becomes thereby defiled and an evil Conſcience. And therefore the Apoſtle, 1 *Tim.* 1. 5. joins them together, ſpeaking *of a pure Heart and a good Conſcience*; but if the ſteams of Luſt riſe up thick in the Heart, they defile and pollute the Conſcience. Hence the Apoſtle again joins them together, *Tit.* 1. 15. a defiled Mind and defiled Conſcience; *The Mind and Conſcience*, ſays he, *is defiled.* How can the Mind be defiled, unleſs it be with Sins of the Mind? Evil Thoughts and evil Affections, which as ſprightly and aerial as they ſeem to be, yet they leave a Stain upon the *Conſcience*: As the breathing upon a Glaſs ſullies it, and dims the Repreſentation of the Face that looks into it; ſo the breathing of evil Cogitations upon *Conſcience*, the *Glaſs* of the Soul, leaves a Miſt and Cloud upon it, that it can but dimly and darkly repreſent to us our true State.

1. *Set a Guard upon your Heart.*

(2.) *Watch diligently as the Heart it ſelf, ſo all the Approaches unto the Heart.* The Approaches to the Heart are like your Roads to a great City, which are full of *Paſſengers*, and uſually full of *Dirt* alſo: And theſe are the Senſes by which and through which *Objects* are continually travelling to the Heart, and carry with them a World of Wickedneſs. Theſe are Sluces, which inſtead of letting in pleaſant Streams to refreſh, commonly they let in nothing but Mud, which pollutes the Soul. There is no actual Filthineſs in the Hearts of any but what enters in by theſe Inlets; through theſe the *Devil* caſts in abundance of Filth, ſtirs up and increaſeth indwelling Luſt, and, by ſinful Objects that the Senſes convey to the Soul, dungs

2. *Watch diligently all the Approaches to the Heart.*

that Ground that is of it ſelf but too too fruitful. Thus the *Devil* makes uſe of the Ear, through it he blows up the Bladder of Pride, by the Breath of popular Applauſe and Praiſe. And thus he makes uſe of the laſcivious Eye as a *burning-Glaſs* to ſet the Heart on Fire; and ſo alſo he makes uſe of the other Senſes as Sinks of Luxury and Intemperance. Now if you would keep your Conſciences *clear* and *undefiled*, ſet a ſtrict Guard and narrow Watch upon all theſe Paſſages to your Hearts; critically examine every Thing that goes in, and every Thing that comes out by theſe Gates; arreſt whatever cannot produce its Paſs and Warrant from the Word of God; keep the ſame Watch upon theſe Gates, that God would keep on the Gate of the *Heavenly City*, the *New Jeruſalem*. It is ſaid, *Rev.* 21. 27. *That there ſhall in no wiſe enter into it any thing that defileth.* Why ſo let us who would keep our Conſciences clear, guard all the Approaches to them with the ſame ſtrictneſs, and let nothing that defileth enter in by theſe Approaches to our Hearts.

6. *Liſten to the Voice of Conſcience.*

Sixthly and *Laſtly*, take this Direction, *Be ſure to liſten to the Voice of Conſcience.* Thoſe that ſtop their Ears and will not hear Conſcience when it directs and reproves, ſhall be ſure to hear it loud enough when it ſhall accuſe and condemn them. Conſcience is the Voice of God in the Soul; why now if this Voice be ſlighted, beware leſt the next time it ſpeak to you in Thunder. Do nothing contrary to the Dictates of your Conſciences; for this will provoke God to give you up to a reprobate Senſe, and judicially to harden you in your Sins; for if ſinning againſt your Conſciences doth not corrupt them by making them inſenſible and ſtupid, it will certainly corrupt them by making them enraging and deſpairing.

Well now, for your Encouragement, let me tell you, while you are careful by following theſe Directions to keep your *Conſciences* clear, you ſhall alſo keep them peaceable. It is the foulneſs of a *Gun* that makes it recoil in diſcharging: And ſo it is the foulneſs of Men's *Conſciences* that makes them recoil back again upon them in diſcharging of their Offices. But while *Conſcience* is kept clear and void of Offence, it will be alſo kept free from quarrelling with you, and from accuſing and condemning of you. So much for this Time and Text.

SERMON XXVII.

A DISCOURSE UPON PERSEVERANCE IN PRAYER.

1 THESS. v. 17.

Pray without ceaſing.

THIS Text is one of thoſe many Commands that the *Apoſtle* lays down in this *Chapter*; being now almoſt at the end and cloſe of his *Epiſtle*, and not willing to omit the mentioning of Duties ſo neceſſary for their Practice, he

he pours them out in ſhort, but weighty Exhortations; the Connexion betwixt moſt of them is dark (if there be any:) I ſhall not therefore vex the Words, by tacking them either to the precedent or ſubſequent *Verſes* by any forced Coherence, but take them as they are in themſelves in one entire Propoſition, and ſo they contain in them a Duty, and that is, *Prayer*; and the manner alſo of performing of it, and that is, *without ceaſing*; and both of theſe do adminiſter to us this plain Doctrin.

That it is a Chriſtian's Duty to Pray inceſſantly. This is a plain and neceſſary Point, and I intend to handle it in as plain and familiar a Method. And there are two Things that I ſhall inquire into. Doctrin

(1.) Firſt, *What it is to Pray.* And then,

(2.) Secondly, *What it is to Pray without ceaſing.*

(1.) I ſhall begin with the Firſt, *What it is to Pray.*

1. *What it is to Pray.*

I Anſwer; *To Pray is, by the Aſſiſtance and Help of the Holy Ghoſt, in the Name and Mediation of Jeſus Chriſt with Faith and Fervency, to make an humble repreſentation of our Deſires unto God for thoſe Things that are according to his Will, with ſubmiſſion to his Pleaſure, and with reference to his Honour.*

This is that holy Duty of Prayer, in which, of all that belong to *Religion*, the Soul uſually enjoys the moſt near and ſweet Communion with God. When we are oppreſſed with Guilt, or overwhelmed with Fears and Griefs, what ſweeter Retreat than to betake our ſelves to our God, and to our Father, into whoſe Boſom we may unload all our Burdens? It is the greateſt ſolace of an afflicted Mind to lie proſtrate before the Lord, and melt it ſelf down in holy Tears and in holy Affections at his Feet. Hence it is ſaid of *Hannah*, 1 *Sam.* 1. 18. That after ſhe had poured out her Soul before God, *her Countenance was no more ſad.* And therefore this is not ſo much our Duty as our Privilege; it is the Happineſs of the glorious Angels in Heaven, and of the Spirits of juſt Men made perfect, that they are always near unto God in their Attendance upon him, that they are Waiters about his Throne: And *Prayer* gives to us the very ſame high Privilege, and brings us into the Preſence and before the Throne of the ſame God; only with this difference, they draw near to a Throne of Glory, and we draw near to a Throne of Grace.

Let us now take a more particular View of this excellent Duty of *Prayer*, according to the Deſcription given of it.

1. *The efficient cauſe of Prayer is the Spirit.*

Firſt, *The efficient cauſe of Prayer is the Holy Ghoſt*; then we Pray when we breath out thoſe Requeſts unto God, that the *Holy Ghoſt* hath breathed into us; and therefore it is ſaid, *Rom.* 8. 26. *The Spirit helpeth our Infirmities, for we know not what we ſhould pray for as we ought; but the Spirit it ſelf maketh Interceſſion for us with Sighs and Groans that cannot be uttered.* All Prayers that are not dictated by the *Holy Ghoſt*, is but howling in God's eſteem. And thou wicked Men, in their Diſtreſſes, may be very paſſionate and very vehement in their Requeſts, yet they have no Promiſe that their *Prayers* ſhall prevail with God. Sometimes indeed God doth hear them, and out of his *common Bounty* and *Goodneſs* grants to them thoſe temporal good Things that they crave; he that hears the *young Ravens* when they cry, he that hears the *lowring of the Oxen*, ſometimes alſo hears wicked Men under their Afflictions, when they roar to him as *wild Bulls in a Net*, as the Prophet expreſſeth it; but yet ſuch Prayers of wicked Men though they are anſwered, yet they are never accepted; God accepts no Petitions but ſuch as are preſented to him through the Interceſſion of Chriſt; now Chriſt makes Interceſſion for none in Heaven, but only for ſuch in whoſe Hearts the Spirit makes Interceſſion here upon Earth; their Prayers alone aſcend up to God as ſweet Incenſe, being perfumed with that *much Incenſe* that Chriſt offers up with the *Prayers of all the Saints.* God always hears and anſwers them, either in the very Thing that they pray for, or elſe in what oftentimes is far better, when they ask that which will be to their own Hurt; then he anſwers them graciouſly by denying them. In *James* 5. 16. the Apoſtle tells us there, *That the effectual fervent Prayer of a righteous Man availeth much.* This indeed may ſeem a needleſs Tautology to ſay an *effectual Prayer availeth*, for it is but one and the ſame thing to avail and to be effectual; but if we conſult the Original, we ſhall find the Words may be tranſlated, *The in-wrought Prayer*; and poſſibly we may with more Congruity render it thus, *The Prayer of a righteous Man wrought in him*; that is to ſay, by the Spirit of God ſuch a Prayer availeth much.

2. *God is the Object of Prayer, eſſentially and perſonally conſider'd.*

Secondly, *As the efficient cauſe of our Prayers is the Holy Ghoſt, ſo the only Object of our Prayers is God*; for it is a repreſentation of our Wants and Deſires unto him. Now God may be conſider'd either eſſentially or perſonally, and under both reſpects we may direct our Prayers unto him.

1. *All the Perſons in the Trinity are to be pray'd unto.*

First, *If we conſider the Perſons of the* glorious Trinity, *ſo they are all adorable with this Act of divine Worſhip.* None will deny but that we may direct our Prayers unto God the Father; and that God the Son may be diſtinctly prayed unto, we have an uncontroulable Inſtance in that of St. *Stephen*, Acts 7. 59. *Lord Jeſus, receive my Spirit*; yea, and this Adoration is due not only to the *Divine Nature* of Chriſt, which was from all Eternity the ſame in Being, in Majeſty and Glory with the Father; but it is alſo due unto Chriſt as *Mediator*, as God-Man, and ſo his humane Nature is alſo joined in the participation of this high Honour, through its union to the Divine Nature: The very Angels in Heaven are commanded to adore him as God-Man, as Mediator, *Heb.* 1. 6. *When he bringeth in his firſt begotten into the World*; that is, when he brought him into the World as Man, *he ſaith, and let all the Angels of God worſhip him.* Indeed we no where in *Scripture*, as I remember, have expreſs mention made of any Prayer directed to the *Holy Ghoſt*, yet whoſoever allows him to be God cannot deny him this Worſhip of Prayer; if we muſt believe in him, we may then certainly call upon him, as the Apoſtle argues, *Rom.* 10. 14. yea, we have an Inſtance of the *Seraphims* giving Praiſe unto him, which is one part of Prayer, *Iſa.* 6. 3. *They cried to one another, holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of Hoſts.* This God is the ſame who in Verſes 10, 11. bids the Prophet ſay to the People, *Hear ye indeed but underſtand not, make the Heart of this People fat, make their Ears heavy, and ſhut their Eyes, leaſt they hear with their Ears and ſee with their Eyes.* This is that God whom the *Seraphims* adored, and this is that God that ſpake to the Prophet; and the Apoſtle quoting this very place out of *Iſaiah*, tells us, *Acts* 28. 25. that it was the *Holy Ghoſt* ſpake; ſo that by comparing theſe two Places together, you ſee plainly that the *Holy Ghoſt* is God, and that he is to be adored by us with the ſame Worſhip that we worſhip the *Father*, and the *Son*, for the *Holy Ghoſt* is the *Lord God of Hoſts*; which St. *Paul* refers to the *Holy Ghoſt*, well ſpake the *Holy Ghoſt* concerning them. Thus if we conſider God perſonally, each Perſon in the *Trinity* may well be the *Object* of our Prayers.

2. *God eſſentially is to be prayed unto.*

Secondly, *Conſider God eſſentially, and ſo we are alſo to direct our Prayers to him.* Now to conſider God *eſſentially* is to have the Eye of our Faith fixed upon his Attributes, not upon his Perſon, to conſider him when we pray to him, not as *Father*, *Son* or *Holy Ghoſt*, but only as an infinitely glorious, wiſe, powerful, gracious God, and the like; to look upon him as a moſt pure Eſſence whoſe Preſence is every where, whoſe Preſence and Goodneſs is over all Things; to conceive him to be an infinite Being altogether unconceivable, this is to conſider God *eſſentially*. Now this Notion of God is equally common to all the *Three Perſons*, and therefore this is the moſt fit and congruous way when we come to God in Prayer to repreſent before us his *Attributes*. We need not ſelect out any one *Perſon* in the *Holy Trinity*, *Father*, *Son* or *Holy Ghoſt* to direct our Prayers unto, unleſs it be in ſome Caſes wherein their particular Offices are more immediately concerned; but when we pray to him who is Almighty, who is All-wiſe, infinitely Holy, infinitely Juſt and Merciful, we pray at once to the whole *Trinity*, both to the *Father*, *Son* and *Holy Ghoſt*. So when we pray according to that holy Form that Chriſt hath taught us, *Our Father which art in Heaven*, Father there denotes not only God the Father, the firſt Perſon in the Trinity, but it is a relative Attribute belonging equally to all the Perſons in the Trinity. God is the Father of all Men by Creation and Providence, and he is eſpecially the Father of the Faithful by Regeneration and Adoption: Why now as theſe Actions of Creation, Regeneration and Adoption are common to the whole Trinity, ſo alſo is the Title of Father common to the whole Trinity; God the firſt Perſon is indeed eminently called the Father, but that is not in reſpect of us, but in reſpect of Chriſt his only begotten Son from all Eternity; in reſpect of us the whole Trinity *is our Father which art in Heaven*, and when we pray ſo, we pray both to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghoſt, to all the Three Perſons; yea, and it may ſeem very probable that when Chriſt Prayed, *Matth.* 26. 39. *Father, if it be poſſible let this*

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Cup paſs from me, nevertheleſs not my Will but thy Will be done: I ſay, it's probable this Prayer was not directed to God the Father perſonally, but to the whole Trinity; for we muſt conſider that Chriſt prays here only as he was Man, and that appears by his diſtinguiſhing of his Will from, and ſubmitting it to God's Will. Why now not only God the Father but the whole Trinity was the Father of Chriſt as Man, yea, Chriſt himſelf, according to his Divine Nature, was the Father of his humane Nature, and therefore praying, as Man, to his Father, that that *Cup might paſs from him*, he prayed to all the Three Perſons, both to God the Father, and to God the Son, and to God the Holy Ghoſt. And thus much for the Object to whom we muſt direct our Prayers, and that is to God only, whether conſidered perſonally or eſſentially.

Thirdly, Obſerve alſo the Matter of our Prayers, *It muſt be a repreſentation of our Deſires to God for ſuch Things as are according to his Will.* So we have it, 1 *John* 5. 4. *If we ask any thing according to his Will, he heareth us.* God's Will in beſtowing a deſired Mercy upon us is beſt known by the Promiſes that he hath made to us, which Promiſes are of two Kinds; ſome refer to temporal Bleſſings, and others refer to Grace and Glory.

3. *We muſt pray for Things that are according to the will of God.*

Why now here, *Firſt, Grace and Glory are promiſed abſolutely*; it is that we are commanded all of us to ſeek after, and therefore here can lie no miſtake upon us while we beg theſe, for there is no doubt while we pray for Grace and Glory, but we do it according the Will of God: Here we may be earneſt and importunate that God would ſanctifie and ſave our Souls; and while we ask this, and make this the matter of our Requeſt, we are under an impoſſibility of asking amiſs; yea, and the more violent we are, and the more reſolute to take no Denial at the Hands of God, the more pleaſing is this holy Force, ſince it ſhews a perfect conformity and concurrence in our Wills unto his Will, who hath told us, *It is his Will, even our Sanctification*, 1 Theſ. 4. 3. This was one part of that violence that our *Saviour* ſaith, *the Kingdom of Heaven ſuffered* in the Days of *John* the *Baptiſt*. It is an Invaſion that is acceptable unto God, when we ſtorm Heaven by *Prayers* and *Supplications*, with ſtrong *Cries* and *Tears*, when we plant againſt it *unutterable Sighs and Groans*, this is ſuch a Battery that thoſe eternal Ramparts cannot hold out long againſt it. We may pray abſolutely for *Grace* and *Glory*.

1. *We may pray for Grace and Glory abſolutely.*

Secondly, Though we may pray thus abſolutely, and with a holy peremptorineſs for Grace and Glory, ſaying to God as *Jacob* to the *Angel* that wreſtled with him, *I will not let thee go until thou haſt bleſſed me with ſpiritual Bleſſings, in heavenly Things in Jeſus Chriſt.* Yet, Secondly, *For the Degrees of Grace and for the Comforts of the Holy Ghoſt, we muſt pray conditionally, if the Lord will*; for theſe Things are not abſolutely neceſſary, neither are they abſolutely promiſed to us by God; neither any degree of Grace or any Conſolation of the Spirit is abſolutely promiſed to us: But however our *Prayers* ought to be, ſo much the more fervent and importunate for theſe Things, than for outward, temporal Things, by how much theſe are of far greater concernment than the other.

2. *We muſt pray for the Degrees of Grace and for the Comforts of the Spirit conditionally.*

Thirdly, *To pray for outward and worldly Bleſſings is not contrary to the Will of God, for he hath promiſed to beſtow them:* But then as his Promiſe is conditional, if it may ſtand with our good, ſo truly alſo muſt our Prayers be conditional, that God would give them to us, if it may ſtand with his Will and with our Good; whatſoever we thus ask we do it according the Will of God, and we are ſure of ſpeeding in our Requeſt, either by the obtaining of our Deſires, or by being bleſſed with a Denial; for, alas, we are blind and ignorant Creatures, and cannot look into the Deſigns and Driſt of *Providence*, and ſee how God hath laid in order Good and Evil in his own purpoſe; oftentimes we miſtake Evil for Good, becauſe of the preſent appearance of Good that it hath; yea, ſo ſhort-ſighted are we, that we can look no farther than outward and preſent appearance; but God, who ſees through the whole Series and Connexion of his own Counſels, he knows many times that thoſe Things we account and deſire as Good are really Evil, and therefore it is our Wiſdom to reſign up all our Deſires to his diſpoſal, and to ſay, *Lord, though ſuch temporal Enjoyments may ſeem good and deſirable to me at preſent, yet thou art infinitely wiſe, and thou knoweſt what the Conſequence and Iſſue of them will be; I beg them if they may ſtand with thy Will, and if thou ſeeſt they will be as really good for me as I ſuppoſe them now to be; if they be not ſo, I beg the Favour of a Denial.* This is the right Frame that a Chriſtian ought to have upon his Heart when

3. *We may alſo pray for temporal Bleſſings conditionally.*

when he comes to beg temporal Mercies of God, and whilſt he thus asks any worldly Comforts he cannot ask amiſs. It was an excellent Saying of the Satyriſt, *We ask thoſe Things of God*, ſays he, *that pleaſe our preſent Humours and Deſires, but God gives thoſe things that are beſt and fitteſt for us*; for we are dearer to him, ſaith the *Heathen*, than we are to our ſelves. *And*, ſays another very well, *it is mercy in God not to hear us when we ask Things that are evil*; and when he refuſeth us in ſuch Requeſts, it is that he might not circumvent us in our own Prayers; for indeed whilſt we ask raſhly and intemperately whatever we fooliſhly ſet our Hearts upon, God need take no other courſe to plague and puniſh us, than by hearing and anſwering of us. So much for the matter of our Prayer, *it muſt be for Things that are according to God's Will.*

4. *How we muſt pray.*

Fourthly, Obſerve alſo the manner how our Prayers muſt be directed unto God. That is,

1. *In the Name of Chriſt.*

Firſt, *We muſt pray in the Name of Chriſt.* Before the Fall Man might boldly have gone to God in his own Name, and ſpeak to him upon his own account; but ſince the great Breach made betwixt Heaven and Earth, ſince that great Quarrel and Enmity aroſe betwixt God and Man, there is no hope of Man's finding acceptance with God upon his own account, and therefore he muſt go to God in the Name of a *Mediator*. Hence Chriſt ſaith, *If ye ask any thing in my Name I will do it for you*, John 14. 31. Now to ask in the Name of Chriſt, is nothing elſe but in all our Addreſſes to God to plead his Merits, and to depend upon his Mediations for the obtaining of thoſe good Things that we deſire. It was truly ſaid, *God heareth not Sinners*, John 9. 31. And how then can we who are Sinners, yea, the chiefeſt of Sinners, hope for audience and acceptance with him who heareth none ſuch? But yet though God heareth not Sinners, yet he always heareth his Son, who is continually making Interceſſion for Sinners; yea, and he always heareth Sinners that come to him in the Name of his Son, and by Faith tenderd up his Merits, through which alone they expect Favour and to prevail with God. All Things go by Favour and Friendſhip in the Court of Heaven; if we ſtand upon our own Merits and Deſerts, we ſhall be ſhamefully diſappointed in our Expectations; no Merit takes place in Heaven but only the Merit of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and whilſt we argue that by Faith with God, we come to him in the Name of his Son.

2. *We muſt pray in Faith.*

Secondly, *Our Prayers muſt be put up with Faith.* James 1. 6. *Let him ask in Faith*, ſays the Apoſtle, *nothing wavering*; *for let not ſuch a Man*, that is, let not ſuch a Man *that wavers, think to receive any good Thing of God.* So in *Heb.* 11. 6. *He that cometh to God muſt believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of thoſe that diligently ſeek him.* Faith is the Soul's Hand, whereby it receives thoſe Bleſſings that God willingly beſtows. Now this is the Reaſon why though we do ſo often pray to God, yet we are ſtill ſo indigent and neceſſitous; God's Ears are not heavy, his Arms are not ſhortned, neither are his Bowels dried up; no, ſtill he hath the ſame Power, the ſame Will, and the ſame Love to his Children that ever he had; but we want a Hand to receive thoſe Mercies that God hath a Heart and a Hand to give forth unto us, and that's the reaſon of our Neceſſitouſneſs, notwithſtanding we do ſo often come before God in Prayer.

3. *Prayer muſt be with Affection and Fervency.*

Thirdly, *Our Prayers muſt be put up as with Faith, ſo with Fervency alſo*; and therefore it is required that we ſhould be *fervent in Spirit, ſerving the Lord*, Rom. 12. 14. and ſo the forecited place, *The effectual, fervent Prayer of a righteous Man availeth much.* We ſhould ſtrive to kindle in our Souls a holy Flame of heavenly Affections when we come to God in Prayer. The Prayers of the Saints were typified under the old Law by Incenſe, but now no Incenſe was to be offered up without Fire: So truly there ſhould be no Prayer offered up to God without the Fire and Flame of holy Affections and Fervency. How do you think that a dull and heavy Prayer ſhould mount up as high as Heaven? Or, that God ſhould hearken or regard what we ſpeak, when we ſcarce regard what we ſpeak our ſelves? That for the manner of our Prayer.

5. *The End of all our Prayers muſt be the Glory of God.*

Fifthly, *We muſt obſerve the End that we ought to aim at in our Prayers*, and that is the Glory of God, *we muſt pray for thoſe Things that we want, with ſubmiſſion to his Will and with reference to his Glory*, that muſt be the end of our Prayers. Our Deſign in begging any thing from God, ſhould be that he may have it out of us again in his Service, and to his Honour and Glory; and whilſt we propoſe this to our ſelves we

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are like to ſpeed in our Requeſts. We may well hope our Prayers will be ſucceſsful when we beg Mercies not to conſume them but to husband them, that the encreaſe of all may return again to God who gave them; and can we think that God will be ſparing, when if I may ſo ſpeak with Reverence, it concerns his own Gain to be liberal? Wicked and unthankful Men are but like *Vapors* and *Exhalations* drawn up out of the Earth, that do but eclipſe the *Sun* that raiſes them. So when God raiſeth up wicked Men by his Bounty and Goodneſs, they only ſerve to eclipſe and ſtain his Glory in the World. Whereas godly Men are like Rivers, that as they receive all their Streams from the Sea, ſo they return all again into the Sea: So theſe, whatever they receive from God, they improve all for and return all again unto God. And therefore they may well hope to ſpeed who beg Mercies at the Hand of God, who intend to return all again unto the Glory of God.

So much for the Qualifications of Prayer; it muſt be made by the aſſiſtance of the Holy Ghoſt, in the Name and Mediation of Jeſus Chriſt, with Faith and Fervency, making an humble repreſentation of our Wants and Deſires unto God for thoſe Things that are according to his Will, with ſubmiſſion to his Pleaſure, and with reference to his Honour. And thus much for the firſt Thing, What it is to pray.

The ſecond Thing propounded, was to ſhew you, *What it is to pray without ceaſing*. And this I ſhall do negatively and poſitively.

2. *What is meant by Praying without ceaſing.*

Firſt, Negatively. *To pray without ceaſing is not always to be actually engaged in this Duty of Prayer*, either *orally*, *verbally* or *mentally*; it is not that all other Duties ſhall be ſwallowed up and give place unto Prayer. This was an old Error of the *Meſſalians* and *Euchites*, that began 340 Years after Chriſt, whoſe Opinion it was, becauſe here and elſewhere in Scripture we are commanded to *pray continually*, and to *pray always*, and the like, therefore they thought the whole Work of a Chriſtian was only to pray. A moſt fond and fooliſh Error; for what is the great end of Prayer, but that we may thereby obtain that Grace from God that may enable us to perform other Duties of Religion and Holineſs. Certainly God doth not blow up one Duty by another; he that hath commanded us *to pray without ceaſing*, hath likewiſe commanded us to *Hear*, *Read*, *Meditate*, and the like; yea, although Prayer be ſo ſpiritual and ſo heavenly a Duty, yet we are not to neglect the Duties of our particular Callings, only that we may have the more time for Prayer. God hath divided out the Work, and hath given unto every Thing its Seaſon, in which alone it is beautiful. Prayer makes Melody in God's Ears, then only when it is well timed when we juſtle out one Duty by another, beſides the ſinful omiſſion of what we ſhould perform, that which we do perform becomes unacceptable, becauſe unſeaſonable: Neither can we hope that Prayer will prevail with God, that appears before him guilty of the Death and Murder (if I may ſo phraſe it) of other Duties. This therefore cannot be the meaning of it, that we ſhould do nothing but Pray.

1. *Negatively, it is not to be always engaged in Prayer.*

Therefore, *Secondly*, Abſolutely or Poſitively, I ſhall give you a fourfold Interpretation of this Expreſſion of the Apoſtle, *Pray without ceaſing*.

To pray without ceaſing, implies four Things.

Firſt, *That may be ſaid to be done without ceaſing, that is done conſtantly and at ſet Times and Seaſons.* So we have the Word uſed, *Gen.* 8. 22. *While the Earth remaineth, Seed-time and Harveſt, Cold and Heat, Summer and Winter, Day and Night ſhall not ceaſe:* That is, they ſhall not ceaſe in their Courſes and appointed Times. So here, *Pray without ceaſing*; that is, obſerve a conſtant courſe of Prayer at fixed and appointed Times, ſtill keeping your ſelves from any ſuperſtitious Obſervations. And thus, *Exod.* 29. 42. the daily *Sacrifice* is called there *a continual burnt Offering*; and yet it was offered up only every Morning and every Evening, and yet God accounts it a continual Offering. So here, *Pray continually, or without ceaſing*; that is keep up frequent and appointed Times for prayer, without intermiſſion.

To pray conſtantly and at ſet Times and Seaſons.

Secondly, *To pray without ceaſing, is to pray with all importunity and vehemency.* So in *Acts* 12. 5. the *Church* is ſaid to pray for St. *Peter without ceaſing*; that is, they were very earneſt and importunate, and would give God no reſt until he heard them. So alſo in the Parable of the unjuſt Judge, which our Saviour ſpeake on purpoſe

2. *It is to pray with all vehemency and importunity.*

purpoſe to ſhew how prevalent with God Importunity is, *Luke* 18. 1. It is ſaid, That the Lord would teach them that they *ought to Pray always*; that is, that they ought to pray earneſtly and importunately, not giving over till they were heard. So alſo 1 *Sam.* 7. 7, 8. the Children of *Iſrael* entreated *Samuel* not *to ceaſe crying to the Lord for them*; that is, that he would improve all his Intereſt at the Throne of Grace to the utmoſt in their Behalfs. So we are bid to *Pray without ceaſing*; that is, to be earneſt and vehement, reſolving to take no Denial at the Hands of God. But yet we muſt do other Duties alſo, though we are vehement in this. We may learn how to demean our ſelves in this caſe towards God, by *Beggars* that ſometimes come to our Doors that oftentimes bring their Work alone with them, they beg importunately and yet they work betwixt whiles; ſo alſo ſhould we do, we ſhould beg as importunately of God as if we depended meerly upon his Charity, and yet betwixt whiles we ſhould work as induſtriouſly as if we were our ſelves to get our Livings with our own Hands.

3. *It is upon all Occaſions to be ſending up Ejaculations unto God.*

Thirdly, *To pray without ceaſing is to take all Occaſions, at every turn, to be darting up of our Souls unto God in holy Meditations and Ejaculations.* And this we may and ought to do when we hear or read the Word, or whatever Duty of Religion we are engaged about, yea, this we may and ought to do in our worldly Employments. If your Hearts and Affections be heavenly, your Thoughts will force out a Paſſage, through the Crowd and Tumult of worldly Buſineſſes, to Heaven; *Ejaculations* are ſwift Meſſengers that require not much time to perform their Errands in, for there is a holy Myſtery in pointing our earthly Employments with theſe *heavenly Ejaculations*, as Men point their Writings ſometimes with Stops, ever now and then ſhooting up a ſhort *mental Prayer* unto Heaven; ſuch Pauſes as theſe are, you will find to be no Impediments to your worldly Affairs. This is the way for a Chriſtian to be retired and private in the midſt of a Multitude, to turn his *Shop* or his *Field* into a *Cloſet*; to trade for Earth, and yet to get Heaven alſo into the Bargain. So we read of *Nehemiah* 2. 4. That whilſt the King was diſcourſing to him of the State of *Judæa*, it is ſaid that *Nehemiah prayed unto God*; that is, he ſent up ſecret Prayers to God, which though they eſcaped the *King*'s notice and obſervation, yet were they ſo prevalent as to bow and encline his Heart.

4. *It is always to keep our Hearts in a praying Frame.*

Fourthly, and *Laſtly*, There is yet ſomething more in this *Praying without ceaſing*, and that is this; *We may then be ſaid to pray without ceaſing, when we keep our Hearts in ſuch a frame, as that we are fit at all times to vent our ſelves before God in Prayer.* When we keep alive and cheriſh a praying Spirit, and can upon all Opportunities draw near to God with full Souls, and with quick and vigorous Affections: This is *to pray without ceaſing*, and this I take to be the moſt genuine, natural Senſe of the Words, and the true Scope of the *Apoſtle* here, to have the Habit of Prayer enclining them always freely and ſweetly to breath out their Requeſts unto God, and to take all Occaſions to proſtrate themſelves before his Throne of Grace. Now thoſe that would maintain this praying Temper muſt be eſpecially careful of Two Things.

They that would maintain a praying Temper muſt be careful of Two Things,

1. *That they immerſe not themſelves in the World.*

First, *That they do not too much ingulf themſelves in the Buſineſſes and Pleaſures of this Life*; for this will exceedingly damp and deaden the Heart to this holy Duty; as Earth caſt upon the Fire puts it out, ſo the World, when it is ſpread over the Affections, muſt needs ſtifle and extinguiſh that holy Flame that ſhould aſcend up to Heaven. How hard is it for a Man, that oppreſſeth himſelf with a heap of Buſineſſes, to raiſe his Heart unto God under all that Load? How hard is it for thoſe that let out their Hearts thus to and fro, a thouſand ways, to ſummon them in the next moment to attend upon God, with that awful and ſerious Frame that becomes all thoſe that appear before him? When we come to Prayer reaking hot out of the Affairs of this World, we find our Hearts ſubject to manifold Diſtractions and Diſcompoſures, and our Thoughts ſcattered like Bees, ſtill flying from one Flower to another, ſtill bringing ſome Intelligence from worldly Objects, even then when we are about divine Employments.

2. *That they fall into no known and preſumtuous Sins.*

Secondly, *If you would maintain a praying Temper of Soul, be careful not to fall into the commiſſion of any known, preſumptuous Sin.* The Guilt of Sin lying upon the Conſcience, will exceedingly deaden the Heart to Prayer. Alas! How can we

we go to God with any freedom of Spirit? How can we call him Father with any Boldneſs and Confidence, while we are conſcious to our ſelves that we have daringly provoked him by ſome wilful Offence? I may appeal to your own Experience in this; Do not your Conſciences fly in your Faces? Do they not take you by the Throat and even choak your Speech, while you are praying with ſome ſuch Suggeſtions as theſe? What, can I pray for the Pardon of Sin, that frequently commit that which I know to be Sin? Shall I dare to lift up unclean Hands before his pure and holy Eyes, or to ſpeak to him in Prayer, when as thoſe Sins that rancor and feſter in my Conſcience, muſt needs make my Breath unſavory and noiſome to him? Will the Lord hear ſuch Prayers? Or, if he doth hear them, will he not account them an Abomination? You now, whoſe Conſciences thus accuſe you, do you not find ſuch Reflections as theſe to be great Deadnings to your Hearts, ſuch Damps to Duty, ſuch Clippings of the Wings of the Spirit of God and takings off of the Wheels of the Soul, ſo that it drives on but ſlowly and heavily in the performance of that Duty? Certainly Guilt is the greateſt Impediment to Duty in the World, for it takes off from the Freeneſs and Filialneſs of our Spirits, and fills us with Diſtruſt, Diſſidence and a ſlaviſh Fear of coming before God, rather as our Judge than as our Father. And therefore we find that as ſoon as *Adam* had ſinned againſt his Maker, he hides himſelf from him: Yea, and we may obſerve it in our ſelves, what a ſlaviſh dejectedneſs and deadneſs ſeizeth upon us when we come to God in Duty, after we have wronged him by any known Sin; how doth this make us come with ſuch miſgiving Fears, as if we would not have God to take notice that we were in his Preſence, making us to be continually in Pain until the Duty be done? And thus you ſee what it is to *Pray without ceaſing*. Is is to pray conſtantly at ſet times and Seaſons, it is to pray importunately and vehemently, it is upon all Occaſions to be ſending up holy Ejaculations unto God, and eſpecially to keep alive and cheriſh a praying Frame of Heart: Which whoſoever would do he muſt beware of immerging himſelf in the World, and of committing any known and preſumptuous Sin. And ſo much for the Doctrinal part.

An Exhortation unto Prayer.

The Application ſhall be to ſtir us up and excite us to the performance of this Holy Duty, wherein indeed the Vitals of Religion and Holineſs do conſiſt: And, to preſs this upon you, conſider with me theſe following Particulars:

1. *Prayer is a Sign of the new Birth.*

Firſt, *Prayer is one of the greateſt Signs of a Man's new Birth.* And is in the natural Birth we know the Child is living by its Crying when it comes into the World; ſo alſo in this ſpiritual Birth it is an evidence, that we are born living Souls to God, when we cry mightily unto God in Prayer. And therefore in *Acts* 9. 11. when God ſent *Ananias* unto *Paul*, that he might take off that Fear from him that might otherwiſe ſeize upon him in going to ſuch an enraged Perſecutor as he was, he tells him St. *Paul* was changed, for *behold he prays*. This is an infallible Sign that we are Children of God, when we can with a Holy Reverence and Boldneſs cry *Abba, Father*.

2. *Prayer is an ineſtimable Privilege.*

Secondly, *Conſider it is a great and ineſtimable Privilege, that God will permit us to approach ſo near to himſelf*; that he will permit ſuch vile Duſt and Aſhes as we are to ſpeak to him, who is the God of the Spirits of all Fleſh. The *holy Angels* in Heaven ſtand always miniſtring in the preſence of God; and Prayer doth in ſome kind aſſociate us with them; it brings us to lie proſtrate at the Feet of God, at whoſe Feet alſo *Angels* and all the Powers in Heaven do with much more Humility than we, fall down and worſhip him; we and they fall down together at the Feet of the great God, we in Prayer and they in Praiſes. This Privilege coſt Jeſus Chriſt dear, for it is through him (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks) *that we have acceſs with boldneſs unto the Throne of Grace.* All acceſs thither was barred againſt Sinners till Chriſt opened a Paſſage for us by his own Death and moſt precious Blood: And ſhall not we make uſe of a Privilege purchaſed for us at ſo dear a Rate as that is? Hath Chriſt ſhed his Blood to procure us liberty to pray, and ſhall not we ſpend our Breath in praying? Hath Chriſt died ſuch a curſed, cruel Death, to purchaſe liberty for us to pray, and ſhall we rather chooſe to die and eternal Death than make uſe of it? This is to deſpiſe the Blood of Jeſus Chriſt, to offer an high Affront and Indignity unto him, to account it a vile and contemptible Thing, when we make no more eſteem of that for the purchaſe of

which he ſhed his precious Blood. We look upon it as a great Privilege to have free and frequent acceſs to thoſe that are much our Superiors, and ſhall we not reckon it a much higher Privilege that we may at all times approach the preſence of him who is *King* of *Kings* and *Lord* of *Lords*, and higher than the higheſt, as we may do at all times in Prayer?

3. *Prayer is a ſovereign Remedy for an afflicted Mind.*

Thirdly, *Prayer it is the moſt ſovereign Medicine and Remedy for an afflicted Mind.* Nothing is ſo deſirable in this World as a faithful Friend, to whom we may at all times unboſom our ſelves, and make all our Secrets and Grievances known. Now Prayer directs us to go to God himſelf, he is our moſt faithful Friend that can beſt counſel and beſt help us, and Prayer is a means whereby we reveal the Secrets and Troubles of our Souls unto him; Prayer it is our diſcourſing with God: When our Hearts ſwell with Grief and are ready to break within us, how ſweet is it then to take God apart and give our Hearts vent? Prayer it is a making our Caſe known to him, and a ſpreading our Wants before him, caſting all our Burthens upon him who hath promiſed to ſuſtain us.

4. *Prayer is a means appointed by God, for all Mercies that we want.*

Fourthly, conſider, *Prayer is a means appointed by God for the obtaining of thoſe Bleſſings and Mercies that we ſtand in need of*; for all Things are God's, he is the great Lord and Proprietor both of Heaven and Earth; whether they be ſpiritual or temporal Mercies that we deſire, if it be Wealth, Strength or Wiſdom, all are his. If we would have ſpiritual Bleſſings conferred upon us, our Faith, our Love, our Patience, our Humility, ſtrengthned and encreaſed, he is the God of all theſe Graces, and Prayer it is a means appointed by God to convey all theſe unto us. Our Prayers, and God's Mercy, are like two Buckets in a Well, while the one aſcends, the other deſcends. So while our Prayers aſcend to God in Heaven, his Mercies and Bleſſings deſcend down upon us.

5. *We are always in want, therefore we ſhould pray always.*

Fifthly, conſider, *All our Supplies are only for our preſent Exigences, to ſerve us only from Hand to Mouth*; the ſtock of Mercy is not ours but God's, he ſtill keeps it in his own Hands, and this he doth that he might keep us in a conſtant Dependence upon him, and in a conſtant Expectation of Mercy from him. Our Wants grow up very thick about us, and if we did but obſerve it, we ſhould find every Day, yea, every Hour, new cauſe to preſent new Requeſts and Supplications unto God; and therefore as our Neceſſities never ceaſe, ſo neither ſhould our Prayers.

6. *They that will not Pray ſhall Howl.*

Sixthly, conſider this, *If you will not be perſuaded to pray, you ſhall one day be made to howl.* You that will not now look up to Heaven in Prayer, ſhall hereafter look up in Blaſpheming, *Iſai.* 8. 21. *They ſhall fret themſelves*, ſays the Prophet, *and curſe God and their King*; that is, in their horrid Deſpair and Anguiſh they ſhall Curſe and Blaſpheme both God and their King, that is, the Devil, and they ſhall *look upwards*. Though now wicked Men will not look to Heaven, yet then God will force them to look upwards.

There may Two *Objections* poſſibly be made againſt this Duty of Prayer.

Obj. 1. First, *God doth before hand know all our Wants and Deſires, and therefore what Neceſſity is there of Prayer?*

Anſw. To this I anſwer with St. *Auguſtine*; *God*, ſays he, *doth require that we ſhould pray to him, not ſo much to make known what our Will and Deſire is*, for that he cannot be ignorant of; *but it is for the Exerciſe of our Deſires*, and to draw forth *our Affections toward thoſe Things that we beg at his Hands*, that thereby we may be made fit to receive what he is ready to give.

Obj. 2. Secondly, Say ſome, *It is in vain to pray, becauſe all our Prayers cannot alter the courſe of God's Providence; we cannot by our moſt fervent Prayers change the method of God's Decrees; if he hath reſolved from Eternity to beſtow ſuch a Mercy upon us, we ſhall receive it whether we pray or pray not; if he hath reſolved we ſhall never partake of it, if we do pray, all our Prayers will be in vain.*

Anſw. I have long ſince anſwered this *Objection*, and told you, That it is true, God's Providence is immutable. But the ſame Providence that orders the End to be obtained, hath likewiſe ordered the Means by which it muſt be obtained: As God hath decreed Bleſſings to us, ſo he hath decreed that they ſhould be obtained by Prayer; and therefore we muſt pray that we may obtain thoſe Bleſſings, for that is the Means God hath decreed for the obtaining of them.

Directions how we muſt Pray ſo as to be accepted.

Some poſſibly may ſay, *If we muſt thus pray without ceaſing, how ſhall we be aſſured that God will hear us? If it be our Duty to pray, how ſhall we pray ſo as that our Prayers may become acceptable unto God?* I anſwer,

First,

First, *If you would have God hear you when you pray, you muſt be ſure to hear him when he ſpeaks.* See that place, *Prov.* 1. 24, 28. *Becauſe I have called and you have refuſed, and have ſet at nought all my Counſels therefore,* ſays God, *you ſhall call but I will not anſwer, you ſhall ſeek me early but ſhall not find me.* God ſtops his Ears againſt their Prayers, who ſtop their Ears againſt his Law. So you find it, *Prov.* 28. 9. *He that turneth away his Ears from hearing the Law, even his Prayer ſhall be an Abomination:* And this is but Equity with God to refuſe to hear them that refuſe to hear him. Wherefore ſhould God give attention to us when we Pray, more than we to him when he Speaks?

1. *They that hear God, God will hear them.*

Secondly, *If you would have God hear you, you muſt be greatly affected with what you ſpeak your ſelves; Qui frigidé rogat, docet negare; He that asks coldly, begs only a Denial.* Certainly we cannot in reaſon expect that God ſhould regard when we Pray, when we do not regard our ſelves what we Pray. How do you think a lazy Prayer that ſcarce drops out of your Lips, ſhould have Strength and Vigour enough to reach Heaven, and to pierce through the Ears of God? If you expect to ſhoot up a Prayer to Heaven, you muſt draw it from a Soul full bent.

2. *Prayer muſt be with Affection.*

Thirdly, *We muſt come to God with Reſolutions to wait for an Anſwer.* We muſt not give over Prayer becauſe God doth not preſently beſtow a Mercy upon us that we deſire; this is not only to loſe the Mercy it ſelf, but to loſe our Prayers alſo. God is a great God and King above all Gods, and it is but his due ſtate to be waited long upon; in this Senſe it is true, *He that believeth maketh not haſte.* Certainly if we believe God to be infinitely wiſe to know the beſt Seaſon to give us what we crave both for his Advantage and for ours alſo, we ſhall not be in haſte in our Suits, or peeviſh becauſe we are not ſtrait anſwered, but patiently wait God's leiſure, as knowing that God hath read our Petitions, and will grant them when he ſeeth the fitteſt time.

3. *We muſt Pray with Patience.*

Fourthly, *If you would pray ſo as to be heard, be ſure you put up no Requeſts in the behalf of your Luſts.* The Apoſtle gives the reaſon why, of ſo many Prayers that are put up to God, ſo few prove ſucceſsful, *James* 4. 2. *You ask and you receive not, becauſe you ask amiſs to conſume it upon your Luſts.* Now to ask Bleſſings from God for our Luſts, is when we beg any outward Mercy, be it Wealth or Health, or the like, with reference to the gratifying of our own carnal and corrupt Deſires; therefore in *James* 4. 4. the Apoſtle calls them *Adulterers and Adultereſſes:* Such Men are indeed like Adultereſſes in this; as they ask their Husbands thoſe Things many times, that they beſtow upon them that they love better; ſo wicked Men do many times ask thoſe Mercies and Bleſſings of God that they intend to ſpend upon their Luſts that they love better than God, and therefore it is no wonder, that God, who knows their ſecret Thoughts and Intents, denies them.

4. *We muſt not make Requeſts for our Luſts.*

Fifthly, *You muſt put ſome ſtreſs upon your Prayers, if you would have them heard and accepted*; you muſt believe that it is to ſome purpoſe that you pray: If we think it is of no great concernment to pray, God will think it is of no great concernment to give what we pray for.

5. *We muſt put ſome ſtreſs upon our Prayers.*

Sixthly, *You muſt take heed alſo, that you do not put too much ſtreſs upon your Prayers*; that you do not ſet them up in the ſtead of Chriſt, that you do not expect to merit by your Prayers the Things that you pray for, but only look upon them as a Means and Ordinance that God hath appointed to obtain thoſe good Things that you ſtand in need of.

6. *We muſt not put too much ſtreſs upon our Prayers.*

Laſtly, *You muſt be ſure to make Jeſus Chriſt your Friend when you come unto God, or elſe all your Prayers are no better than ſcattered in the Air, or ſpilt in the Carriage. Benjamin* was a Type of Chriſt in this reſpect: *Joſeph* chargeth his Brethren that they ſhould not dare to ſee his Face again, unleſs they brought their Brother *Benjamin* with them. So truly they ſhall find no Welcom with God, that do not bring their elder Brother Jeſus Chriſt in the Arms of their Faith, and plead his Merit and his Righteouſneſs for the obtaining of their Deſires. So much for this Time and Text.

7. *We muſt plead the merit of Chriſt in our Prayers.*

SERMON XXVIII.

A DISCOURSE UPON THE OMNIPRESENCE OF GOD.

PSAL. cxxxix. 7. 8, 9, 10.

Whither ſhall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither ſhall I flee from thy Preſence? If I aſcend up into Heaven, thou art there; if I make my Bed in Hell, behold thou art there. If I take the Wings of the Morning, and dwell in the uttermoſt parts of the Sea; even there ſhall thy Hand lead me, and thy right Hand ſhall hold me.

THESE Words declare to us the glorious Attribute of God's Immenſity or Omnipreſence, ſet forth in moſt elegant and lofty Terms, as if the *Prophet* would mitigate that Dread that might well ſeize upon us, from the conſideration of the terrible Majeſty of God being ſo near us, by the ſweetneſs and flouriſhing of the Expreſſion, *Whither ſhall I go from thy Spirit?* This *Queſtion* doth not imply that *David* was indeed contriving how to make an Eſcape from God, nor pondering with himſelf in what forlorn Corner of the *World* he might lie obſcure, where the Preſence of God ſhould never apprehend him; but this Interrogation ſerveth for a vehement Aſſertion, *Whither ſhall I go?* That is, there is no Place where I can go, or where I can imagine to go, but thy Spirit, and thy Preſence will be with me. *Whither ſhall I go from thy Spirit?* That is, either from thee who art a Spirit, and ſo canſt pierce and penetrate me, be as truly and eſſentially in the very Bowels and Marrow of my Soul, as my Soul is intimately and eſſentially in my Body. *From thy Spirit*; that is, from thy Knowledge and thy Power; they Knowledge to detect and obſerve me, thy Power to uphold or to cruſh me. In what dark Corner or Cavern ſoever I ſhould muffle my ſelf, yet thy preſence is ſo univerſal, that it would find me out, for it ſtretcheth it ſelf from Heaven to Hell. *If I make my Bed in Hell.* By Hell here, may be meant either the Grave, which is often ſo called in Scripture, as *Acts* 2. 27. *Pſal.* 16. 10. *Thou wilt not leave my Soul in Hell, neither wilt thou ſuffer thine Holy One to ſee Corruption*; (a Prophecy concerning Chriſt) that is, Thou wilt not leave my Perſon in the Grave; ſo it is interpreted *Verſe* 31. when it is ſaid, that his Soul was not left in Hell, neither did his Fleſh ſee Corruption; it is ſpoken ſo in *Gen.* 37. 35. *Jacob*, ſpeaking concerning the ſuppoſed Death of his Son *Joſeph*, ſays, *I will go down into the Grave to my Son mourning.* Concerning the Reſurrection of Chriſt from the Grave, *Gen.* 37. 35. *Job* 17. 13. that word which we tranſlate the Grave, we tranſlate (alſo) Hell. Now ſaith the *Prophet*, Though I ſhould go down to the Grave, and be covered from the ſight, and forgotten out of the mind and thoughts of

of Men, yet thou art there, and obſerveſt every Duſt how it molders and crumbles away: My Body cannot be more in the Grave than thou art there. If we take Hell for the place of the damned, God's preſence is there likewiſe: One would think, if from any place God would exclude himſelf, it ſhould be from *Hell*, ſince his preſence is ſufficient to make an Heaven any where; but ſo infinite is his unlimited Being, that when the Body is in the Grave, and the Soul in Hell, yet then is God preſent, both with the Soul, and with the Body. *If I make my Bed in Hell*, that is, If I cover my ſelf never ſo cloſe and draw the Curtains of the thickeſt Darkneſs round about me; If my Body ſhould lie in the deepeſt Intrails of the Earth, and my Soul be wrapt about with a Winding-ſheet of Smoak and Flames, yet thou art there, and thy preſence would ſoon find me out, *Job* 26. 6. *Hell is naked before him, and Deſtruction hath no covering.* Yea the *Apoſtle* tells us, 2 *Theſſ.* 1. 9. That *the Wicked in Hell ſhall be puniſhed, with everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord, and from the glory of his Power.* That is, not only that their puniſhment ſhall be to be ſeperated from the preſence of the Lord; but look how they are ſaid to be puniſhed from the glory of his Power, ſo likewiſe are they to be puniſhed from his Preſence, their Deſtruction ſhall be from the Glory of his Power; that is, his Power in inflicting moſt dreadful Puniſhments upon them, and his Power in ſuſtaining them under thoſe Puniſhments, when with one Hand the Lord ſhall hold them up in Hell, and lift up the other as high Heaven, to give them redoubled Strokes of everlaſting Vengeance. So likewiſe they ſhall be puniſhed from the preſence of the Lord; that is, God himſelf will be preſent in *Hell* to torment and puniſh them, that at the very ſame time that he ſhall be a cheriſhing God in Heaven, he will be a tormenting God in Hell: Becauſe in them he hath eſtabliſhed his two great Thrones, the one of his Mercy, the other of his Juſtice.

But yet poſſibly there may be found ſome neglected place here below, where God hath no ſuch concernment to be preſent in it, as he hath to be preſent in *Heaven* and in *Hell*. Now ſaith the *Pſalmiſt*, Verſe 9. *If I take the Wings of the Morning, and dwell in the uttermoſt Parts of the Sea, even there ſhall thine Hand lead me, and thy Right-hand ſhall hold me.* *Wings of the Morning* is an elegant *Metaphor*, and by them we may conjecture is meant the Sun-beams, called Wings, becauſe of their ſwift and ſpeedy motion, making their paſſage ſo ſudden and ſo inſtantaneous, as that they do prevent the obſervation of the Eye, called *the Wings of the Morning*, becauſe the Dawn of the Morning comes flying in upon theſe Wings of the Sun, and brings Light along with it, and by beating and fanning of theſe Wings ſcatters the Darkneſs before it. Now, ſaith the *Pſalmiſt*, If I could pluck theſe *Wings of the Morning*, the *Sun-beams*; if I could imp my own Shoulders with them; if I ſhould fly as far and as ſwift as Light, even in an inſtant, *to the uttermoſt parts of the Sea*; yea, if in my flight I could ſpy out ſome Solitary Rock, ſo formidable and diſmal as if we might almoſt call in queſtion whether ever a *Providence* had been there; if I could pitch there on the top of it, where never any thing had made its abode, but Coldneſs, Thunders and Tempeſts, *yet there ſhall thy Hand lead me, and thy Right-hand ſhall hold me.*

Thus you ſee the Text declares this Ubiquity and Omnipreſence of God, both in Heaven and Earth and Hell, and in all Places and in all Things.

I ſhall firſt handle this Point Doctrinally, and then Practically, obſerving this Method: I ſhall,

1. Lay down ſome Poſitions.
2. Demonſtrate the Truth of them by ſome cogent and convincing Arguments.
3. Anſwer ſome Objections which may be made againſt the Omnipreſence of God.
4. Make ſome Improvement of this Point.

The firſt Poſition I ſhall lay down is this, *That God is intimately and eſſentially in all parts and places of the World*; yea, this Preſence being eſſential is alſo neceſſary, ſo that it is ſimply impoſſible that God ſhould not be whereſoever the Creature is. By the World, I mean whatſoever was at the beginning created by the Power of God, the Heavens, the Air, the Earth and Sea, and all things viſible and inviſible; God is with them and in them all. There are three things briefly to be touched upon here. *Poſition* 1.

(1.) Firſt, *That God is intimately preſent with the Creatures.* He paſſeth through their very Beings and Inward Parts; he is in the very Center of their Eſſence, and this flows from the Spirituality of his Eſſence. From hence it is that it is impoſſible

poſſible that he ſhould be excluded out of the moſt cloſe compacted Being. Bodies cannot thus enter one another, becauſe of their groſs and material Subſtances; they can only ſtand without and knock for admiſſion; they cannot enter into the ſubſtance one of another: Water, when ſucked up by a Spunge, doth not paſs into the ſubſtantial part of it, but only fills up thoſe Caverns and hollow Pores that were before filled with Air. The *Air* we breath in cannot enter into the Subſtance of of our Bodies, but only into thoſe Pores and hollow Receſſes that are by Nature fitted to receive it; ſo of all other Corporeal Beings. But *Spirits* are not tied up to this Law. The Soul of Man, becauſe it is a Spirit, reſides not only in the empty void Spaces of the *Body*, but alſo in the midſt of the moſt ſolid and ſubſtantial part of it. *Angels*, who are a degree of Spiritual Beings above the Soul, they cannot be excluded from being preſent in the moſt condenſed Bodies; and we know not how often they are in us; we know not how often they paſs through us, nor how many of them are now preſent with us. We read of no leſs than a *Legion*, which is Six Thouſand, that quartered themſelves together in one poſſeſſed Perſon, *Mark* 5. 9. Then, certainly God, between whom and the *Angels* there is infinitely more diſtance than between *Angels* and Bodies, cannot poſſibly be ſhut out of any Being, but diffuſeth himſelf to every part of his Creatures.

(2.) Secondly, *God is not only intimately preſent with his Creatures, becauſe as he is a Spirit he paſſeth through the moſt inmoſt part of them, but he is intimately preſent with all his Creatures at once.* And therein is his preſence diſtinguiſhed from the preſence of *Angels*; they indeed paſs from one to another, and be one in another; they may poſſibly ſtretch and dilate themſelves to a great compaſs, but they cannot ſtretch themſelves to an *Ubiquitarineſs*, to be in all Beings at once. If an *Angel* ſuddenly dart himſelf from one Point of the Heavens, through the Center of the Earth, to an oppoſite Point of the Heavens, and by a motion of inſinuation, without impelling or driving the Air before him, yet he is not in Heaven and Earth at once, but when he is in one place he ceaſeth to be in another; but it is not ſo with God, for he is every-where and in all things at once for ever, therefore God tells us, *Do not I fill Heaven and Earth*, Jer. 23. 24. He is ſo in them, as that he doth not leave any one place void or empty of himſelf, for were there any places where God were not, then it could not be properly ſaid to be filled with him.

(3.) *Thirdly*, This Omnipreſence of God is ſimply neceſſary, not only for the preſerving and upholding of his Creatures in their Beings and Operations, but neceſſary to our very Beings; for his own Eſſence is ſimple, and he cannot withdraw from, nor forſake any place, or any thing with which his preſence now is. God cannot contract and leſſen himſelf, nor gather up his *Eſſence* into a narrow room and compaſs; but as he is here in this very place which we now take up, ſo he muſt and will be here to all Eternity. Nor is this any imperfection, as if God were not an Infinite Perfection and Excellence, for this flows from the immutability of his Nature and Eſſence; for ſhould God remove himſelf, he were not altogether unchangeable, but *with him there is neither change nor ſhadow of turning*, *Jam.* 1. What the *Heathens* thought of this *Immenſity* and *Omnipreſence* of God, it is ſomewhat obſcure; ſome of them confined him to Heaven, and were ſo far from affirming him preſent in all things, that they thought he took no care of any thing below, as being too mean and too unworthy for God to regard. This was the Opinion of the *Epicureans*, *Acts* 17. 18. Others thought indeed, that the Care and Providence of God reached to theſe ordinary things, but not his Eſſence; and the ground of their Errour was, becauſe they thought it moſt befitting the *Majeſty* of God, to ſit only in Heaven, a glorious and a becoming place, and not to make himſelf ſo cheap and ſo common, as to be preſent with Men and the Vile Things of the World: But this is a weak Reaſon, as I ſhall ſhew anon. Some others among the *Heathens* had righter Apprehenſions of this Divine Attribute; one of them, being to give a Deſcription what God was, tells us moſt admirably, *God was a Sphere, whoſe Center was every-where, and whoſe Circumference was no where.* A raiſed apprehenſion of the Divine Nature in an *Heathen*. And another, being demanded what God was, made anſwer, That God is an Infinite Point, than which nothing can be ſaid more (almoſt) or truer, to declare this *Omnipreſence* of God. It is reported of *Heraclitus* the *Philoſopher*, when his Friend came to viſit him, being in an old rotten *Hovel*, *Come in come in*, (ſaith he) *for God is here.* God is in the meaneſt *Cottage* as well as in the ſtatelieſt *Palace*; the pooreſt *Beggar* co-

habits

habits with God as well as the greateſt *Princes*, for God is every-where preſent and ſees all things.

God is not only preſent in the World, but he is infinitely exiſtent alſo without the World, and beyond all things but himſelf. He is in all that Vaſt Tract of Nothing which we can imagine, and beyond the Higheſt Heavens: What Reaſon can ſay for this, I ſhall anon ſhew. In the mean time ſee that one poſitive place of Scripture, 1 *Kings* 8. 27. *Behold the Heavens and Heaven of Heavens cannot contain him.* And if God be not contained in them, certainly he then muſt be infinitely beyond and above them: He ſurmounts the Heaven of Heavens, that is, the very higheſt and uppermoſt Heavens, which St. *Paul* calls the *Third Heaven*, 2 Cor. 12. That glorious Place in which God doth moſt ſpecially manifeſt himſelf and will do to all Eternity. The Scripture tells us, that though the *Heaven* of the glorified *Angels* and *Saints* be the place in which God will eſpecially manifeſt his preſence, yet it is not that place unto which God will or doth confine his preſence. *Iſai.* 66. 1, 2. *Thus ſaith the Lord, the Heaven is my Throne, and the Earth is my Footſtool. Where is the Houſe that ye build unto me? And where is the Place of my Reſt? For all thoſe things hath mine Hand made.* As if God ſhould have ſaid, Do not think to cloiſter me up within the Walls of the *Temple*; no, I am ſet upon the higheſt Heavens, as upon my Throne, and they are all under me, and I am exalted far above them. Many ſuch glorious Expreſſions there are of God's Infiniteneſs and Immenſity ſcattered up and down the *Scripture*, which I ſhall not now ſpend time to recollect: The *Scripture*, you ſee, owns it for a truth, That God is Infinite in his Eſſence beyond the whole World, which is one of thoſe Divine Properties which poſeth *Reaſon* to conceive, how it is poſſible, that ſince beyond the World there is nothing, *that God ſhould exiſt there*; but though *Reaſon* cannot apprehend it, yet from *Reaſon*, as well as from *Scripture*, it appears it muſt be ſo. *Poſition* 2.

As God exiſts every-where, ſo all and whole God exiſts every-where. So that all God is here, and all God is there, and all God is in every place, and in every thing: This is indeed a great and moſt unconceivable Myſtery, but yet it muſt needs be ſo, becauſe God is indiviſible and ſimple and not compounded of Parts; and therefore where-ever there is any of God's *Eſſence*, there is all his *Eſſence*, otherwiſe part of his *Eſſence* would be here, and part there, and part of it elſewhere, which would be utterly repugnant to the ſimple and uncompounded Nature of God. God's Attributes are his *Eſſence*: Now there is no where, where God is, but there are all his Attributes, and therefore where God is there is all his *Eſſence*. He is *a Spirit*, *moſt Wiſe*, *moſt Powerful*, *moſt Juſt*, and the like, here and there, as well as in Heaven above; yea, and what is more, to the aſtoniſhment of Reaſon, than all this, God is every-where Omnipreſent, and in every place. And though it be common to all Spiritual Beings, becauſe they have no parts, to have a *totality* in the whole, and a *totality* in every part: (Indeed it is expreſſed in the *Schools*, that Spirits are all in the whole, and all in every part;) yet herein God hath a peculiar way of ſubſiſting from other Spirits, that not only his *Eſſence* alone is in every part of the World, but alſo his Preſence is in all and every part of the World: So that God is every where preſent, which is beyond the reach of our apprehenſions; yet it is undoubtedly true, for God's Omnipreſence being that Attribute which belongs to him, he is preſent every-where and in all things. *Poſition* 3.

Now for the Rational Demonſtrations whereby it may be evinced, that God is Omnipreſent.

That God is preſent every-where in this World, that I ſhall make good by theſe Arguments:

(1.) *Argument* 1. Firſt from his Unchangeableneſs, thus: If there be any place where God is not, then God may be there, becauſe he is Omnipotent; but if God may be there, where he is not actually alſo, then it muſt be by motion to that place; but it is impoſſible that God ſhould be able to move from one place to another, becauſe he is immutable: Therefore hence it clearly follows, that there is no place where God is not, and where he was not from all Eternity.

(2.) *Arg.* 2. It may be demonſtrated, *That God is Omnipreſent from his preſervation of all things in their beings.* Thus God is preſent with whatſoever he preſerves, but he preſerves every thing in its being, therefore he is preſent every-where. There is required as great a Power to preſerve Creatures from falling back into their firſt Nothing, as there was to make them at firſt out of Nothing; for

for Preſervation, as the *Philoſopher* ſpeaks, is nothing elſe but a continued and a prolonged Creation. Now he cannot create any thing at a diſtance from it, becauſe no Creature is fit to convey a Creative Action, and becauſe alſo whatever Vertue or Power is in God it is his Eſſence; therefore if he create or preſerve by his Power, he creates and preſerves immediately by his Eſſence, and ſo his Eſſence muſt be whatſoever his Operations are. But God exiſts not only in the World, but infinitely beyond the World alſo, that may be demonſtrated thus:

1. Firſt, From the *Infiniteneſs of his Nature and Eſſence.*
2. Secondly, From the *Infiniteneſs of his Perfections.*

Arg. 1. Firſt, From the *Infiniteneſs of God's Nature or Eſſence.* That Nature, which is infinite, cannot be bounded or limited; but God's Nature is infinite, therefore it cannot be bounded; but if God were only preſent in the World and did not exiſt infinitely beyond it, then his Being and Nature could not be infinite as a Spirit is infinite; therefore if God ſhould be included in the World, he would alſo be but infinite as the World.

Arg. 2. Secondly, From the *Infiniteneſs of his Perfections*, we may argue thus: That which is infinitely perfect, muſt be infinitely great, but God is infinitely perfect; ſo that there is no Perfection which we can imagine but is eminently in God, therefore he muſt be infinitely great, ſo as there can be no ſpace which we can imagine, but he muſt be preſent in it: But we can imagine an infinite ſpace beyond this World, therefore God is there, becauſe there is no Perfection imaginable which God hath not. Whatever is infinitely perfect, muſt be infinitely great, as appears from this, becauſe the greater a thing is, the more perfect it is of that ſame kind, as a great piece of *Gold* is more excellent than a leſs; and therefore from this Perfection of God, it appears, that he is *every-where*, he being all Perfection.

(2.) *Arg.* 2. As it is demonſtrated from God's Infiniteneſs and Perfection, ſo likewiſe from his Almighty Power, God can create another World greater than this, even in that imaginary ſpace which we can conceive beyond this World; therefore certainly God is now exiſtent there.

(3.) *Arg.* 3. *God*'s Omnipreſence may may be argued from the Eternity of God. God was infinitely exiſtent before the Creation of the World, ſince he is Eternal, and the World but Temporal; the World hath ſtood only but ſome few Thouſands of Years, and before the Creation of the World there was nothing but God; and God exiſted eternally in himſelf; therefore, though beyond this World there be nothing, yet God will be there actually exiſting in that ſame imaginary ſpace beyond this World, as he did exiſt in an imaginary ſpace before this World was created.

Thus I have done with the Propoſitions, and the Confirmation of them by the rational Arguments, thoſe things that relate to the *Philoſophical* Part of the *Text*, for informing of the Judgment in the Notion of that ſtupendious Attribute of God's Omnipreſence,

I ſhall now come to anſwer ſome Objections: The firſt is taken from thoſe Scriptures where it ſeems to be implied, that God moves from place to place, as in *Gen.* 18. 21. where the Lord ſaith, concerning *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, *I will go down now and ſee whether they have done altogether, according to the cry of it, which is come unto me.* And in *Hab.* 3. 3. it is there ſaid, *God came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran*, &c.

Obj. 1. Now theſe places which ſpeak of going to, and departing from places, ſeem to oppoſe God's Ubiquity, becauſe *Motion* is inconſiſtent with God's Omnipreſence.

Anſw. I anſwer: Theſe and the like *Scriptures* are not to be taken properly and literally, but as accommodate to our capacity and conception, even as Parents, when they ſpeak to their little Children, will ſometimes liſp and babble in their Langurge; ſo God oftentimes condeſcends to us in ſpeaking our Language, for the declaring of thoſe things which are far above our reach. But you will ſay, how are ſuch Places to be underſtood? I anſwer, When God is ſaid to come unto, or to depart from any Place or Perſon, nothing elſe muſt be underſtood thereby, but a declaring or not declaring himſelf to be preſent, as Men, when they manifeſt themſelves preſent, they do it by moving hither or thither; ſo God, to accommodate himſelf thereunto, when he manifeſts his Preſence any where, he tells us, that he goes thither; and when that Manifeſtation ceaſeth, he tells us he departs thence, though he was always there preſent, both before and after that Manifeſtation.

feſtation. So that theſe Expreſſions uſed in the *Scripture*, concerning God, though ſpoken after the manner of Men, yet they muſt be underſtood after the manner of God, that is, with a ſuitableneſs and conformity to his infinite Eſſence.

The *Scripture* tells us, that hereafter in Heaven *we ſhall ſee God as he is:* But is not that impoſſible? If God be an *Omnipreſent* God, we ſhall not be able to comprehend him, becauſe we ſhall not our ſelves be infinite in Heaven; and if Man be ſtiled finite, how then can he comprehend what is infinite, ſince infinite is comprehend of nothing but that which is infinite? Obj. 2.

I Anſwer, Such *Scriptures* are not to be underſtood, as if the Capacities of *Angels*, much leſs of Men, are or ever ſhall be wide and capacious enough to contain the infinite greatneſs of God; no, his Omnipreſence is not comprehended by Angels themſelves, nor ſhall be by Man for ever; but it muſt be underſtood comparatively. Our Viſion and Sight of God here, is but through a Glaſs darkly; but in Heaven it ſhall be with ſo much more brightneſs and clearneſs, that in compariſon of the obſcure and glimmering way whereby we know God here, it may be called a ſeeing of him Face to Face, and knowing him as we are known by him; though, to ſpeak in abſolute Propriety of Speech, theſe things are not poſſible to any Creature. *Anſw.*

It may ſeem no ſmall diſparagement to God to be every-where preſent; What! for the Glorious Majeſty of God to be preſent in ſuch vile and filthy Places as are here upon Earth? Obj. 3.

(1.) To this I anſwer, God doth not think it any diſparagement to him, nor think it unworthy of him to know and make all theſe which we call vile and filthy places; why then ſhould we think it unworthy of him to be preſent there? *Anſw.*

(2.) God is a Spirit, and is not capable of any pollution or defilement from any vile or filthy things. The *Sun-beams* are no more tainted by ſhining on a Dunghil, than they are by ſhining on a Bed of Spices; no more can God be ſullied by being preſent in filthy Sinks, (to ſpeak with Reverence) than to be in the glorious Heavens, becauſe he is a Spirit, and his Eſſence is not ſubject to any taints from the Creature.

(3.) The vileſt things that are, have ſtill a being that is good in their own kind, and as well-pleaſing to God as thoſe things which we put a greater value and eſteem upon.

(4.) Laſtly, It reflects no more diſhonour upon God to be preſent with the vileſt Creatures, than to be preſent with the nobleſt and higheſt; becauſe the *Angels* are at an infinite diſtance from God. There is a greater diſproportion between God and the *Angels*, than there is between the vileſt Worm and an *Angel*; all are at an infinite diſtance to his Glory and Majeſty. Thus much for the *Objections*.

APPLICATION.

Firſt, *Is God thus infinitely preſent every-where, and thus in and with all his Creatures, then what an Encouragement is here unto Prayer?* Thou canſt not ſay, Alas! I now pray, but how ſhall God hear? He is in Heaven above, and I am on Earth below, many Thouſands of Miles diſtant from his preſence: How then ſhall my weak Whiſperings, that can ſcarce reach the Walls of mine own Cloſet, ever be able to reach his Ear? No, God's Eſſential Preſence is with thee whereſoever thou art, as he is in Heaven it ſelf; and God is all Ear, he can underſtand the ſilent Motions of thy Lips every-where, yea, he can underſtand the ſecret Motions of thy Heart. When *Hannah* prayed for her Son *Samuel*, *Eli*, the Prieſt of God, thought her Geſture did proceed from a diſtempered Head, and not from an holy Heart; But God was preſent with her Lips, and that Prayer which was thought by the Prieſt of God to be but a dumb ſhew, yet to God himſelf it was powerful Rhetorick and as loud as Thunder in his Ears. The *Scripture* generally intimates that all our Prayers ſhall be directed to God in Heaven. So *Solomon* prayed, 1 *Kings* 8. 32. *Then hear thou in Heaven*, &c. And it is again expreſſed in the 30th Verſe. So that moſt excellent Compoſure which Chriſt taught his Diſciples in the beginning of it, *Our Father, which art in Heaven*, it gives our Thoughts a Lift to Heaven. Now this doth not imply, that God doth no where hear our Prayers, but only in Heaven. But how then? Why is this Phraſe uſed? For theſe two Reaſons: Uſe 1.

Firſt, Becauſe Heaven is the moſt glorious place; there God eſpecially hath eſtabliſhed his Throne of Grace, and ſits upon it. Now, becauſe it is moſt Glorious and Majeſtick, and ſince *God* is there to hear Suits and receive Petitions, that are tendred up by all his *Servants* here on *Earth*, therefore the *Scripture* directeth us to that moſt glorious and celeſtial place, *Hear thou in Heaven.* Hence we have that Expreſſion, *Acts* 10. 4. *Thy Prayers and thine Alms are come up for a Memorial before God.* Certainly, if our Prayers ſhould not be heard till they come to Heaven, they are ſo weak and faint, that they would be out of breath by the way, and not be able then to ſpeak for themſelves: But yet God ſpeaks in us by his Spirit, and keeps alive the Senſe of his Majeſty upon our Hearts, that he would not have us think it to be a mean and trivial thing to have our Prayers heard; therefore he repreſents himſelf to us Arrayed in all his Glory.

Secondly, Our Prayers are directed to *God* in Heaven, becauſe though he hears them where-ever they be uttered, yet he no where hears them with acceptation but in Heaven only. Our Prayers are accepted by God becauſe they are heard in Heaven. Thy Prayers are not accepted by *God* becauſe *God* hears them upon Earth, as they are heard in thy *Cloſet*, or as they are heard in thy Heart, but only as they are heard in Heaven; and the reaſon is, becauſe that Prayers are acceptable only as they are preſented before *God* in the Meditation and Interceſſion of Jeſus Chriſt. He muſt mingle them with the Incenſe of his Merits, before they can aſcend up before *God* as a ſweet Savour. Now Chriſt performs his *Mediatory Office* no where but in Heaven; for though, as *God*, he be every where preſent, as the *Father* is, and therefore hears your Prayers whereſoever they be put up; yet, as *Mediator*, they are only heard in Heaven by him; and he hears no Prayers, but the Prayers of his People, as he is *Mediator*; and therefore it is no comfort to you, that Chriſt hears your Prayers, as he is *God* only, for ſo he doth, and cannot but do it, unleſs he hears your Prayers likewiſe as he is *Mediator*. Now Chriſt, as he is *Mediator*, he is *God-man*, for as he wrought out our Salvation in both Natures, ſo he ſtill continues to mediate for us in both Natures: And ſince the Human Nature is only in Heaven, therefore it follows, he performs the Mediatory Office only in Heaven. Now it is the Mediatorſhip of Chriſt alone that makes all our Prayers and Duties acceptable to *God* himſelf, therefore it concerns us ſtill to pray, *Lord, hear us in Heaven.* It is in vain that thou heareſt me on Earth, unleſs thou heareſt in Heaven too. My Prayers cannot be heard acceptably, unleſs thou heareſt them twice; thou heareſt my Prayers on Earth; not a Word of my Tongue but thou heareſt; but what will it avail thy Servant, unleſs thou heareſt my Prayers a ſecond time repeated over to thee in the Interceſſion and Mediation of Jeſus Chriſt in Heaven? And therefore, ſaith *Solomon*, 1 Kings 8. 34. *Hear thou in Heaven, and forgive.* When *God* ſhall only hear on Earth, he will be ſo far from forgiving, that he will be avenged; but when he hears our Prayers in Heaven, through the Mediation of Chriſt, then he is inclined to forgive and pardon us. Hence we find, that the Jews prayed towards the *Temple*, which was a Type of Heaven, and the *Altar* and *Incenſe* and *Mercy-Seat* in this *Temple* were Types of Chriſt, who is now in Heaven. And therefore *Daniel*, when in *Babylon*, *he prayed, his Window being open towards Jeruſalem*, towards the *Temple*; as if no Prayer were acceptable to *God*, but what was heard in Heaven. So *Jonah*, when he was in the Belly of the *Whale*, Jonah 2. 7. *My Prayer came in unto thee, into thine Holy Temple.* *Jonah* was a ſtrong Orator when he was in the ſlimy Paunch of the Whale; yea, but *God* was there, and *God* heard him there; but yet his Prayer would have been as filthy as his Perſon, if *God* had not heard him elſewhere than in the Belly of the Whale. *My Prayer came in unto thee, into thine Holy Temple.* That is, *God* heard him in Heaven. And therefore, though the Breath of *Jonah* could have no ſweetneſs, yet the Prayer that he breathed forth, came up as Incenſe and a ſweet Perfume before *God* as it came into the Holy Temple. Thus God hears the Prayers of his in Heaven; but the Prayers of the Wicked he hears only upon Earth; he hears them when they ſpeak them, but *God* never hears their Prayers in the Mediation of Chriſt; but the Prayers of his own People he hears on Earth, as he is an omnipreſent and omnipotent God; and he hears them in Heaven as he is a gracious and reconciled Father. If thou doſt but Whiſper thy Prayer, God will hear it; that which is but whiſpered on Earth, it rings and eccho's in the Court of Heaven; and if Chriſt ſpeaks our Prayers over to God, they

they become ſo loud, that God cannot ſtop his Ears againſt them. The Voice of Prayer is not like other Voices, the further they reach, the weaker they grow; no, that Voice which is ſo weak that it cannot be heard beyond the compaſs of thy *Cloſet*, yet when it is put forth in Prayer, it fills all Heaven with its ſound. But where is the encouragement unto Prayer in all this? If thou doſt belong to God, thou may'ſt have great encouragement unto Prayer from the Conſideration of his *Omnipreſence*; for becauſe of this there is no Prayer of a Child of God but ſhall be heard in Heaven though it be uttered in ſecret: For conſider, that though Chriſt, as Man, is only in Heaven, yet Chriſt, as God, is every-where preſent, and hears the Prayers of all Men in the World. Thoſe that are wicked he regards no further, but gives them the hearing; but for his own, he regards their Prayers, and preſents what he hears from them to God in Heaven; Chriſt makes his Omniſcience and Omnipreſence to be ſubſervient to the Work of his Mediatorſhip: One of his Offices is to be a faithful High-Prieſt and an Advocate to God for us; and Chriſt being ſuch an Advocate, that hears all the Suits and all the Cauſes of his Clients, we may be aſſured, that there is not one Prayer that God hears on Earth from us, but he hears it alſo in Heaven, through Chriſt. It was a notable Scoff of *Elijah* to *Baal*'s Prieſts, 1 *Kings* 18. 27. *Cry aloud, for he is a God*, &c. *peradventure he ſleepeth and muſt be waked.* As if he ſhould ſay, You ſerve an unworthy God, that cannot hear thoſe that pray unto him. And indeed how ſhould he do ſo, that is not Omnipreſent? *He is talking*, or *he is purſuing*, or *travelling*; *Cry! Cry aloud!* and peradventure, if he ſleepeth, that wall awaken him. But though you ſhould cry never ſo loud, though your Cry ſhould reach from Earth to Heaven, he would be ſilent; ſuch a God as yours could never hear. And therefore when *Elijah* himſelf came to pray, *Verſe* 36. the Text doth not tell us he cried aloud, but that he came near. But when *Baal*'s *Prieſts* roared and howled, like diſtracted Men, and cut themſelves in an Idolatrous manner, *Baal* is not prevailed with to hear them. Now, *Elijah came near*; that is, he came in a calm and ſedate manner, and poured out his fervent compoſure to God, as knowing, that that God whom he prayed to, *is preſent every-where.* The Voice in Prayer is neceſſary upon a threefold Account:

(1.) *Firſt*, As it is that which God requires ſhould be imployed in his Service, for this is the great end why our Tongues were given to us, that by them we might bleſs and ſerve God, *James* 3. 9.

(2.) *Secondly*, When in private it may be a Help and Means to raiſe up our own Affections and Devotions, then the Voice is requiſite, keeping it ſtill within the bounds of decency and privacy.

(3.) *Thirdly*, In our joyning alſo with others, it is a help likewiſe to raiſe and quicken their Affections; otherwiſe, were it not for theſe three Reaſons, the Voice is no more neceſſary to make known our Wants to God, than it is to make them known to our own Hearts; for God is always in us and with us, and knows what we have need of before we ask it.

Uſe 2. Secondly, As the Conſideration of God's Omnipreſence ſhould encourage us in Prayer, as knowing that God certainly hears us, ſo it ſhould affect us with a Holy Awe and Reverence of God in all our Prayers and Duties, and in the whole Courſe of our Lives and Converſations. Certainly it is an excellent Meditation to prepare our Hearts to Duty, and to compoſe them in Duty, to be much pondering the *Omnipreſence* of God, to think that I am with God, he is preſent in the Room with me, even in the Congregation with me, and likewiſe in my Cloſet, and in all my Converſe and Dealings in the World: How can it be poſſible for that Man to be frothy and vain, that keeps this Thought alive in his Heart? If the Preſence of ſome Earthly Perſon ſtrike an Awe in our Hearts when we come before them, how much more ſhould the Conſideration of God's Preſence affect us with an Holy Fear? Suppoſe an *Angel* ſhould fly in the midſt of us, that are here preſent, with a ruſhing and dazling Glory, how would it make all our Hearts beat and throb within us? It would make us ſoon abandon all thoſe vain Thoughts that now we feed upon, thoſe Thoughts that eat out the Heart and Life of Duty; how much more ſhould it affect us and fill us with Holy Fear, that God is now and always in the midſt of us, whoſe Glory ſtains and ſullies the Beauty, and extinguiſhes the Light of Angels. Oh! that God, that is always preſent with us, ſhould be worſhipped and ſerved with a Holy Fear, and remembred

with the greateſt Veneration. Now, to imprint this the more deeply, I ſhall ſuggeſt two or three Particulars.

(1.) *Becauſe God is in all things, therefore he ſees and knows all things.* The Omniſcience of God is grounded upon his Omnipreſence, *Jer.* 23. 24. *Can any hide himſelf in ſecret places, that I ſhall not ſee him, ſaith the Lord; do not I fill Heaven and Earth, ſaith the Lord?* Nothing in Heaven or in Earth can be hid or concealed from God's Eye, *Heb.* 4. 13. *All things are naked and opened before the Lord.* There is no Corner ſo retired, ſo ſhady, ſo dark, no Gulph ſo deep, that can hide any thing from the piercing diſcovery of his Eye: He knows our Thoughts, thoſe Nimble and thoſe Spiritual Things, that are ſo quick in their flight that they cannot be ſeized upon by any Creature in the World; God knows them, the Devil cannot know them, nor can an Angel know them; yet God diſcerns our Thoughts more clearly than we can diſcern the Faces of one another; he ſees *our Thoughts afar off*, as the *Pſalmiſt* tells us; he ſees our Thoughts in their firſt Conception, when they firſt begin to heave in our Breaſts; he knows the leaſt Windings and Turnings of our Souls. Now would not this compoſe us to an habitual and holy Awe of God, to be continually thinking that whatſoever we do, God's Eye is now upon us? Let every one ſay within himſelf, Where-ever I am, or whatever I do, I am in the Preſence of the Holy God, who takes notice of all my Carriages; there is not a Glance of mine Eye, but his Eye obſerves it; there is not an irreverent or unſeemly Geſture, but takes notice of it; there is not a Thought of mine can eſcape, but he knows that Thought; and *he knows my Down-lying and Up-riſing*, &c. Let this conſideration ſeaſon your Lives and Converſations; be ſtill pondering in your Minds, That whatſoever you are doing, his Eye is upon you, and he is preſent with you.

(2.) Secondly, *Conſider, That God not only ſees into all you do, but he ſees it to that very end that he may examine and ſearch into it.* He doth not only behold you with a common and indifferent Look, but with a ſearching, watchful and inquiſitive Eye; he pries into the Reaſons, the Motives, the Ends of all your Actions. *Pſal.* 11. 4. it is ſaid, *The Lord's Throne is in Heaven; his Eyes behold, his Eye-lids try the Children of Men. Rev.* 1. 14. where Chriſt is deſcribed, it is ſaid, *His Eyes are as a Flame of Fire.* You know the Property of Fire is to ſearch and make trial of thoſe things that are expoſed unto it, and to ſeparate the Droſs from the pure Metal: So God's Eye is like Fire, to try and Examine the Actions of Men; he knows and diſcerns how much your very pureſt Duties have in them of mixture and baſe ends of Formality, Hypocriſie, Diſtractedneſs and Deadneſs; he ſees through all your Specious Pretences, that which you caſt as a Miſt before the Eyes of Men, when yet thou art but a Juggler in Religion; all your Tricks and Sleights of Outward Profeſſion, all thoſe things that you uſe to cozen and delude Men withal, they cannot poſſibly impoſe upon him; he is a God that can look through all thoſe Fig-leaves of Outward Profeſſion, and diſcern the Nakedneſs of your Duties through them. In the laſt place,

(3.) Thirdly, *God tries all your Caſes and Actions, in order to an Eternal Judgment and Sentence to be paſſed upon them.* This Conſideration might damp the ſtouteſt Sinner's Heart in the whole World. Believe it, Sirs, God doth not only ſee your ways, but he ſees them ſo as to remember them againſt you another Day; though you have forgot what you have thought and what you have ſpoken, and what you have done, yet God for ever remembers them, and at that Day he will ſadly recall all theſe things again to your Remembrance. Oh! that therefore this might prevail with you ſo to do every thing, as being now already under the Eye of God, and ſhortly muſt be under his Doom and Sentence. Now if God ſhould ſend an Angel to ſtand at our Backs, and tell us whatever we are doing, this Action of ours we muſt be judged for; it ſhould make us fearful of ſinning, as that Angel himſelf. True, we have no ſuch Monitor, but our Conſcience performs to us the ſame Office: Therefore charge it upon your Conſciences, that they ſtill put you in mind of God; that he ſees you; that he will judge you; and that he always looks upon you, and writes down in thoſe Eternal Leaves of his Memorial-Book, whatſoever proceeds from you, either in Duties of Religion, or the Actions of your Ordinary Courſe and Converſation: Therefore, becauſe he is Omnipreſent and ſees all things, ſtand in awe of his Omniſciency, whereby he ſees whatſoever we do, and whereby he will try and judge us at the laſt Day.

SERMON

SERMON XXIX.

A DISCOURSE UPON PROVIDENCE.

MATTH. 10. 29, 30.

Are not two Sparrows ſold for a Farthing? And one of them ſhall not fall on the ground without your Father.

But the very Hairs of your Head are all numbred.

THE Myſtry of God's Providence, next to that of Man's Redemption, is the moſt Sublime and Inſcrutable. 'Tis eaſie in both to run our ſelves off our Reaſon. For as Reaſon confeſſeth it ſelf at a loſs when it attempts a ſearch into thoſe eternal Decrees of electing Sinners to Salvation, and deſigning Chriſt to ſave them, ſo muſt it likewiſe when it attemps to trace out all thoſe entangled Mazes and Labyrinths wherein the Divine Providence walks. We may ſooner tire Reaſon in ſuch a purſuit than ſatisfie it, unleſs it be ſome kind of ſatisfaction when we have driven it to a Non-plus, to relieve our ſelves with an ὁ βάθος; O the depth of the Wiſdom and Knowledge of God! How unſearcheable are his Judgments, and his Ways paſt finding out! This Knowledge therefore being too wonderful for us, I ſhall not preſume to conduct you into that ſecret Place, that Pavillion of Clouds, and ſurrounding Darkneſs where God ſits holding the Rudder of the World, and ſteering it through all the Floatings of Caſualty and Contingency to his own fore-ordained Ends; where he graſps and turns the great Engine of Nature in his Hands, faſtning one Pin and looſing another, moving and removing the ſeveral Wheels of it, and framing the whole according to the Eternal Idea of his own underſtanding. Let us content us, to conſider ſo much of God's Providence as may affect us with comfort in reflecting on that particular Care which he takes of us, rather than with Wonder and Aſtoniſhment by too bold a prying into thoſe hidden Methods whereby he exerciſeth it.

Our Saviour Chriſt in this Chapter giving Commiſſion to his Apoſtles, and ſending them forth to preach the Goſpel, obviates an Objection they might make, concerning the great danger that would certainly attend ſuch an Undertaking. To ſend them upon ſuch an hated Employment, would be no other than to thruſt them upon the Rage and Malice of the World, to ſend them forth as Sheep into the midſt of Wolves, who would doubtleſs worry and devour them; ſure we are to have our Meſſage derided, our Perſons injured, and that holy Name of thine on which we ſummon them to believe, Blaſphemed and Reviled; and though our Word may prove a Word of Life to ſome few of the Hearers, yet to us who are the Preachers of it, it will prove no other than Death. A vile and wretched World the whilſt, when the Goſpel of Peace and Reconciliation ſhall thus ſtir up Enmity and Perſecution againſt the Embaſſadors, who are appointed to proclaim it!

Now to this our Saviour Anſwers,

First,

Firſt, By ſhewing what the extent of their Adverſaries Power is, how far it can reach, and what miſchief it can do when God permits it to rage to the very utmoſt. And this he doth in the 28th Verſe, the Verſe immediately foregoing the Text: *Fear not them who kill the Body, but are not able to kill the Soul.* Or as St. *Luke* expreſſeth it, Chap. 12. 4. *They can kill the Body, but after that, have no more they can do.* Alas, are ſuch Men to be feared, who when they do their worſt, can only deſtroy your worſt part, which if they do not, yet Accidents or Diſeaſes will? What are your Bodies but Clogs to your Spirit, and Priſons to your Souls? And certainly thoſe Enemies are not very formidable, who when they moſt think to hurt you, only knock off your Clog, or break open your Priſon and let your Souls eſcape to their deſired Liberty.

Secondly, Our Saviour anſwers, that though they can kill the Body when God permits them; yet they cannot ſo much as touch it without his Permiſſion. And this he doth in the Words of my Text, by ſhewing how punctual and particular God's Providence is, even over the ſmalleſt, and thoſe that ſeem the moſt trifling Occurrences of the World; a Sparrow, whoſe price is but mean, two of them valued at a Farthing, which ſome make to be the tenth part of a *Roman* Peny, and was certainly one of their leaſt Coins, whoſe life therefore is but contemptible, and whoſe flight ſeems but giddy and at random; yet it falls not to the ground, neither lights any where without your Father. His all-wiſe Providence hath before appointed what Bough it ſhall pitch on; what Grains it ſhall pick up, where it ſhall Lodge, and where it ſhall Build; on what it ſhall Live, and when it ſhall Die. And if your Father's Providence be ſo Critical about the ſmall concernments, even of Sparrows; fear not ye, for you are of more Value than many Sparrows, yea, of more Value than many Men.

Our Saviour adds, The very Hairs of your Head are all numbred: God keeps an account even of that ſtringy Excrement; He knows how many fall off, and the preciſe number of thoſe that remain; and no wonder that he knows the number of our Sins, which are far more,

Hence we learn that God governs the meaneſt, the moſt inconſiderable, and contemptible Occurrences in the World by an exact and particular Providence. Do you ſee thouſand little Motes and Attoms wandring up and down in a Sunbeam? It is a God that ſo peoples it; and he guides their innumerable and irregular ſtrayings. Not a Duſt flies in a beaten Road; but God raiſeth it, conducts its uncertain motion, and by his particular care conveys it to the certain place he had before appointed for it, nor ſhall the moſt fierce and tempeſtuous Wind hurry it any farther. And if God's Care and Providence reacheth thus to theſe minute Things, which are but as it were the Circumſtances of Nature, and little Acceſſaries to the World; certainly Man who is the Head and Lord of it, for whoſe ſake and ſervice other Creatures were formed, may very well be confident that God exerciſe an eſpecial and moſt accurate Providence over Him and his Affairs.

By this you ſee what the Subject is intended to treat of, even the over-ruling and all-diſpoſing Providence of God, not a Sparrow, not a Hair of your Heads falls to the ground without your Father.

But before I proceed farther, I muſt take notice of two Things in the Words.

Firſt, That our Saviour ſpeaking here of the Providence of God, aſcribes to him the Name of our Father: God hath many Names and Titles attributed unto him in the Scriptures; as Father, Lord, Creator, Redeemer, Judge, King and God. But God is a word that denotes his Eſſence, Lord is a Title of his Dominion, Creator marks out his Omnipotence, Redeemer commends his Love, Judge is a Name of fear and aſtoniſhment, and King is a Title of Royal Majeſty: But this indearing Name of Father, ſignifies unto us his Providence, for from him as from a Father do we expect and receive guidance and government.

Secondly, Whereas nothing comes to paſs without our Heavenly Father, this may be underſtood three ways; without his permiſſion; without his ordination, and concurrence; without his over-ruling and directing it to his own Ends.

Firſt, No Evil comes to paſs without his permiſſive Providence.

Secondly, No Good comes to paſs without his ordaining and concurring Providence.

Thirdly, Nothing, whether good or evil, comes to paſs without the over-ruling Providence

Providence of our Father, guiding and directing it to his own Ends. But concerning this diſtinction of permiſſive, concurring and over-ruling Providence, I ſhall have occaſion to ſpeak more hereafter. My work at preſent ſhall be,

Firſt, To deſcribe unto you what the Providence of God is in the general notion thereof.

Secondly, To prove that all Affairs and Occurrences in the World, are guided and governed by Divine Providence.

Thirdly, To anſwer ſome puzling queſtions and doubts concerning the Providence of God, and ſome Objections that may be made againſt it.

Firſt, Let us ſee what Providence is. Take it in this diſcription: Providence is an Act of God, whereby according to his eternal and moſt wiſe Council, he preſerves and governs all Things, and directs them all to their ends, but chiefly to his own glory.

This Providence conſiſteth in two things, Preſervation, and Government of his Creatures.

Firſt, One remarkable Act of the Providence of God is the preſervation of his Creatures in their Beings: He preſerves them,

Firſt, In their Species and Kind, by the conſtant ſucceſſion of them one after another; ſo that though the individuals of them are mortal and periſh, yet the Species or Kind is immortal. There is no kind of Creature that was at firſt made by God, but it ſtill continueth to this very Day, and ſhall ſo do to the end of the World. And truly, it is the wonderful Providence of God thus to perpetuate the Creation; that whereas we ſee an inbred Enmity in ſome ſorts of Creatures againſt others, yet his Wiſdom ſo ſways their mutual Antipathies, that none of them ſhall ever prevail to a total Extirpation and Deſtruction of the other.

Secondly, He preſerves them likewiſe by his Providence in their individual and particular Beings, while they have a Room to fill up, and an Office to diſcharge in the Univerſe. Each Fly and Worm, as well as Man (who is but the greater Worm of the two) hath a work to do in the World; and till that be finiſh'd God ſuſtains its Being: Nor ſhall the weakeſt Creature be deſtroy'd, within the prefixed time that God hath ſet to its duration. There are none of us here alive this Day, but have abundant cauſe thankfully to acknowledge the powerful and merciful Providence of God in preſerving us in, and reſcuing us from many dangers and deaths to which we ſtood expoſed. It is only his Viſitation that hath hitherto preſerved our Spirits, and to his never-failing Providence we owe it that ſuch frail and feeble Creatures, who are liable to be cruſh'd before the Moth, liable to ſo many Diſeaſes and Accidents, have yet a Name among the Living, and have not yet failed from off the face of the Earth.

Secondly, As God preſerves, ſo he governs all things by his Providence and this Government conſiſts in two things, direction of the Creatures Actions, and diſtribution of Rewards and Puniſhments, according to the Actions of his rational Creatures.

Firſt, God by his governing Providence directs all the Actions of his Creatures, yea, and by the ſecret, but efficatious illapſe and penetration of the Divine Influence, he powerfully ſways and determines them which way he pleaſeth. And from this part of his Providence, brancheth forth his permiſſion of Evil Actions, and his concurrence to Good, both by the aſſiſtance of his common and likewiſe of his ſpecial Grace; and laſtly, his general influence into all the Actions of our Lives; all which we are inabled to perform by the Almighty Power of the Divine Providence, which as at firſt it beſtowed upon us natural Faculties; ſo by a conſtant concurrence doth excite and aſſiſt thoſe Faculties to their reſpective Operations.

Secondly, God by his governing Providence, diſtributes Rewards and Puniſhment according to our Actions: And this part of his Providence is oftentimes remarkable even in this preſent Life, when we ſee retributions of Divine Mercy and Vengeance, ſignally proportioned according to Mens demerits; but the more eſpecial manifeſtation and execution of it is commonly adjourned to the Life to come; and then all the ſeeming inequalities of God's diſpenſations here will be fully adjuſted in the eternal Recompence of the Godly, and eternal Puniſhment of the Wicked and Impenitent.

Now

Now by this Almighty Providence, God over-rules and ſways all things to his own glory. There is nothing comes to paſs, but God hath his ends in it, and will certainly make his own ends out of it; though the World ſeem to run at random, and Affairs to be huddled together in blind Confuſion and rude Diſorder; yet God ſees and knows the Concatenation of all Cauſes and Effects, and ſo governs them, that he makes a perfect Harmony out of all thoſe ſeeming Jarrings and Diſcords. As you may obſerve it in the Wheels of a Watch, though they all move with contrary Motions one to the other, yet they are uſeful and neceſſary to make it go right: So is it in theſe inferiour things, the proceedings of Divine Providence, are all regular and orderly to his own ends, in all the thwartings and contrarieties of ſecond Cauſes. We have this expreſt in that myſterious Viſion, *Ezek.* 1. 18. where the Providences of God are ſet forth by the Emblem of a Wheel within a Wheel, one interſecting and croſſing another; yet they are deſcribed to be full of Eyes round about. What is this, but to denote unto us, that though Providences are as turning and unſtable as Wheels; though they are as thwart and croſs as one Wheel within another, yet theſe Wheels are all nailed round with Eyes; God ſees and chuſes his way in the moſt intricate and intangled Providences that are; and ſo governs all things, that whilſt each purſues its own inclination, they are all over-ruled to promote his Glory. This is Providence, the two great parts of which are Preſervation and Government; and the great end of both theſe the glory of the Almighty and All-wiſe God. And this is it which our Saviour ſpeaks of when he tells the *Jews*, *John* 5. 17. *My Father worketh hitherto* (*viz.* in preſerving and governing his Creatures) *and I work.*

Secondly, The ſecond General propounded, was to demonſtrate to you, That all things in the World are governed by the Divine Providence. The old Philoſophers among the *Heathens*, had very different Notions concerning the Government of the World. Some held that all things were governed by an imperious and inevitable Fate, to which God himſelf was Subject: So *Chryſippus*, and the *Stoicks*. Others thought that all was left to blind Chance, and whatſoever came to paſs here below was only caſual and fortuitous; ſo the *Epicureans*: Others that the great God regarded only the more glorious Affairs of Heaven, but had committed the care of Earthly concernments unto inferiour Spirits, as his under Officers and Deputies: So moſt of the *Platoniſts*, thought their Maſter was Orthodox. Others, that God's Providence reached only to the great and important Matters of this World, but that it was too much a diſparagement to his infinite Majeſty to look after the motion of every Straw and Feather, and to take care of every trivial and inconſiderable Occurrence in this World. So ſpeaks *Cicero* in his Book *de natura Deorum*, *Magna Dii curant, parva negligunt.* [*vide Ariani Epictet. lib.* 1. *cap.* 12.] How much better is that moſt excellent ſaying of St. *Auſtin*, *Tu ſic curas unumquemq; noſtrum, tanquam ſolum cures, & ſic omnes tanquam ſingulos.* God takes as much care of every particular, as if each were all, and as much care of all, as if all were but one particular.

And to demonſtrate this all-diſpoſing Providence of God, I ſhall take two ways.

Firſt, From the conſideration of the Nature and Perfection of the Deity.

Secondly, From the contemplation of that Beauty and Order which we may obſerve in the World.

It is moſt neceſſary that we ſhould have our Hearts well eſtabliſh'd in the firm and unwavering belief of this Truth, that whatſoever comes to paſs, be it Good or Evil, we may look up to the hand and diſpoſal of all, to God; and if it be Good, may acknowledge it with praiſe; if Evil, bear it with patience; ſince he diſpenſeth both the one and the other; the Good to reward us, and the Evil to try us.

Now firſt, To demonſtrate it from the Being and Nature of God.

This I ſhall do in theſe following Propoſitions, which I ſhall lay down as ſo many Steps and Gradations.

Firſt, That there is a God is undoubtedly clear by the light of Nature. Never was there any People ſo barbarous and ſtupid, but did firmly aſſent to this Truth without any other proof than the deep impreſs upon their Hearts, and the obſervation of viſible Objects, that there was a Deity. 'Tis neither a Problem of Reaſon, nor yet ſtrictly an Article of Faith, but the unforced dictate of every Man's natural Conſcience; where Conſcience is not violently perverted, and under the force of thoſe Vices, whoſe intereſt it is that there ſhould be no God. Never was there any

any Nation that worſhip'd none, but their great ſottiſhneſs was, that they worſhip'd many.

Secondly, As all confeſs there is a God, ſo likewiſe that this God muſt neceſſarily have in himſelf all perfections, as being the firſt Principle and Source of all things. All theſe perfections of Wiſdom, Power, Knowledge, or the like, that we ſee ſcattered up and down among the Creatures, muſt all be concentred in God; and that in a far more eminent degree, becauſe whatever is found in Creatures is but derived and borrowed from him, and therefore it muſt needs follow, that becauſe it is of more perfection to be infinite in each perfection, therefore God is infinite in them all.

Thirdly, Among all the Perfections that are diſperſed among the Creatures, the moſt excellent is Knowledge and Underſtanding. For this is a property that agrees only to Angels and Men, who are the top and flower of the Creation; and therefore certainly this Perfection of the Creatures is to be found in God; yea, and that infinitely. His Knowledge and Wiſdom therefore is infinite.

Fourthly, His Knowledge being thus infinite, he both knows himſelf, and all other things in himſelf.

Firſt, God perfectly knows himſelf, he knows the boundleſs extent of his own Being; and though he be infinite and incomprehenſible to all others, yet is he finite and comprehenſible to himſelf: And hence it follows,

Secondly, That he knows particularly all other things. For if he knew himſelf perfectly, he muſt needs know all things beſides himſelf; becauſe none can perfectly know himſelf, that doth not fully know all that his Power and Strength can reach unto. But now there is nothing which the Power of God cannot reach, for by his Power he created all things. And therefore knowing his own Eſſence, which is the cauſe of all, he knows every thing in the fecundity of his Eſſence. Thus we have demonſtrated it from the Principles of Reaſon, that God neceſſarily knows all things. But *Providence* denotes more than *Knowledge*. And therefore,

Fifthly, This *Knowledge* that is in God, is not like that which we acquire; 'tis not a *Knowledge* that depends upon the Objects known, and forms Ideas from the contemplation of things already exiſting. But it is like the Knowledge of an Artificer which cauſeth and produceth the things it comprehends. God knows them before they are; and by knowing them brings them to paſs. God knows all things, ſaith St. *Auſtin, de Trinitat.* 15. *Not becauſe they are, but therefore they are becauſe God knew them.* So that his *eternal Knowledge* and *Underſtanding* gives Being to every thing in the World.

Sixthly, It appertains to him who gives *Being* to a thing to *preſerve* and *govern* it in its Being. And therefore God giving Being to all things, he alſo doth maintain and provide for them. 'Tis the very Law of Nature that he hath imprinted upon all his *Creatures*, to provide for their own Off-ſpring. We ſee with what ſollicitous Affection and Tenderneſs, even Brute and irrational *Creatures* do it. We are all the Off-ſpring of God, and he our common Parent. And therefore certainly he who hath inſpired ſuch Parental care in all things elſe, doth himſelf much more take care to give Education to all to which he hath given Being.

Thus you ſee is proved that God's Providence reacheth unto all things. It might likewiſe be demonſtrated from God's Omnipreſence. He is preſent every where, with, and in all his Creatures, and certainly he is not with them as an idle and unconcerned Spectator, but as the Director, and Governour of their Actions. But I ſhall proceed to the ſecond ſort of Arguments to prove the Divine Providence.

And thoſe are taken from the conſideration of the Frame and *Compages* of the World, the Beauty and Harmony which we ſee in Nature. The World is a Book wherein we may clearly read the wonderful Wiſdom of God. There is no Creature that doth not proclaim aloud, That God is the wiſe Creator and Governour of it. Who hath gilded the Globe of the Sun and put on his Rays? Who hath ſet its Bounds, and meaſured out its Race, that it ſhould without failing, without error or miſtake, know how to make its daily and annual Returns, and divide out Times and Seaſons to the World? Who hath given a particular Motion to all the Voluminous Orbs of Heaven, and beat out a Path for every Star to walk in? Who hath ſwathed in the great and proud Ocean, with a Girdle of Sand, and reſtrains the Waves thereof, that though they be higher than the Land, yet they ſhall not over-

flow it? Who poiſeth the oppoſitions and contrarieties that are in Nature in ſo even a Balance, that none of them ſhall ever prevail to a total Deſtruction of the other? Who brings up the great Family of brute Beaſts without tumult and diſorder? Do not all theſe great and wonderful works ſpeak forth the watchful Providence of God; who as he made them by his Word, ſo ſtill governs them by his Power? Therefore whatſoever we receive beneficial from them, whatſoever ſeems to provide for our Neceſſities or Conveniencies; it is God that hath ſo diſpenſed the Government of the World as to make it ſerviceable. If the Heavens turn and move for us, if the Stars, as ſo many burning Torches, light us in the obſcurity of the Night; if the Angels protect and defend us, let us acknowledge all this from the Providence of God only. It is he that turns the Heavens round their Axis: He lights up the Stars, he commands the Angels to be Miniſtring Spirits, Guards and Centinels about us. If the Fire warm us, the Air refreſh us, the Earth ſupport us, it is God that hath kindled the Fire, that hath ſpread forth the Air, ſtabliſh'd the Earth upon the Pillars of his own Decree that it ſhould not be ſhaken. And let us know too, that when we want theſe Creatures for our ſuſtentation, if the Heavens, if the Angels, if the Earth, if the Sea, if all Things ſhould fail us, yea, bandy and ſet themſelves againſt us, yet God who provides for us by them, can alſo, if he pleaſe, provide for us without them.

Thus we have diſpatch'd the two general Inquiries, and have deſcribed and demonſtrated unto you the Divine Providence.

The third which remains, is to anſwer ſome Queſtions and Doubts which may be made, and have indeed been ſtrongly urged againſt the Government of the World by Providence.

As Firſt, If the World be governed by Providence, whence comes it that wicked and ungodly Men flouriſh and proſper? That God ſhines upon their Tabernacles, and drops fatneſs upon all their Paths? Whereas on the contrary, the Godly are often expoſed to Poverty, Contempt, Reproaches, perſecuted by Men, afflicted by God. Would it not be as agreeable to the Divine Goodneſs, to caſt abroad the Wealth, the Pomp, and Glory of this World with an undeciding Hand, leaving Men to ſcramble for them as they can, as that he ſhould with a particular and ſtudied Care advance thoſe who contemn him, and cruſh thoſe who humbly truſt and depend upon him? Can I think the World is governed by the Providence of a Juſt God, when uſually unjuſt Men govern the World under him? When ſwaggering Sinners, who deſpiſe him, have Power likewiſe to controul others? Is it Wiſdom to put a Sword into that Hand which will turn the point of it againſt the giver? Or Juſtice to impower them to all thoſe Acts of Rapine, Violence, and Oppreſſion, which they commit? And ſhall we call that Providence which is neither wiſe nor juſt? One hath an unexhauſted Store to ſupply his diſſolute Luxury and Riot, another ſcarce Neceſſaries to maintain a poor Life ſpent in the Commands of God. Here a wicked *Dives*, who worſhipped no other God but his own Belly, feaſts deliciouſly every day; whilſt a godly *Lazarus* ſtarves at this Glutton's Gate, and entertains the Dogs with licking of his Sores. And what, doth God's particular Care furniſh the Glutton's Table with daily acceſs, who will not give the remaining Scraps to God's Children? If there be Divine Providence in this, what is become of the Divine Equity? This inequality of Affairs ſeem to perſuade that it is not the Holy and Righteous God of Heaven, but rather the God of this World, that governs the Concerns of it, and that he ſpoke Truth, when he told our Saviour, *Luke* 4. 6. *The Power and Glory of this World is delivered unto me, and to whomſoever I will, I give it.*

Now to Anſwer this. Firſt, This Quarrel is not of late commenced againſt Heaven; but it hath been the Complaint of all Ages. It raiſed Controverſies among the very Heathens themſelves, ſome of them upon this Ground denying, and others again by whole Treatiſes defending the government of the World by Providence. And no wonder it ſhould puzzle them, ſince the very beſt of God's Saints and Servants have likewiſe ſtumbled at this Stone of Offence. Thus the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 73. 2, 3. &c. *As for me my Feet were almoſt gone, my ſteps had well nigh ſlipt: For I was envious at the Fooliſh, when I ſaw the proſperity of the Wicked.* So likewiſe the Prophet *Jeremy* 12. 1. *Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee, yet let me talk with thee of thy Judgment: Wherefore doth the way of the wicked proſper? Wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherouſly?* This therefore is an old

grief,

grief, which in all Ages of the World hath been complained of. And though at firſt ſight it ſeems to confute the Providence of God, yet if we more narrowly conſider it, 'tis a ſtrong confirmation of it. For ſince Virtue and Goodneſs is ſo deſpicable a thing in the World; ſince holy and good Men have been always injured and perſecuted, certainly were there not an all-wiſe Providence that finds out ways and means of its own to counterpoiſe theſe Diſadvantages, and to preſerve them amidſt the rage and hatred of their implacable Enemies, long e're this there had been none of them left, either to have ſuffered or complained. Were there no other Argument to prove that God governs the World, this would ſuffice, even, That his Servants have been continually oppreſſed in it, yet never could be rooted out of it. Though Men and Devils have combined together againſt them, and God (as they have complained) have ſeemed to abandon them; yet ſuch a fenceleſs and forlorn Generation as this, hath been hitherto, and ſhall ſtill be preſerved to the very end of the World. Doth not this ſpeak forth the Power and Care of Almighty God, thus to keep a Buſh unconſumed in the midſt of Fire? To preſerve Fuel untouch'd in the very embraces of Flames?

Secondly, God doth chaſtiſe his own People, and proſper the Wicked, that he might thereby rectifie our Judgments, and teach us not to account Adverſity the greateſt Evil, nor yet Proſperity the chiefeſt Good. For certainly were they ſo, only the Righteous ſhould enjoy the Grandeur, Pomp, and Glory of this World, and only the Wicked and Ungodly become miſerable. Concerning this, St. *Auſtin* ſpeaks excellently in his 70th Epiſtle, " Worldly Things, *ſaith he*, are in themſelves but indifferent, and good and evil only as they are improved; but leſt they " ſhould be thought always evil, therefore *God* ſometimes gives them to thoſe who " are good, and leſt they ſhould be thought the higheſt and the chiefeſt good, they " are ſometimes given to thoſe who are evil. And a like Saying to this hath *Seneca*, in his Book *de Provident. cap.* 5. There is no ſuch way to traduce the Riches, the Honours, the Pleaſures of this Life, thoſe vain Nothings which are ſo earneſtly deſired, and eagerly purſued by the moſt, no ſuch way to beat down their Price in the eſteem of all wiſe and good Men, as for God to beſtow thoſe upon the Vileſt, which he ſometimes denies to the Beſt and Holieſt.

Thirdly, When God beſtows any temporal good thing upon wicked and ungodly Men, he gives it as their Portion; and when he brings any Calamity on his own Children, he inflicts it for their tryal. Is it not ordinary that a Servant receives more for Wages, than a Son may have for the preſent at his own command? God is the Father, and bountiful Maintainer of the whole Family both in Heaven and Earth; a Father to the Faithful, a Lord and Maſter over all. He may give his Slaves large Wages, when his own Children poſſibly have not ſo much in hand. Is he therefore hard or unjuſt? No: The Inheritance is theirs, and that is kept in reverſion for them. What wicked Men poſſeſs of this World, is all that ever they can hope for. Why ſhould we grudge them filled Bags, or ſwelling Titles? 'Tis their whole Portion. They now receive their good Things. Haſt thou Food and Cloathing? That is Childrens Fare: Envy not ungodly Men, who flaunt it in the Gallantry of the World. They have more than you; but 'tis all they are like to have. The Pſalmiſt gives us an account of their Eſtate, *Pſal.* 17. 14. *They are the Men of this World, who have their Portion in this Life, whoſe Bellies God filleth with his hid Treaſure:* Whereas thou, O Chriſtian, who poſſeſſeſt nothing, art Heir apparent of Heaven, Co-heir with Jeſus Chriſt, who is the Heir of all things, and haſt an infinite Maſs of Riches laid up for thee: So great and infinite that all the Stars of Heaven are too few to account it by. You have no reaſon to complain of being kept ſhort; for all that God hath is yours: Whether Proſperity or Adverſity, Life or Death, all is yours. What God gives is for your comfort, what he denies or takes away is for your tryal; it is for the increaſe of thoſe Graces which *are far more gracious than any Temporal Enjoyment*. If by ſeeing wicked and ungodly Men flow in *Wealth and Eaſe*, when thou art forced to ſtruggle againſt the *Inconveniencies and Difficulties of a poor Eſtate*, thou haſt learnt an *Holy Contempt and Diſdain of the World*. believe it *God hath herein given thee more*, than if he had given *thee the World it ſelf*.

Fourthly, God doth many times even in the World expound the Myſtery of his Providence, by the fatal and dreadful overthrow of thoſe wicked Men whom he for a while ſuffered to proſper. *The triumph of the wicked*, ſaith *Job*, 20. 5. *is ſhort*. At longeſt it is but ſhort, becauſe meaſured out by a ſhort Life. Now is their Tri-

umph, hereafter their Torment: But many times God brings them to ruin even in this Life. He turns the Wheel of Providence and makes it paſs over thoſe who but a while before ſat vaunting a top of it. And then wilt thou doubt whether God governs the World by Providence? Wilt thou doubt whether *God* be juſt in ſuffering wicked Men to proſper and flouriſh? *God* lifts them up on high, only that he may caſt them down with the more terrible Fall. When the Workers of Iniquity proſper, (ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 97. 2.) it is that they might be deſtroyed for ever. Now when *God* comes thus to execute Judgment upon them, thoſe who queſtioned the Providence of *God* in their advancement, will the more glorifie it in their downfal. The Righteous ſhall ſee it and be glad, and ſhall ſay, Verily there is a Reward for the Righteous, verily there is a God that judgeth in the Earth, *Pſal.* 58. 11.

Fifthly, If *God* doth not clear up this inequality of his Providence in this Life, yet he will certainly do it at the Day of Judgment. And indeed the ſtrange diſpenſation of Affairs in this World, is an Argument that doth convincingly prove that there ſhall be ſuch a Day, wherein all the *Involucra* and Intanglements of Providence ſhall be clearly unfolded. Then ſhall the Riddle be diſſolved, why God hath given this and that prophane Wretch ſo much Wealth, and ſo much Power to do Miſchief. Is it not that they might be deſtroyed for ever? Then ſhall they be called to a ſtrict account for all that plenty and proſperity for which they are now envied: And the more they have abuſed, the more dreadful will their Condemnation be. Then it will appear that *God* gave them not as Mercies, but as Snares. 'Tis ſaid *Pſalm* 11. 6. *That God will rain on the Wicked Snares, Fire and Brimſtone, and an horrible Tempeſt.* When he ſcatters abroad the deſirable things of this World, Riches, Honours, Pleaſures, *&c.* then he rains Snares upon them: And when he ſhall call them to an account for theſe things, then he will rain upon them Fire and Brimſtone, and an horrible Tempeſt of his Wrath and Fury. *Dives* who carrowſed on Earth, yet in Hell could not obtain ſo much as one poor drop of Water to cool his ſcorch'd and flaming Tongue. Had not his exceſs and intemperance been ſo great in his Life, his fiery thirſt had not been ſo tormenting after Death. And therefore in that ſad Item that *Abraham* gives him, *Luke* 16. 5. he bids him remember, that thou in thy Life-time receiveſt thy good things, and *Lazarus* evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou tormented. I look upon this as a moſt bitter and a moſt deſerved *Sarcaſm*, upbraiding him for his groſs Folly, in making the Trifles of this Life his good things: *Thou haſt received thy good things, but now thou art tormented.* Oh, never call *Dives*'s Purple and delicious Fare good things, if they thus end in Torments! Was it good for him to be wrapt in Purple, who is now wrapt in Flames? Was it good for him to fare deliciouſly, who was only thereby fatted up againſt the day of Slaughter? Could you lay your Ears to Hell Gates, you might hear many of the Grandees and Potentates, the great and rich ones of this World curſing all their Pomp and Bravery, and wiſhing they had been the moſt deſpicable of all thoſe whom they once hated, oppreſs'd and injur'd: And as it will appear at that Day that none of the enjoyments of this World are good to wicked Men; ſo that none of thoſe Afflictions and Calamities which good Men ſuffer are Evil. *Lazarus*'s Sores are not Evil, ſince now every Sore is turned into a Star. His lying proſtrate at the rich Miſer's door is not Evil, ſince now he lies in *Abraham*'s Boſom: And in this day all theſe intricacies of Providence will be made plain, and we ſhall have other apprehenſions of things, than what we have at preſent. Now we call Proſperity, Riches and Abundance, Good Things; and Want and Affliction, Evil. But when we come to conſider theſe with relation to Eternity, the true Standard to meaſure them by, then Poverty may be a Mercy, and Riches a Judgment; God may bleſs one by Afflictions, and Curſe another by Proſperity: He may beſtow more upon us in ſuffering us to want, than if he ſhould give us the Store and Treaſures of all the Earth. And certainly whatever our thoughts of it are now, yet within a while this will be the Judgment of us all. When we are once lodged in our Eternal State, then we ſhall acknowledge that nothing in this World deſerved the name of good, but as it promoted our eternal Happineſs; nor of evil, but as it tends to eternal Miſery.

And thus you ſee this grand Objection anſwered, and the Providence of God cleared from that Injuſtice which we are apt peeviſhly to impute unto it.

Other Doubts are of leſs moment, and therefore ſhall be brieflier reſolved.

As

As Secondly, If God's Providence ordains all things to come to paſs according to the immutable Law of his purpoſe, then what neceſſity is there of Prayer?

We cannot by our moſt fervent Prayers alter the leaſt circumſtance, or punctilio in God's Decrees. If he hath ſo laid the method of his Providence in his own Counſels as to prepare Mercies and Bleſſings for us, our Prayers cannot haſten, nor maturate them before their time: Or if he determine by his Providence to bring Afflictions upon us, our Prayers cannot prevent, nor adjourn them beyond their prefixed time. Now to this *Aquinas* 2. 29. 83. *Art.* 2. Anſwers well, that the Divine Providence doth not only ordain what Effects ſhall come to paſs, but alſo by what means and cauſes, and in what order they ſhall flow. God hath appointed, as the effect it ſelf, ſo the means to accompliſh it. Now Prayer is a means to bring to paſs that which God hath determined ſhall be. We do not Pray out of hope to alter God's Eternal Purpoſes, but we Pray to obtain that which God hath ordained to be obtained by our Prayers: We ask, that thereby we may be fit to receive what God hath from all Eternity determined to give by Prayer, and not otherwiſe. And therefore when we lie under any Affliction, if we languiſh under Pain or Sickneſs, if we are pinch'd by Want or Poverty, if we are oppreſs'd by the Injuries and Perſecutions of others, Prayer is neceſſary, becauſe as God by his Providence hath brought theſe things upon us, ſo likewiſe poſſibly the ſame Providence hath determined not to remove them, till we earneſtly and fervently Pray for our deliverance from them. And therefore when God had promiſed great Mercies to the *Jews*, he tells them by the Prophet *Ezek.* 36. 37. *Yet will I for this be enquired of by the Houſe of* Iſrael *to do it for them.* Prayer therefore doth not incline God to beſtow that which before he was not reſolved to give, but it capacitates us to receive that which God will not give otherwiſe.

Thirdly, Another Objection may be this, If Providence ordereth and diſpoſeth all the Occurences of the World, then there can nothing fall out caſually and contingently.

I Anſwer: In reſpect of God it is true, there is nothing caſual nor contingent in the World. A thing may be caſual in reſpect of particular Cauſes; but in reſpect of the univerſal and firſt Cauſe, nothing is ſuch. If a Maſter ſhould ſend a Servant to a certain place, and command him to ſtay there till ſuch a time, and preſently after ſhould ſend another Servant to the ſame, the meeting of theſe two is wholly caſual in reſpect of themſelves, but ordained and foreſeen by the Maſter that ſent them. So is it in all fortuitous Events here below: They fall out unexpectedly as to us, but not ſo as to God; he foreſees and he appoints all the viciſſitudes of Things, and all the Surpriſes of humane Accidents. So that you ſee there may be Contingencies in the World, though God's Providence be moſt particular and punctual.

Fourthly, Some may object that this would deſtroy the liberty of Man's Will, and ſubject all things to a fatal neceſſity, even humane Actions themſelves. For if Man can do nothing but what God hath by his Providence fore-appointed ſhall be done, how then is Man free either to do, or not to do?

This Queſtion requires much more time to anſwer it at large than I can allow it. Some ſeeing it a very difficult thing to reconcile Providence and Liberty, have preſumed to deny that Providence intermeddles at all in ſuch Affairs as depend upon the free-will of Man. And of this Opinion *Tully* ſeems to have been; for which St. *Auſtin* chaſtiſeth him as injurious to God; when he ſaith, *Voluntatem dum faceret liberam, fecit Sacrilegam.* I ſhall not here ſtand to diſtinguiſh of a neceſſity of Coaction, and a neceſſity of Infallibility, and that the Providence of God doth not bring upon the Will a neceſſity of Coaction, but only of Infallibility, which very well conſiſts with the liberty of the Will. All that I ſhall at preſent anſwer, is, That God doth indeed efficaciouſly determine the Will to do what it doth, yet this determination leaves it in a perfect State of liberty, becauſe the liberty of the Will doth not ſo much conſiſt in indifferency to act, or not to act, as in a rational Spontaneity. When we do what we have an Appetite to do upon Grounds that to us ſeem rational, then we act freely. Now though God doth abſolutely ſway the Will which way he pleaſeth, yet he never forceth it contrary to its own Inclinations. For that to which God determines it by his Providence ſeems at that preſent moſt rational to be done; and upon that repreſentation

ſentation of good in the Object, the Will embraceth it and acts accordingly. So that its Providence is not violated by any boiſterous and compulſive ſway, that the firſt Cauſe hath over it, but God attracts it with ſuch a powerful and inſinuating Sweetneſs, that though the Will can incline to nothing but what it ſeems to have reaſon for, yet withal it wills nothing but what God by Providence over-rules it unto. So *Auſtin de Civitate Dei*, lib. 5. cap. 9. *Nos dicimus & Deum ſcire omnia antequam fiant, & voluntate nos facere quecquid a Nobis non niſi volentibus fieri ſentimus & novimus.* Though God fore-ſees and decrees all things before they are, yet we do that with a free-will, which we do not otherwiſe than willingly.

Fifthly, The laſt Doubt and Query is this: If God govern all Actions, and all Affairs, by an exact and critical Providence; how then comes it to paſs that there is ſo much Evil, Villany and Wickedneſs committed in it? The Diſquiſition of this is the more obſcure and intricate, becauſe it is hard to conceive how God, who is infinite Goodneſs it ſelf, ſhould intereſt his Providence in what is ſo contrary to his Nature.

Now here we muſt affirm that there is no Evil whatſoever, whether it be of Sin, or of Suffering, that comes to paſs without the Providence of God. As for the Evil of Puniſhment or Suffering, it is clear, *Amos* 3. 6. *Shall there be Evil in the City, and the Lord hath not done it?* But for the Evil of Sin it is not effectively from God; yet doth he by his Providence, for moſt holy and wiſe Ends, permit wicked Men to commit thoſe Sins which his Law prohibits, and his Nature abhors. Tho' they refuſe to be ſubject to the Written Law, yet they are and muſt be ſubject to the eternal Law of his own Counſels, and there is not a Sin they commit, but as his Authority condemns, and his Purity hates it; ſo his Wiſdom both ſuffers it to be, and over-rules it when it is, to his own ends. 'Tis true, all Men naturally are Slaves to their Luſts, but God holds their Chain in his own Hands; ſometimes ſlackning it by his Permiſſion, and ſometimes ſtraitning it by his powerful Reſtraint. And therefore to plead Providence the warrant of our Actions (a boiſterous Argument which of late hath been moſt uſed among us, until Providence it ſelf had ſignally confuted it) is to plead that for the juſtification of our Actions, without which they could not be ſinful. Thus *Cain* killed his Brother by a Providence, and *Achan* ſtole the Wedge of Gold, and *Judas* betrayed Chriſt, and the *Jews* Crucified him by a Providence, yea and all the Villany that was ever acted under the Sun, was all brought forth out of the Curſed Womb of Mens Luſts, by the Providence of God, that is, by his permiſſion to the Evil, and concurrence as to the Act: Neither is this any ſtain at all to the infinite Holineſs and Purity of his Nature; for though we ſin, if we hinder not the commiſſion of Sin in others when it is in our Power to do it, becauſe we are commanded and obliged to it both by the Care we ought to have of his Honour, and the Charity we owe unto the Souls of others; yet no ſuch obligation lies upon God, who may juſtly give Men over to their perverted Inclinations. And though he can eaſily keep the moſt wicked Man in the World, from ruſhing into thoſe Sins which he daily commits, yet not being bound to interpoſe his Power to hinder them, he permits them holily, and at laſt will puniſh them juſtly.

But the Queſtion is not ſo much whether God doth not by his Providence permit Sin, as why he doth it. And St. *Auſtin* anſwers it excellently in that known Saying of his; God, ſaith he, who is infinitely good, would never permit Evil were he not alſo infinitely Wiſe, and knew how to bring Good out of Evil. It is the primary object of his Hatred, and that alone for which he hates wicked Men. As he is an Holy God, ſo he hates it; and as he is a wiſe God, ſo he permits it. And there is a twofold good for which God doth ſometimes permit Evil.

Firſt, The manifeſtation of his own Glory.

Secondly, The exerciſe of his Peoples Graces.

Firſt, God by permitting Sin manifeſts the Glory of many of his Attributes. *Surely the wrath of Man ſhall praiſe thee*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 76. 10. Every Sin ſtrikes at ſome of the Divine Attributes. One denies his Juſtice, another his Mercy; one his Power, another his Wiſdom, and all are contrary to his Purity. But yet God hath in his own Counſels ſuch ſecret Screws and Wires whereby he doth ſo wreath and invert theſe Pins that eventually they advance what they ſeem directly to oppoſe. A Child perhaps would think when he ſees an Husbandman caſt Dung and Soil upon his Field, that it were but improvidently done thus to

ſpoil

ſpoil the flouriſhing verdure and gayety of the Graſs and Flowers. Why, that very Dung which covers them, makes them afterwards ſprout up more fair and freſh. So God permits wicked Men to Dung the Earth with their Filth, that thoſe Attributes of his which ſeem to be buried under them, may afterwards ſpring up with the greater Luſtre and Glory. From hence he will reap the richer Crop of Praiſe to himſelf. Sometimes he glorifies the ſeverity of his Juſtice, by hardening them in their Sins to their own deſtruction; ſometimes the Riches of his Mercy, by calling the greateſt and moſt flagitious Sinners to Repentance, and granting them Pardon; and always his infinite patience and forbearance in not executing preſent Vengeance upon thoſe who ſo daringly provoke him. But although we cannot now ſo clearly comprehend the Advantages that God makes out of the Sins of Men, yet when we come to ſtand in the general Aſſembly at the Day of Judgment; God will then comment upon, and explain the Myſteries of his Providence, and make us underſtand how thoſe Sins for which he will then condemn the World, put a gloſs and ſhine upon his Attributes.

Secondly, God by permitting Sin exerciſeth the Graces of his People. The Sins of others give us matter for the exerciſe of an Holy Zeal, for God who is daily affronted by them; of an Holy Pity and Commiſeration over thoſe who like Mad-men wound, and gaſh, and deſtroy themſelves; for the exerciſe of an Holy Caution over our ſelves, leſt we be induced to ſin after their Example. Our own Sins give us daily occaſion to renew our Repentance, to humble our Souls before God, to fortifie our Reſolutions, to double the Guards we ſet upon our own Hearts and Ways, to watch over our ſelves more circumſpectly, that we relapſe not into the Commiſſion of them again. Thus a true Chriſtian may gain ſome advantage by his very Falls. As Husbandmen make uſe of the very Thorns and Briars that grow in their Fields to ſtop the Gaps, and and ſtrengthen the Fences about them, ſo ſhould we improve our very Sins and Failings, to fence our Souls that we lie not open to the like Temptations for the future.

Thus, you ſee that God brings Good out of all the Evil which he permits, he glorifies his own Attributes, and exerciſeth his Peoples Graces. And thus you ſee likewiſe, God's Providence both Proved and Vindicated; aſſerted to be particular and punctual over all Occurrences that happen in the World; and cleared from all the Imputations of Injuſtice, that the Folly or Atheiſm of Man can lay againſt it. I ſhall conclude with two or three Inferences or Corollaries.

Firſt, If the accurateneſs of God's Providence reach unto all the little Concernments of the World, we may be well aſſured, that thoſe which are the more conſiderable and important Occurrences of it, are all guided and governed by a ſpecial Hand of Providence. And thus our Saviour himſelf urgeth as a ſtrong Incouragement for our confidence and truſt in God: *Not a Sparrow falls to the ground without your Father; fear not ye therefore, you are of more worth than many Sparrows.* Yea, not an Hair of your Head falls without a Providence, and think ye that the Head it ſelf ſhall? Certainly, God doth not like *Domition*, buſie himſelf about Flies, and neglect the great and weighty Affairs of his Government. And this is the reaſon of that Queſtion the Apoſtle asks, 1 *Cor.* 9. 9. *Doth God take care for Oxen?* Yes, certainly he doth, nor did the Apoſtle intend to deny it, but thereby to infer that certainly his Care is much more particular towards us. This then may eſtabliſh our Hearts under any perſonal Sufferings or publick Calamities, when Evil is upon our ſelves or the Nation, when Uproars and Confuſions ſeems to reduce the World back to its ancient Chaos; when Storms and Waves overwhelm the Ship, and we with the Diſciples think our good God aſleep, and begin to cry out with the Pſalmiſt, *Awake, O Lord, why ſleepeſt thou?* Our God is not ſleeping, but even then at the Helm, he Steers, he Governs and Guides all theſe Diſorders, and will conduct the whole Tumult and Hurry of Affairs to his own Glory and our Good.

Secondly, If God's Providence hath the Command and Sway even over the Sins of Men, this then may be abundant matter of Peace and Satisfaction in the worſt of times, when Wickedneſs doth moſt of all rage and abound; let us then conſider, that if God permits them, he alſo can when he pleaſeth Check, put a Stop and

and Period to their Rage and Madneſs. Their Hands are fettered by the Adamantine Chains of a moſt ſtrong Decree, which they can neither reverſe nor exceed; whatſoever they do, is but by Permiſſion; a limited, and a limiting Permiſſion. Our Saviour tells us, *Pilate, thou couldeſt have no power over me, except it were given thee from above.* The very power that Men have to ſin againſt God, is from God; and therefore certainly he will withdraw it, when it doth not work out his own ends. This was it that ſatisfied *David*, when *Shimei* pelted him with Stones and Curſes, 2 *Sam.* 16. 10. *Let him alone, let him Curſe, becauſe the Lord hath ſaid unto him, Curſe David.*

Thirdly, Hence ſee to what we ought to aſcribe it, that there is no more notorious Wickedneſs committed in the World; when we hear of any prodigious Villany, we are apt to wonder that ever ſuch Abominations ſhould be incident to the Sons of Men. Wonder not at the matter as if any ſtrange thing were happened to them, but rather wonder at the goodneſs of God which is the ſole Cauſe that ſuch things as theſe are Wonders. Were his permiſſive Providence as large as Mens Luſts are outragious, theſe things would ſoon ceaſe to be Wonders, and become the common and ordinary practice of all Men. Why are not our Streets continually filled with Violence, Rapine, Murthers, and Out-cries? Whence is it that we enjoy our Poſſeſſion, and our Lives in Safety? The wickedneſs of Men lies hard, and preſſeth upon God's Reſtraints, and whereſover there are any gaps in it, it breaks forth naturally and violently, and if this Dam and Mound of Divine Providence, were but broken down, it would break out till it had overflow'd the whole Face of the Earth, and covered it with a Deluge of Impiety and Prophaneneſs. But that God, who ſets Bounds to the raging of the Sea, and ſaith hitherto ſhall thy proud Waves come and no farther, doth by the ſame Almighty Providence, ſet Bounds to the Luſts and Corruptions of Men, which are altogether as unruly, and curbs in the Fury of their Madneſs, which elſe would drown the whole World in Perdition and Deſtruction.

Fourthly, and Laſtly, This ſhould teach us, to acquieſce and reſt ſatisfied in every Providence of God, as that which will certainly in the end redound to his own Glory. When we ſee Diſorders and Confuſions abroad in the World, we are apt to deſpond and to cry out, Lord, what wilt thou do for thy great Name, thy Honour, thy Glory lies bleeding, and ſuffers through the Sins of Men? Why, commit thy care to God: He will certainly ſo wield their Luſts, as that they ſhall bring about and effect his own ends. God is Glorifying himſelf, even by theſe things; and why then ſhould we be troubled? This Thought kept alive on our Hearts would cauſe us to reſt ſatisfied amidſt all the Tumults we obſerve and hear of in the World. For though we know not how to unwind theſe ravelled Diſpenſations to the bottom of his Glory, yet he can and will. There is an inviſible and wiſe Hand that moulds and faſhions all; and though the parts by themſelves may appear rude and unpoliſh'd, yet put the whole frame and ſeries of Providence together, and that will appear moſt admirable and glorious.

Now to the King Eternal, Immortal, Inviſible, the only wiſe God, Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt, be Honour and Glory for ever, and ever, *Amen.*

SERMON

SERMON XXX.

A DISCOURSE Concerning the Uſe of the HOLY SCRIPTURES.

COLOSSIANS iii. 16.

Let the word of Chriſt dwell in you richly in all wiſdom.

THIS Epiſtle, if any other, is a rich Mine of Heavenly Treaſure, and abounds both in the diſcovery of Goſpel Myſteries, and the Injunction of Chriſtian Duties. It is furniſh'd throughout with that which may either inſtruct us in Knowledge, or direct us in Practice: And the Apoſtle having already laid down many Excellent Things in order to both theſe; and ſeeing it would be an endleſs Task to diſcourſe unto them all the Truths, or exhort them to all the Duties of Religion in particular; he therefore ſpeaks compendiouſly in the Words of my Text, and refers them to the perfect Syſtem in which is contained an account of what a Chriſtian ought to know or do; and that is the Holy Scriptures. *Let the word of Chriſt dwell in you richly.*

The Words of this Exhortation are very full, and laden with weighty Senſe. We may reſolve them into two parts.

Firſt, Here is the Nature and Subſtance of the Exhortation, which is to a diligent Study, and plentiful knowledge of the Holy Scriptures.

Secondly, The manner how we ought to be Converſant in them; *So that it may dwell in us richly in all wiſdom.*

In the former we may take notice that the Scripture is called the Word of Chriſt; and that upon a double account: Both becauſe he is the Author that compoſed it, and likewiſe, he is the ſubject matter of which it principally treats. Now though in both theſe reſpects, the Scriptures of the New Teſtament be more eſpecially the Word of Chriſt; yet alſo may the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament as truly and properly go under his Name. For,

Firſt, He is the Author of them all: He may well write this Title upon our Bibles, *The Works of Jeſus Chriſt*. All the Prophets before his Incarnation, were but his Amanuenſes, and wrote only what he by his Spirit dictated to them, 2 *Pet.* 1. 21. *Prophecy came not in old time by the will of Man, but Holy Men of God ſpake as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt*; and certainly the Holy Ghoſt inſpired them by Chriſt's Authority and Commiſſion; and what he declared, he took from him, *and ſhewed it unto them*, John 16. 14, 15. *He ſhall receive of mine, and ſhall ſhew it unto you.*

Secondly, Chriſt alſo is the principal Subject and Matter of the whole *Scripture*. The ſending Chriſt a Saviour into the World, is that great Buſineſs which hath employed the Counſel of the Father, the Admiration and Miniſtration of Angels, the Tongues and Pens of Prophets, Apoſtles, and Holy Men of all Ages, before the Scriptures were written, when Revelation or Tradition were yet the only poſitive Rules for Faith and Practice. The Patriarchs ſaw him by theſe. *Abraham ſaw my day and was glad*, John 8. 56. Afterwards the People of the Jews ſaw him by Types, Promiſes, and Prophecies recorded in the Scriptures. He was that

excellent Theme that hath filled up many Chapters of the Old Teſtament; as the firſt Draught of a Picture repreſents the features and proportion of the Perſon, but afterwards is added the complexion and life to it. So is it here, the Pens of the Prophets drew the firſt Lineaments and Proportion of Chriſt in the Old Teſtament, and the Pens of the Apoſtles and Evangeliſts have added the Life and Sweetneſs to it in the New. Yea, Chriſt is ſo truly deſcribed in the Old Teſtament, by his Life, by his Death, by all the greater Remarks of either, that in his Conteſt with the Jews, he appeals thither for a Teſtimony, *John* 5. 39. *Search the Scriptures, for they are they which teſtifie of me.* And St. *Peter*, *Acts* 3. 24. affirms, *That all the Prophets, as many as have ſpoken, have foretold of theſe days.* And *Acts* 10. 43. *To him gave all the Prophets Witneſs.* Chriſt, who is the true Expoſitor, being himſelf the true Author, makes them all ſpeak his Senſe. *Luke* 24. 27. *Beginning at Moſes and all the Prophets, he expounded to them in all the Scriptures, the ſayings concerning himſelf.* So that St. *Chryſoſtom*'s Obſervation holds true, that the Goſpel was in the World before Chriſt. Ἐρρίζωθη μὲν ἐν τοῖς βίβλοις τῶν προφήτων, ἐβλάστησε δὲ ἐν τῷ Κηρύγματι τῶν ἀποστόλων. It took Root in the Writings of the Prophets, but flowed forth in the preaching of the Apoſtles; ſo that in both theſe reſpects, the Holy Scripture may well be called the Word of Chriſt; of Chriſt as the Author, and as the Subject of it.

And in both theſe lies couch'd a very cogent Argument, that may inforce this Exhortation of the Apoſtle, and excite them to a diligent ſtudy of the Scriptures. For,

Firſt, Is Chriſt the Author of them, and ſhall we not with all Care and Diligence peruſe theſe Books which he hath Compoſed? The Writings of Men are valued according to the Abilities of their Authors. If they be of approved Integrity, profound Knowledge, ſolid Judgment, their Works are Eſteemed and Studied. And ſhall we not be much more Converſant in theſe, which are ſet forth by the Author, who is Truth it ſelf, and the eſſential Wiſdom of the Father? Theſe that were dictated by the immediate Inſpiration of the Holy Ghoſt, and writ as it were with a Quill of the Heavenly Dove?

Secondly, Chriſt is the Subject of the Scriptures: And what is all other Learning and Knowledge but beggarly Elements, if compared with this? Here we have the Cabinet of God's Counſels unlock'd, the eternal Purpoſes of his Grace, in ſending his Son into the World publickly declared. Here we have the Stupendious Hiſtory of God's becoming Man, of all the Miracles this God-man did upon Earth; of all the Cruelties he ſuffered. Here we have the Deſcription of his Victory in his Reſurrection, of his Triumph in his Aſcenſion, of his Glory in his Seſſion at the right Hand of the Majeſty on High. *Surely, great is the Myſtery of Godlineſs, God manifeſted in the Fleſh, juſtify'd in the Spirit, ſeen of Angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the World, received up into Glory*, as the Apoſtle with admiration recounts it, 1 *Tim.* 3. 16. And of all theſe wonderful Paſſages, the Scripture gives us a perfect Narrative. And what have the great Wits of the World ever treated on like this, either for Strangeneſs or Truth? All their Learning is but idle and contemptible Speculation, compared to this great Myſtery of a Crucified Saviour; who ſubdued Death by dying, and without force converted the World to believe a Doctrine above Reaſon. It was a very odd Saying of *Tertullian*, *de carne Chriſti cont. Marc.* and yet there is ſomething in it that ſtrikes, *Natus eſt Dei filius, non pudet, quia pudendum eſt*; the Son of God was Born, we bluſh not at it, becauſe it is ſhameful. *Mortuus eſt Dei filius, prorſus credibile eſt, quia ineptum eſt:* The Son of God died; it is incredible, becauſe it is unfit and unlikely it ſhould be ſo: *Sepultus reſurrexit, certum eſt, quia impoſſibile eſt*; he roſe from the Dead, it is certain true, becauſe it is impoſſible. Now theſe unlikely and impoſſible things, judged ſo by Humane Reaſon; theſe deep things of God the Scripture declares, and declares them in ſuch a manner as convinceth even Reaſon it ſelf to aſſent to them, though it cannot comprehend them. If therefore you deſire to know Chriſt and him Crucified, and thoſe Myſterious Doctrines which the Wit of Man could not invent, for it can hardly receive them, be converſant in the Holy Scriptures; for they are the Word of Chriſt, and reveal all the Wonders of Wiſdom and Knowledge, to which all the Wiſdom of the World is but Folly. This therefore I ſuppoſe lies in the Expreſſion, the Word of Chriſt, *viz.* the Word of which he is both the Author,

Secondly, We may obſerve in the Text, the manner how we ought to be Converſant in the Scriptures, and that is ſet forth very ſignificantly.

Firſt, Let the Word of Chriſt dwell in you. Do not only give it the hearing, as a ſtrange and marvellous Story: Let not the memory of it vaniſh out of your Minds, as ſoon as the ſound of the Words vaniſheth out of your Ears, but lay it up and lodge it in your Hearts, make it Familiar and Domeſtick to you; that it may be as well known to you, as thoſe that live in the ſame Houſe with you. Read it, ponder and meditate upon it, till you have tranſcribed the Bible upon your Hearts, and faithfully printed it in your Memories.

Secondly, Let it dwell in you Richly or Copiouſly, which may be taken either Objectively, or Subjectively: Objectively, and ſo the Senſe is, that all the Word of God ſhould dwell in us. Content not your ſelves with ſome part of it; that you read the Goſpel, or new Teſtament, but neglect the Old, as is the practice of ſome fluſh Notioniſts. Or that you know the Hiſtorical part of both, but neglect the Doctrinal, which is the fond and childiſh Cuſtom of ſome, who read the Scripture as they would Romances, skipping over the moral Diſcourſes as impertinent to the Story. But when we receive the whole Doctrine contained in it, and are diligent in revolving the Prophets, Evangeliſts, Apoſtles, every part and parcel of the Heavenly revealed Truth.

Again, the Word of Chriſt may dwell in us richly in the latter Senſe, or Subjectively. And ſo it doth when not only every part of it dwells in us, but when it dwells alſo in every part of us. In our Memories to retain it, in our Minds to meditate on it, in our Affections to love it, and in our Lives to practiſe it. Then doth the Word of Chriſt dwell richly and abundantly in us.

Thirdly, Let it dwell richly in all Wiſdom.

The higheſt Wiſdom is truly to know, and to ſerve God in order to eternal Life.

Now ſaith the Apoſtle, ſo acquaint your ſelves with the Scriptures, that you may from thence learn true Wiſdom, the ſaving knowledge both of what is to be believed, and what is to be done, in order to the obtaining of everlaſting Happineſs.

To be converſant in it only, to know what it contains, is not Wiſdom but Folly, But then it dwells in you in Wiſdom, when you ſtudy it, to practiſe it, when you endeavour to know the Rule that ye may obey it. This is Wiſdom here, and will end in Happineſs hereafter. And thus you have the Words of my Text explained.

In handling this Subject, I ſhall only purſue the Deſign of the Apoſtle, and endeavour to preſs thoſe Exhortations upon you. And indeed I need not many Arguments to perſuade thoſe who have already any acquaintance with theſe ſacred Oracles, ſtill to be converſant in them. Have you not your ſelves found ſuch clear Light, ſuch attractive Sweetneſs, and perſuaſive Eloquence in the Word of God, that all that the Tongue of Man can utter for it, falls infinitely ſhort of what it ſpeaks on in its own behalf? Who of us have not found direction from it in Caſes of Difficulty, Solution of Doubts, Support under Afflictions, Comfort under Sadneſs, Strength againſt Temptations, Quicknings of Grace, Warmth of Affection; and in brief, whatſoever we could expect from the Mercy of God have we not found it in the Scriptures? And ſhall we need further to commend it to you by Arguments, ſince it hath commended it ſelf by manifold Experiences? But ſo it is that the Devil knows we are diſarmed and diſabled if once he can wreſt the Sword of the Spirit from us, as the Apoſtle calls it, and therefore labours all he can to ſtrike the Bible out of our Hands: Or if we do read it, he ſtrives to put on ſuch falſe Spectacles as ſhall miſrepreſent every thing to us, and poſſeſs us with Prejudice and Objections againſt it. I ſhall therefore before I proceed any farther, encounter with ſome of thoſe prejudiced Opinions, which make this a Claſp'd and Sealed Book to many.

Firſt, Some may fear leſt the ſtudy and knowledge of the *Scriptures*, ſhould only aggravate their *Sin* and *Condemnation*. On the one Hand the Precepts of the Law are ſo various, the Duties ſo difficult, and Fleſh and Blood ſo infirm and oppoſite; that they caſt a deſpairing Look at them, as impoſſible to be fulfilled. On the other Hand they have been told that Knowledge without Practice will expoſe them to Damnation without excuſe. They have read, *Jam.* 4. 17. *To him that knoweth to do*

good, and doth it not, to him it is Sin, It is emphatical and weighty Sin; and *Luke* 12. 47. *He that knew his Maſter's Will, and did it not ſhall, ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes.* This they have read, and this deters them from reading any further. If they cannot practice what they know; and if to know and not practice, be only to inflame their laſt reckoning, and make their Torments more intolerable, it is beſt for them to muffle up themſelves in a ſafe Ignorance.

To this I Anſwer,

Firſt, Thou the Word abounds with multitudes of ſublime Precepts, and difficult Duties, yet this is no diſcouragement from the ſtudy of it. For conſider that this ſame Word is not only a Light to diſcover what you ought to do, but an Help to inable you to do it. It is the very means that God appointed to overcome your averſeneſs, and aſſiſt your weakneſs. And if ever this be effected, it muſt in an ordinary way, be by converſing with the *Scriptures*. That ſick Man hath loſt his Reaſon, as well his Health, who ſhould refuſe to take Phyſick, becauſe if it doth not work, it will but make him the worſe. Why the way to make it work is by taking it. So it is a diſtemper'd kind of arguing, againſt the Word of God, the Phyſick of our Souls, that it is mortal and deadly if it doth not work into practice. The way to make it work into practice, is to take it firſt into our knowledge; 'tis true, it were a great diſcouragement if the Scripture only ſhewed you how much Work you have to do, what Temptations to reſiſt, what Corruptions to mortifie, what Graces to exerciſe, what Duties to perform, and left all that upon your own Hands. But the Leaves of the Bible, are the Leaves of the Tree of Life, as well as of the Tree of Knowledge; they ſtrengthen as well as inlighten, and have not only a Commanding, but an aſſiſting Office. And this the *Scripture* doth two ways.

Firſt, It directs where we may receive Supplies of Ability for the performance of whatſoever it requires. It leads thee unto Chriſt, who is able to furniſh thee with ſupernatural Strength, for ſupernatural Duties. His Treaſury ſtands open for all Concerns; and his Almighty Power ſtands ingaged to aſſiſt thoſe who rely upon it. Be not diſcouraged therefore, he that finds us Work, finds us Strength: And the ſame *Scripture* that injoins us Obedience, exhibits God's Promiſe of beſtowing upon us the power of obeying. *Thou who workeſt all works in us and for us*, Iſa. 26. 12. *And work out your own Salvation, for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do*, Phil. 2. 12, 13. Why then ſhould we ſo complain of hard Sayings and grievous Commandments? Have we not God's Omnipotence obliged by Promiſe to aſſiſt in the ſame Words, wherein we are commanded to obey? What ſaith the Apoſtle, *I am able to do all things through Chriſt ſtrengthning me*, Phil. 4. 13. When in reading the *Scripture*, thou meeteſt with difficult and rigorous Duties, the ſeverity of Mortification, the ſelf-cruelty of plucking out right Eyes, and cutting off right Hands; commend thy ſelf to theſe Promiſes of Aid and Aſſiſtance, that the ſame *Scripture* holds forth, and lift up thy Heart in that divine Meditation of *St.* Auguſtine, *Lord, give what thou commandeſt, and command what thou pleaſeſt.* Whilſt thou thus duly dependeſt on Chriſt's Strength, and makeſt uſe of thy own, it is as much his Honour and Office to inable thee, as it is thy Duty to perform what he requires.

Secondly, The Scripture as it directs us to rely on the Strength of Chriſt; ſo it is a Means that God hath appointed to quicken and excite our own Strength and Power, to the diſcharge of thoſe Duties it diſcovers. Wherefore are thoſe preſſing Exhortations, and thoſe dreadful Threatnings, every where ſo diſperſed up and down in the Book of God, but that when we are ſlow and dull and drowſie, the Spirit may by theſe, as by ſo many Goads, rowze us, and make us ſtart into Duty? Such a ſpiritual Sloth hath benumb'd us, that without this quickning we ſhould not be diligent in the Work of the Lord; and therefore *David* prays, *Pſal.* 119. 88. *Quicken me, ſo ſhall I keep the Teſtimonies of thy Mouth*; but yet it is alſo the Word it ſelf that quickens us to the Obedience of the Word, *Pſal.* 119. 50. *Thy Word hath quickened me.* And indeed, if you can come from reading the Word, that ſo abounds with Promiſes, with Threatnings, with rational Arguments, with pathetick Expoſtulations, winning Inſinuations, importunate Intreaties, heroick Examples propounded to our Imitation, with all the perſwaſive Art and Rhetorick that becometh the Majeſty of the great God to uſe; if you can read this Word, and yet find from it no warmth of Affection, no

quickening

quickening to Duty; let me tell you, you either read it without attending to it, or elſe attend without believing it. It is therefore no diſcouragement from ſearching and ſtudying the Scriptures, that its Commands be many and difficult, for it directs you whither to go for promiſed Strength, and the more you converſe with it, the more will you find your Hearts quickened to a due Obedience of it. That's the firſt Anſwer.

But then Secondly, Whereas many think that it is better not to know, than not to practiſe; we muſt here diſtinguiſh of Ignorance, which is of two kinds, either invincible, or elſe affected: Invincible Ignorance is ſuch as is conjoined with, and proceeds from an utter impoſſibility of right Information, and it ariſeth only from two Things.

First, Abſolute want of neceſſary Inſtruction: Or,
Secondly, Want of natural Capacity to receive it.

Affected Ignorance, is an Ignorance under the means of Knowledge, and always ariſeth from the neglect, or contempt of them. Such is the Ignorance of thoſe who do, or may live where the Goſpel is preached, and where by Pains and Induſtry they may arrive to the knowledge of the Truth.

Now here for ever to anſwer this Objection, and to ſhew you how neceſſary Knowledge is, I ſhall lay down theſe two Particulars.

First, I grant indeed, that unpractis'd Knowledge is a far greater Sin than invincible Ignorance, and expoſeth to a much ſorer Condemnation. Hell-fire burns with Rage, and meets with Fuel fully prepared for it, when God dooms unto it an Head full of Light, and an Heart full of Luſts. Thoſe who know God's Will, but do it not, do but carry a Torch with them to Hell, to fire that Pile that muſt for ever burn them. We have a common Proverb, *That Knowledge is no Burthen*: But believe it, if your Knowledge in the Scripture be meerly Speculative, and overborn by the violence of unruly Luſts; this whole Word will be no otherwiſe to you, than the Burthen of the Law, as the Prophets ſpeak, a Burthen that will lie inſupportably heavy upon you for ever. Better for you were born under Barbariſm in ſome dark Corner of the Earth, where the leaſt Gleam of Goſpel light never ſhone, and where the Name of Chriſt was never mentioned, than to have this weighty Book, a Book which you have read and known, hung about you to ſink you infinitely deeper in the Burning Lake, than a Mill-ſtone hung about you can do in the midſt of the Sea. What St. *Peter* ſpeaks of Apoſtates, 2 *Pet.* 2. 21. is but too well applicable to the knowing Sinner? *It had been better for them not to have known the way of Righteouſneſs, than after they have known it, to turn aſide from the Commandments delivered to them.* How? Better not to have known it? Why, is there any poſſibility to eſcape the Condemnation of Hell without the knowledge of the way of Righteouſneſs revealed in the Scriptures? No, Damnation had been unavoidable without this Knowledge; yet it had been better they had not known it. For here is the Hyperbole of their Miſery; better they had been Damned than to have known theſe Truths, and this Rule of Righteouſneſs, and yet turn from the Obedience and Practice of it. O fearful State! O dreadful Doom! When a ſimple and genuine Damnation ſhall be reckon'd a Gain and Favour in compariſon of that exquiſite one which God will with all his Wiſdom prepare, and all his Power inflict on thoſe who knowing the righteous Judgment of God, *that they who commit ſuch things are worthy of Death*, do notwithſtanding, perſevere in them; *He that knew his Maſters will and did it not, ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes*, Luke 12. 47. And, *If I had not come and ſpoken unto them, they had not had Sin, but now they have no Cloak for their Sins*, ſaith our Saviour, *John* 15. 22. The Sin Puniſhment of thoſe who are invincibly ignorant, is as nothing compared to what the knowing Sinners lie under.

But do not flatter your ſelves, your Ignorance is not invincible. Are you not called to the knowledge of Chriſt? Do you not read or hear the Scriptures? Do you not enjoy Goſpel Ordinances and Miniſtry? May you not, if you will be but diligent and induſtrious, underſtand what you are ignorant of? Certainly there is nothing that can prove your Ignorance invincible, unleſs it be your obſtinacy, that you will not be prevailed with to be inſtructed by all the means of Inſtruction. Your Ignorance muſt therefore be affected. Well then attend unto

The ſecond Particular. Affected Ignorance is a greater Sin, and will be more ſorely

ſorely puniſhed at the Day of Judgment, than unpractiſed Knowledge. This kind of Ignorance is ſo far from being pleadable as an Excuſe, that it is an aggravation of Mens Guilt, and will be ſo of their Condemnation. There be but two things that compleat a Chriſtian, Knowledge and Practice. Both theſe God doth ſtrictly require. Knowledge may be without Practice, but the Practice of Godlineſs cannot be without Knowledge. God, I ſay, requires them both. Now Judge ye which is the greateſt Sinner, he that labours after Knowledge, though he neglect Practice, or he that neglects them both: He that fulfils ſome part of God's Will, or he that fulfils nothing of it. Certainly in your own Judgment, this latter deſerves to be doubly puniſh'd; once for not doing his Duty, and again for not knowing it when he might. Truly it is but juſt and righteous that God ſhould with the higheſt Diſdain and Indignation, ſay unto them, Depart from me, ye Curſed, I know you not, ſince they have audaciouſly ſaid unto him, Depart from us, we deſire not the knowledge of thy ways. The Apoſtle, ſpeaking of God's patience towards Heathens, who were invincibly ignorant of the Truth, tells us, *Acts* 17. 30. *That the times of this ignorance* (and yet an Ignorance it was that put them upon no leſs than brutiſh Idolatry) *God winked at.* Ignorant Perſons, in ignorant times, whilſt as yet the World was deſtitute of the means of Knowledge, and Darkneſs over-ſpread the Face of it, God connived and winked at. But ignorant Perſons in knowing times, God doth not wink at but frown upon. I am the more earneſt in preſſing this, becauſe I perceive that vile and rotten Principle, unworthy of a Chriſtian who is a Child of Light and of the Day, is taken up by many, That it is no matter how little we know, if we do but practice what we know. What a Cheat hath the Devil put upon them! Hath not God commanded you to know more, as well as to practice what you know? Is it likely you ſhould practice what you know upon God's Command, who will not upon his Command increaſe your Knowledge? And yet this is the uſual Plea of prophane Men. Ask them why they frequent the publick Ordinances ſo ſeldom, they will tell you, they know more by one Sermon, than they can practice. But how can ſuch make Conſcience of practiſing, who make none of knowing, though the ſame God hath enjoined them both? Yea, though they cannot practice what they know, yet let me tell them, that for thoſe who live under the means of Grace, and may be inſtructed if they will, it may be as great a Sin to omit a Duty out of neglect of knowing it, as out of neglect of doing it; yea, and much greater. We ſhould our ſelves judge that Servant, who while we are ſpeaking to him, ſtops his Ears on purpoſe that he might not hear what we command him; we ſhould, I ſay, judge him worthy of more Stripes, than he who gives diligent Ear to our Commands, although he will not obey them. So it is in this Caſe. Thou who ſtoppeſt thine Ears, and wilt not ſo much as hear what the Will of thy Lord and Maſter is, deſerveſt much more Puniſhment, than he who takes Pains to know it, although he doth it not. It is damnable not to give God the Service that he requires. But O Inſolence! Not to give God thy Lord and Maſter ſo much as the hearing? Hath God ſent Man into the World, and ſent the Scriptures after, as Letters of Inſtruction, what we ſhould do for him here, and will it think'ſt thou be a ſufficient Excuſe when thou returneſt to thy Lord, that it is true thou hadſt Inſtructions, but never opened'ſt them, never looked'ſt into them? What a fearful Contempt is this caſt upon the great God, never ſo much as to enquire what his Will is? Whether or no he commands that which is fit and reaſonable for us to perform? And therefore refuſe not to ſearch and ſtudy the Scriptures, upon pretence that the knowledge of what you cannot fulfil, will but aggravate your Sin and Condemnation. For be aſſured of it, greater Sin, and ſorer Condemnation can no Man have, than he who neglects the means of Knowledge, thereby to diſoblige himſelf from practice. And again, the Scriptures were given to aſſiſt us in the performance of thoſe Duties which it requires from us. They do not only inform the Judgment, but quicken the Will and Affections, and ſtrengthen the whole Soul to its Duty. And this is in anſwer to the firſt Objection.

Secondly, Some will ſay the reading of the Scriptures poſſeſſeth them with ſtrange Fears, and fills them with incredible Terrors. It raiſeth up ſuch dreadful Apparitions of Hell, and the Wrath of God, as makes them a Terror to themſelves.

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To this I anſwer, Firſt, It may be thy Condition is ſuch as requires is. Poſſibly thou art in a State of Wrath, and would'ſt thou not be under the apprehenſions of it? Thou art under the Guilt of thy Sins, and then no wonder that the Voice of God ſhould be terrible unto thee. It is moſt unreaſonable to hate the Word, (as *Ahab* hated *Micaiah*,) becauſe it propheſieth no Good concerning thee. Alas! What Good can it ſpeak, as long as thou thy ſelf continueſt Evil?

Secondly, It is not ſo much the Scripture, as thine own evil Conſcience that haunts and terrifies thee. When thou readeſt that dreadful Threatning, *Ezek.* 18. 4. *The Soul that ſinneth it ſhall die*, there were nothing of Terror in it, did not thy guilty Conſcience witneſs againſt thee, that thou art the Man: 'Tis this that turns and levels all God's Artillery againſt thee. Get therefore a Conſcience pacified upon good Grounds, and the very threatning of the Word will ſpeak to thee, not ſo much Terror from the dreadfulneſs of the Wrath, and Condemnation denounced, as Joy that thou haſt eſcaped it.

Thirdly, It may be, the Word of God by working in thee the Spirit of Fear, is preparing thee for the Spirit of Adoption; for that uſually uſhers in this. We find the Gaoler trembling, before we find him rejoycing: There were mighty and rending Winds, Earthquakes, and Fire, all terrible; before there came *the ſtill voice*, in which God was, 1 *Kings* 19. 12. So God in Convictions may times prepares the way by Thunders, and Earthquakes, by the Thundering of his Word, and the Trembling of our own Conſciences, before he comes to us in the ſtill and ſweet Voice of Peace and Comfort. And certainly they are much more afraid than hurt, whom God by his Terrors thus frights into Heaven.

But, Thirdly, Some may ſtill ſay, their Fears are ſo ſtrong that they will drive them into Deſperation, or Diſtraction, if they longer pore on thoſe dreadful Things, the Scripture contains.

I anſwer, There is not one Line or Syllable in the whole Book of God that gives the leaſt ground for Deſpair. Nay, there are the moſt ſupporting Comforts a poor fearful trembling Soul can deſire; *Come unto me all that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you reſt. Come unto me and I will in no wiſe caſt you out; return unto the Lord and he will abundantly pardon*, Iſa. 55. 7. *I, even I, am he that blots out and forgets your Sins*; and innumerable ſuch like. Now if Men will only take the Sword of the Spirit to wound them, and not alſo the Balm of the Spirit to heal them, they may through their own fault, eſpecially when they read the Scriptures with the Devil's Commmentaries, fret themſelves into Deſpair.

Fonrthly, Some may ſay, Certainly it cannot be thus neceſſary that the Word of Chriſt ſhould dwell thus richly and abundantly in all Chriſtians. It is requiſite indeed for Miniſters, whoſe Calling it is to Teach and Inſtruct others, that they ſhould have this abundance of Scripture dwelling in them; but for us who are to receive the Law at their Mouth, a competent knowledge in the Fundamentals of Religion may well be ſufficient. We know that Chriſt is the Son of God, that he came into the World to ſave Sinners, and that if we would be ſaved by him, we muſt believe in him, and ſuch chief Points of Chriſtianity which are ſufficient to Salvation.

To this I anſwer, Firſt, God may well expect a more plentiful meaſure of the Word to dwell in Miniſters; becauſe it is not only their general, but particular Calling to peruſe and ſtudy it. There is therefore a twofold fulneſs, a fulneſs of the private Chriſtian, and a fulneſs of the Treaſurer or Steward, to whoſe charge the Oracles of God are committed, and who is to communicate Knowledge to the People. This being the Miniſter's Office, it is his Duty eſpecially to abound and be inriched in the knowledge of the Scripture.

But Secondly, Wherefore muſt the Word of Chriſt dwell ſo richly in Miniſters, is it for themſelves only, or is it to inſtruct their Flock? What? And can it it be neceſſary for them to Teach, and yet unneceſſary for you to Learn? Are they bound to ſearch into the depth of Goſpel Myſteries to inform you of them, and is it enough for you only to know the firſt Principles and Rudiments? Certainly, whatſoever God requires the Miniſter to Teach, that he requires you to Learn. Now would you your ſelves judge the Miniſter

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to have ſufficiently diſcharged his Duty, that ſhould only in the general Preach, That we are all Sinners; that Chriſt the Son of God came into the World to ſave us; that the Glory of Heaven, and the Torments of Hell, ſhall be the Rewards of Obedience, or Diſobedience? If theſe few abſolutely neceſſary and fundamental Truths were all, you might well think the Miniſtry to be a very eaſie, or a very needleſs Office.

If then it is our Duty to reveal to you the whole Counſel of God, and to with-hold nothing from you of all thoſe Myſteries which the Scripture contains, whereof ſome give Life, others Light, ſome are Vital, others Ornamental; you cannot with Reaſon but conclude, that if we are obliged to Teach theſe Things, you alſo are obliged to Learn and know them.

Thirdly, It is a moſt deſtructive Principle that many have through Sloth and Lazineſs taken up, That a little Knowledge will ſuffice to bring them to Heaven. Certainly God would never have revealed ſo many deep and profound Myſteries in his Word, if it were not neceſſary they ſhould be known and believed. Shall we think all the reſt of the Bible ſuperfluous, except a few plain practical Texts? What God hath recorded in the Scripture, is written for our Inſtruction. 'Tis true if we have not the means of Inſtruction, nor are in a poſſibility of attaining it, a leſs meaſure of Knowledge, anſwered by a Conſcientious Practice may ſuffice for our Salvation. But for us who have Line upon Line, and Precept upon Precept, for us to ſatisfie our ſelves with a few of the common Principles, ſlighting the reſt as nice and unneceſſary Points, for us to neglect Knowledge, argues defect of Grace. For whereſoever true Grace is, there will be a moſt earneſt Endeavour to grow daily in both; and yet Multitudes every where, even of thoſe who abhor groſſer Sins, as Swearing, Drunkenneſs, and the like, yet take up with a few Notions of Religion that all are Sinners and all muſt periſh, unleſs Chriſt ſave them, *&c.* This they knew, as ſoon as they knew any thing; and more than this, they will not know: They will not trouble their Heads with any further Diſcoveries, nor look deep in to the Myſteries of Godlineſs; contenting themſelves that they have, as they think, Knowledge enough to bring them to Heaven. Let me tell them, That though where there is not Means of Knowledge, a little may ſuffice for Salvation; yet where God doth afford plentiful means, the Knowledge of theſe very Things becomes neceſſary to them, which others might ſafely be ignorant of. This is in Anſwer to the Fourth Objection.

Fifthly, Some may object that they have found by Experience, that the Study of Scripture hath many times made them the worſe, it hath alarmed their Luſts, and put them in an Uproar. Such and ſuch Sins were quiet, till they read in the Word a Command againſt them; therefore they are diſcouraged and think it beſt to forbear the ſtudy of the Scripture, ſince they find that by forbidding Sin, it only rouzeth and awakens it.

Firſt, I anſwer, Firſt this was St. *Paul*'s very Caſe, *Rom.* 7. 8. *Sin taking occaſion by the Command, wrought in me all manner of Concupiſcence*; now this effect is meerly accidental, and is not to be imputed unto the Holy Word of God, but to the wicked Heart of Man, which takes an Hint (ſo deſperately corrupt is it) from God's forbidding Sin, to put it ſelf in mind of committing it.

Secondly, Thou complaineſt that the Word exciteth to Corruptions, but it doth it no otherwiſe than the Sun draws Smoak and Stink out of a Dunghil. It doth not increaſe but unhappily excite them. The very ſame Luſts lay hid in their Hearts before. There they lay like ſo many Vipers and Serpents aſleep till the Light and Warmth of the Word made them ſtir and crawl about. And this Advantage thou mayeſt make of it, that when thy Corruptions ſwarm thick about thee, upon the diſturbance the Law of God hath made among them, thou may'ſt thence ſee what a wicked Heart and Nature thou haſt, how much Filth and Mud there lieth at the bottom of it, which preſently riſeth upon the firſt ſtirring. This may make thee vile in thine own Eyes, and deeply humbled under the ſad and ſerious Conſideration of thy indwelling Sin. 'Tis the very uſe the Apoſtle makes in the ſame Caſe, *Rom.* 7. 24. *O wretched Man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the Body of this Death!* When Humors are in Motion, we ſoon perceive what is the ſtate

ſtate of our Body; and when Corruptions are once ſtirred, we may thereby eaſily know the State and Condition of our Souls.

Thirdly, The ſame Word that doth thus occaſionally ſtir up Sin, is the beſt Means to beat it down. You may perceive by this, there is ſomewhat in the Word that is extreamly contrary to their Sins, ſince they do ſo riſe and arm againſt it; their great is Enemy upon them, and this Alarm that they take, is but before their overthrow. It may be the Mud is only ſtirred that it might be caſt out, and their Hearts cleanſed from it. Be not diſcouraged therefore, for there is no Means in the World ſo appoſite to the deſtruction and ſubduing of Sin ar the *Scripture*, though at firſt it may ſeem inſtead of ſubduing of Sins to ſtrengthen them.

Sixthly, Many are diſcouraged from ſtudying the *Scriptures*, becauſe their Memories are ſo treacherous and unfaithful they can retain nothing; when they have read the *Scripture*, and would recollect what they have read, they can give no account of it either to themſelves or others. Nothing abides upon them, and therefore they think it were as good give over as thus continually pour Water into a Sieve, and inculcate Truths upon ſuch a leaky Memory, where all runs out. This is indeed the Complaint of many. But,

Firſt, This ſhould put thee on a more frequent and diligent ſtudy of the *Scripture* than diſcourage thee from it. More Pains will ſupply this Defect; thou muſt the oftner prompt, and the oftner examine thy ſelf, the more forgetful thou art. Memory is the Soul's Steward, and if thou findeſt it unfaithful, call it the oftner to account. But ſtill following it Line upon Line, and Precept upon Precept, and continually inſtil ſomewhat into it. A Veſſel ſet under the fall of a Spring, cannot leak faſter than it is ſupplied. A conſtant dropping of this Heavenly Doctrine into the Memory, will keep it that though it be leaky, yet it never ſhall be empty.

Secondly, Scripture-Truths when they do not inrich the Memory, yet they may purifie the Heart. We muſt not meaſure the Benefit we receive from the Word according to what of it remains, but according to what effect it leaves behind. Lightning you know, than which nothing ſooner vaniſheth away, yet it often breaks and melts the hardeſt and moſt firm Bodies in its ſudden Paſſage. Such is the irreſiſtible force of the Word; the Spirit often darts it through us; it ſeems but like a Flaſh and gone, and yet it may break and melt down our hard Hearts before it, when it leaves no impreſſion at all upon our Memories. I have heard of one who returning from an affecting Sermon highly commended it to ſome, and being demanded what he remembred of it, anſwered. *Truly I remember nothing at all, but only while I heard it, it made me reſolve to live better than I ever have done, and ſo by God's Grace I will.* Here was now a Sermon loſt to the Memory but not to the Affections. To the ſame Purpoſe, I have ſomewhere read a *Story* of one that complained to an aged Holy-man, that he was much diſcouraged from reading the *Scripture*, becauſe his Memory was ſo ſlippery he could faſten nothing upon it that he read. The old Hermit (for ſo as I remember he was deſcribed) bid him take an earthen Pitcher and fill it with Water; when he had done it, he bid him empty it again, and wipe it clean that nothing ſhould remain in it, which when the other had done, and wondred to what this tended; Now, *ſaith he*, though there be nothing of the Water remaining to it, yet the Pitcher is cleaner than it was before: So though thy Memory retain nothing of the Word thou readeſt, yet thy Heart is the cleaner for its very Paſſage through.

Thirdly, Never fear your Memory; only pray for good and pious Affections. Affection to the Truths we read or hear, makes the Memory retentive of them. Moſt Mens Memories are like Jett, or Electrical Bodies, that attract and hold faſt only Straws or Feathers, or ſuch vain and light Things, diſcourſe to them the Affairs of the World, or ſome idle and romantick Story, their Memories retain this as faithfully as if it were ingraven on Leaves of Braſs. Whereas the great important Truths of the Goſpel, the great Myſteries of Heaven, and Concernments of Eternity, leave no more Impreſſion upon them, than Words on the Air in which they are ſpoken; whence is this, but only that the one ſort work themſelves into the Memory through the intereſt they have got in the Affections, which the other cannot do. Had we but the ſame Delight in Heavenly Objects, did we but receive the Truth in the love of it, and mingle it with Faith in the hearing,

this would fix that Volatileneſs and Fleetneſs of our Memories, and make every Truth as indelible, as it is neceſſary. That's in Anſwer to the Sixth Objection.

Seventhly, Others complain that the Scripture is obſcure and difficult to be underſtood; they may as well, and with as good ſucceſs, attempt to ſpy out what lies at the Centre of the Earth, as ſearch into the deep and hidden Myſteries, which no Humane Underſtanding can fathom or comprehend. And this diſcourageth them.

To this I anſwer First, 'Tis no wonder if there be ſuch profound Depths in the Word of God, ſince it is a Syſtem and Compendium of his infinite and unſearchable Wiſdom, that Wiſdom which from the beginning of the World hath been hid in God. Thoſe deep Truths which your Underſtanding cannot reach, require your humble Veneration.

Secondly, The Scripture is ſuited to every Capacity. It is, (as it is commonly expreſt) a Ford wherein a Lamb may wade, and an Elephant ſwim; and herein is the infinite Wiſdom of God ſeen, in wreathing together plain Truths with obſcure, that he might gain the more Credit to his Word, by the one inſtructing the Ignorance of the Weakeſt, by the other puzzling and confounding the Underſtanding of the Wiſeſt. This alſo adds a Beauty and Ornament to the Scripture.

As the Beauty of the World is ſet off by a graceful variety of Hills and Valleys, ſo is it in the Scripture. There are ſublime Truths that the moſt aſpiring Reaſon of Man cannot over-top, and there are more plain and eaſie Truths in which the weakeſt Capacity may converſe with Delight and Satisfaction. No Man is offended with his Garden, for having a ſhady Thicket in it; no more ſhould we be offended with the Word of God, that among ſo many fair and open Walks, we here and there meet with a Thicket that the Eye of Humane Reaſon cannot look through.

Thirdly, Thoſe Truths that are abſolutely neceſſary to Salvation, are as plainly without either Obſcurity or Ambiguity recorded in the Scripture, as if they were (as the *Mahometans* think concerning their *Alcoran*) written with Ink made of Light; there's the neceſſity of Faith in Jeſus Chriſt, or repentance from dead Works, of an holy and mortified Life, ſo clearly ſet down, that ſcarce have there any been found ſo impudent as to raiſe Controverſies about them; and is it not peeviſh to quarrel at the Word for being obſcure in thoſe things, which if thou haſt uſed thy utmoſt Diligence to underſtand, the ignorance of them ſhall not at all prejudice thy Salvation? Bleſs God rather, that he hath ſo clearly revealed the neceſſary and practical Duties of a Chriſtian Life, that thoſe are not involved in any myſtical or obſcure Intimations, but thou may'ſt without doubt or diſpute, know what is of abſolute neceſſity to be either believed or practiſed in order to Salvation. Be aſſured of this, that what with all thy Labour and Diligence thou canſt not underſtand thou needeſt not, and what is needful, is plain and obvious, and thou mayſt eaſily underſtand it.

Fourthly, The Scripture is obſure; but hath not God offered us ſufficient Helps for the unfolding of it? Have you not the Promiſe of his Spirit to illuminate you? 1 *Cor.* 2. 10. *God hath revealed them to us by his Spirit, for the Spirit ſearcheth all things, yea the deep things of God.* Have we not his Miniſter, whoſe Office it is to inſtruct us, and lead us into the inmoſt Senſe of the Scriptures? Nay, have we not the Scripture it ſelf, which is the beſt Interpreter of its own meaning? Uſually if it ſpeak more darkly in one place, it ſpeaks the ſame Truth more clearly in another. Now compare Scripture with Scripture, you will find it holds a Light unto its ſelf. The oftner you read, and the more you ponder on thoſe Paſſages that are abſtruſe, the more you will find them clear up to your Underſtanding. So that neither is this any reaſonable Diſcouragement from ſtudying the Holy Scriptures.

Eighthly, Others may ſay, They are doubtful, becauſe they ſee many of thoſe who have been moſt Converſant in the Scripture, how they have been perverted and carried aſide into damnable Errors, and yet ſtill have pleaded Scripture for the defence of them.

I anſwer. True, the Devil hath in theſe our Days buſied himſelf to bring a Reproach upon Scripture, through the Whimſies and Giddineſs of thoſe who have pretended moſt acquaintance in it. But let not this be any Diſcouragement, for this ariſeth not directly from the influence the Scripture hath on them, which is the

the Rule of Truth only; but from the Pride and Self-conceit of a few Notioniſts, who wreſt it to their own Perdition. And though they boaſt much of Scripture to countenance their Opinions; yet Scripture miſunderſtood and miſapplied is not Scripture. Indeed there is no other way to diſcern Truth from Error, but only by the Scripture rightly underſtood; and there is no way rightly to underſtand it, but diligently to ſearch it.

But to ſay that therefore we muſt not read the *Scripture* becauſe ſome wreſt it to their own Deſtruction, is alike reaſonable, as to ſay that therefore we muſt not Eat nor Drink, becauſe that ſome Eat to Gluttony, and others Drink to Giddineſs and Madneſs. The Apoſtle St. *Peter* tells us, *Epiſt.* 2. *Chap.* 3. *v.* 16. That in St. *Paul*'s Epiſtles there were ſome Things hard to be underſtood, which the unlearned and unſtable wreſt, as they do alſo the other Scriptures to their own deſtruction. Shall we therefore conclude, that neither his Epiſtle nor any other of the Scriptures ſhould be read by us; becauſe that in ſome, inſtead of Nouriſhment, they have occaſioned only Wind, Flatulency and ill Humours? If this had been his purpoſe, it had certainly been very eaſie for him to have ſaid, Becauſe they are hard to be underſtood, and many wreſt them to their own deſtruction, therefore beware that you read them not. But inſtead of this, he draws another Inference, *Verſe* 17. *Ye therefore beloved, beware, leſt ye alſo being led away with the Errors of the Wicked fall from your own ſtedfaſtneſs, but grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* He ſaith not, Beware that you read them not, but, beware how you read them: This is the true Apoſtolical Caution, which tends not to drive us from the Scriptures, but to make us more ſtudious and inquiſitive in them, leſt we alſo be perverted by the cunning Craftineſs of Men, who lie in wait to deceive. And this the Primitive Fathers thought the beſt and ſureſt means, to preſerve their People from Error and Seduction. It were almoſt endleſs to recite to you thoſe many Paſſages wherein they do moſt Pathetically exhort all, of all Ranks and Conditions, of each Sex, of all Ages, to a diligent peruſal of the Holy Scriptures. And ſo far were they from taking it up in a Language unknown to the Vulgar, or debarring the Laity from reading it, that the Tranſlations of it into the common Tongue of each Country were Numerous, and their Exhortations ſcarce more vehement and earneſt in any thing, than that the People would employ their Time and Thoughts in revolving them. It is therefore a moſt certain Sign, that that Church hath falſe Wares to put off, which is of nothing more careful than to darken the Shop. And aſſuredly the wreſting the Scriptures by ſome who read them, cannot occaſion the Deſtruction of more, than that damnable Idolatry, and thoſe damnable Hereſies have done, which have been brought into, and are generally owned and practiſed by the Church of *Rome*, through the not reading of them.

Thus you ſee (as it was in *Joſiah*'s time) how much Duſt and Rubbiſh this Book of the Law lies under. I have endeavoured to remove it. And ſhall now proceed to thoſe Arguments that may perſuade you to a diligent ſearch and peruſal of the Scriptures. The *Jews* indeed were ſo exact, or rather Superſtitious in this, that he was judged a Deſpiſer of thoſe Sacred Oracles, who did not readily know how often every Letter of the Alphabet occurred in them. This *preciſeneſs* God hath made uſe of to deliver down his *Word* to us, *unvaried* and *uncorrupted*. It is not ſuch a ſcrupulous ſearch of the Scripture, I now exhort you to: But as God hath left it to us a rich *Depoſitum*, a dear Pledge of his Love and Care, ſo we ſhould diligently attend to a rational and profitable Study of it.

There are but two Things in the general that commend any Writing to us, either that it diſcovers Knowledge, or directs Practice; that it informs the Judgment, or reforms the Life. Both of theſe are eminently the Characters of this Book of God. And therefore *David* tells us, *Pſal.* 19. 7. *The Law of God converts the Soul, and makes wiſe the ſimple.* It is a Light not only to our Heads, but it *is a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our paths*, Pſal. 119. 105. Let us conſider it as to both.

Firſt, In point of Knowledge, as it perfects the Underſtanding; and ſo it will appear in ſundry Particulars how excellent a Study it is. For,

Firſt, The Scripture diſcovers unto us the knowledge of thoſe Truths that the moſt improved natural Reaſon could never ſift out; and are intelligible only by Divine Revelation. God hath Compoſed two Books, by the diligent Study

of which, we may come to the knowledge of himſelf. The Book of the Creatures, and the Book of the Scriptures. The Book of the Creatures is written in thoſe great Letters of Heaven and Earth, the Air and Sea, and by theſe we may ſpell out ſomewhat of God. He made them for our Inſtruction, as well as our Service. There is not a Creature that God hath breathed abroad upon the Face of the Earth, but it reads us Lectures of his infinite Power and Wiſdom. So that it is no abſurdity to ſay that as they are all the Works of his Mouth, ſo they are all the Works of his Hands. The whole World is a ſpeaking Workmanſhip, *Rom.* 1. 20. *The inviſible things of God, are clearly ſeen by the things that are made, even his eternal Power and Godhead.* And indeed when we ſeriouſly conſider how God hath poiſed the Earth in the midſt of the Air, and the whole World in the midſt of a vaſt and boundleſs Nothing; how he hath hung out thoſe glorious Lights of Heaven, the Sun, the Moon, and Stars, and made Paths in the Sky for their ſeveral Courſes, how he hath laid the Sea on heaps, and ſo girt it in, that it may poſſibly overlook, but not overflow the Land; when we view the Variety, Harmony, and Law of the Creation, our Reaſon muſt needs be very ſhort, if we cannot from theſe collect the infinite Wiſdom, Power, and Goodneſs of the Creator. So much of God as belong to theſe two great Attributes of Creator and Governour of the World, the Book of Nature may plainly diſcover to us. But then there are other more retired, and reſerved Notions of God, other Truths that nearly concern our ſelves and our eternal Salvation to know and believe, which Nature could never give the leaſt Glimpſe to diſcover. What Signature is there ſtamp'd upon any of the Creatures of a Trinity in Unity, of the eternal Generation, or temporal Carnation of the Son of God? What Creature could inform us of our firſt Fall, and Guilt contracted by it? Where can we find the Copy of the Covenant of Works, or of Grace, printed upon any of the Creatures? All the great Sages of the World, though they were Nature's Secretaries, and ranſack'd its abſtruſeſt Myſteries, yet all their Learning and Knowledge, could not diſcover the Sacred Myſtery of a Crucified Saviour. Theſe are Truths which Nature is ſo far from ſearching out, that it can ſcarce receive them when revealed. 1 *Cor.* 2. 14. *The natural Man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned.* The Light that can reveal theſe, muſt break immediately from Heaven it ſelf. And ſo it did upon the Prophets, Evangeliſts, and Apoſtles; the Penmen of the Holy Scriptures.

And if it were their ſingular Privilege, that the Holy Ghoſt ſhould deſcend into their Breaſts, and ſo poſſeſs them with Divine Inſpirations, that what they ſpake, or wrote, became Oracular, how little leſs is ours; ſince the Scriptures reveal to us the very ſame Truths which the Spirit revealed to them? God heretofore ſpake in them, and now he ſpeaks by them unto us. Their Revelations are become ours; the only difference is, That what God taught them by extraordinary Inſpiration, the very ſame Truths he teacheth us in the Scripture, by the ordinary Illumination of his Spirit. Here, therefore whilſt we diligently converſe in the Book of God, we enjoy the Privilege of Prophets. The ſame Word of God which came unto them, comes alſo unto us; and that without thoſe ſevere Preparations, and ſtrong Agonies, which ſometimes they underwent, before God would inſpire them with the Knowledge of his Heavenly Truth. That is the firſt Motive and Argument.

Secondly, The Knowledge which the Scripture teacheth, is for the matter of it the moſt ſublime and lofty in the World. All other Sciences are but poor and beggarly Elements, if compared with this. What doth the Naturaliſt, but only buſie himſelf in digging a little droſſy Knowledge, out of the Entrails of the Earth? The Aſtronomer, who aſcends higheſt, mounts no higher than the Cœleſtial Bodies, the Stars and Planets; which are but the Outworks of Heaven. But the *Scripture* pierceth much farther, and lets us into Heaven in ſelf. There it diſcovers the Majeſty and Glory of God upon his Throne; the Eternal Son of God ſitting at his right Hand, making a prevailing and authoritative Interceſſion for us: The glittering Train of Cherubims and Seraphims, and innumerable Company of Angels, and the *Spirits* of Juſt Men made perfect. So that indeed when you have this Book laid open before you, you have Heaven it ſelf, and all the inconceivable Glories of it laid open to your View. What can be more

more ſublime than the Nature of God? And yet here we have it ſo plainly deſcribed by all its moſt glorious Attributes and Perfections that the Scripture doth but beam forth Light to an Eye of Faith, whereby it may be inabled to ſee him who is inviſible. But if we conſider thoſe Goſpel Myſteries the Scripture relates, the Hypoſtatical Union of the Divine and Humane Nature in Chriſt's Incarnation, the Myſtical Union of our Perſons to his, by our believing, that the Son of God ſhould be ſubſtituted in the ſtead of guilty Sinners; that he who knew no Sin ſhould be made a Sacrifice for Sin, and the Juſtice of God become reconciled to Man, through the Blood of God: Theſe are Myſteries ſo infinitely profound as are enough to puzzle a whole College of Angels. Now theſe the Scripture propounds unto us, not only to poſe, but to perfect our Underſtanding. For that little Knowledge we can attain unto in theſe Things, is far more excellent than the moſt comprehenſive Knowledge of all things elſe in the World. And where our ſcanty Apprehenſions fall ſhort of fathoming theſe deep Myſteries, the Apoſtle hath taught us to ſeek it out with an ὦ βάθος, *Rom.* 11. 33. *O the depth of the Riches, both of the knowledge and wiſdom of God! how unſearchable are his judgments, and his ways paſt finding out!*

Thirdly, The Scripture it an inexhauſtible Fountain of Knowledge, the more you draw from it, the more ſtill ſprings up. It is a deep Mine, and the farther you ſearch into it, ſtill the richer you find it. It is tedious to read the Works and Writings of Men often over, becauſe we are ſoon at the bottom of what they deliver, and our Underſtanding hath nothing new to refreſh it. But in reading the Scripture it fares with us as it did with thoſe whom Chriſt miraculouſly fed, the Bread multiplied under their Teeth, and increaſed in the very chewing of it. So here, while we ruminate and chew on the Truths of the Scripture, they multiply and riſe up thicker under our Meditation. One great Cauſe of the neglect that many are guilty of in reading the Holy Scripture, is a Fear that they ſhall but meet with the ſame Things again, which they have already read and known; and this they account tedious and irkſome. Indeed if they, read it only ſuperficially and ſlightly, it will be ſo. But thoſe who fix their Minds to ponder and meditate upon the Word, find new Truths ariſing up to their Underſtanding, which they never before diſcover'd. Look as it is in a Starry Night, if you caſt your Eyes upon many ſpaces of the Heavens, at the firſt Glance perhaps you ſhall diſcover no Stars there; yet if you continue to look earneſtly and fixedly, ſome will emerge to your View that were before hid and concealed: So is it with the Holy Scriptures. If we only glance curiouſly upon them, no wonder we diſcover no more Stars, no more glorious Truths beaming out their Light to our Underſtanding. St. *Auguſtine* found this ſo experimentally true, that he teils us in his Third Epiſtle, That though he ſhould with better Capacity, and greater Diligence, ſtudy all his Life-time, from the beginning of his Childhood to decrepit Age, nothing elſe but the Holy Scriptures; yet they are ſo compacted, and thick-ſet with Truths, that he might daily learn ſomething, which before he knew not. God hath as it were ſtudied to ſpeak compendiouſly in the Scriptures. What a Miracle of brevity is it, that the whole Duty of Man, relating both to God and his Neighbour, ſhould be all compriſed in ten Words? Not a Word, but were the Senſe of it drawn out, were enough to fill whole Volumes; and therefore the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 119. 96. *I have ſeen an end of all perfection, but thy Commandments are exceeding broad.* When we have attained the knowledge of thoſe Things that are abſolutely neceſſary to Salvation, there yet remain ſuch depths of Wiſdom, both in the manner of Scripture-expreſſion, and in the Myſteriouſneſs of things expreſt, that after our utmoſt Induſtry, ſtill there will be left new Truths to become the Diſcovery of a new ſearch.

Fourthly, The Scripture exhibits to us that Knowledge which is neceſſary to Eternal Salvation. *This is life eternal to know thee, the only true God and Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent*, John 17. 3. *And this knowledge the Scriptures alone can afford us*, John 5. 39. *So* 2 Tim. 3. 15. We need not therefore enquire after blind Traditions, or expect any whimſical Enthuſiaſms; the written Word contains whatſoever is neceſſary to be known in order to eternal Salvation; and whoſoever is wiſe above what is written, is wiſe only in Impertinencies. Now hath God contracted whatever was neceſſary for us to know, and ſummed it up in one Book; and ſhall not we be diligent and induſtrious in ſtudying that which doth ſo neceſ-

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ſarily concern us? Other Knowledge is only for the adorning and embelliſhment of Nature; this is for the neceſſity of Life, of Life Eternal. I have before ſpoken enough concerning the neceſſity of Knowledge unto Salvation, and therefore ſhall not farther inlarge. Therefore as St. *Peter* ſaid to Chriſt, *Lord, whither ſhall we go, thou haſt the words of eternal life?* So let us Anſwer whatſoever may ſeem to call us off from the diligent Study of the Scriptures, Whither ſhall we go, to this we muſt cleave, with this we will converſe, for here alone are the Words of Eternal Life.

Fifthly, The Knowledge that the Scripture diſcloſeth is of undoubted Certainty, and perpetual Truth; it depends not upon Probabilities or Conjectures, but the infallible Authority of Chriſt himſelf; he hath dictated it, for whom it is impoſſible to lie. The Rule of our Veracity or Truth, is the conformity of our Speech to the Exiſtency of Things; but divine Truth and Veracity hath no other Rule beſides the Will of him that ſpeaks it. He muſt needs ſpeak infallible Truth, who ſpeaks Things into their Beings, ſuch is the omnipotent Speech of God. Whatſoever he declares, is therefore true, becauſe he declares it. Never matter how ſtrange and impoſſible Scripture-Myſteries may ſeem to Fleſh and Blood, to the corrupt and captious Underſtandings of natural Men; when the Word of God hath undertaken for the Truth, it is as much Impiety to doubt them, as it is Folly to queſtion the reality of what we ſee with our very Eyes. Nay, the information of our Senſes, what we ſee, what we hear, what we feel, is not ſo certain, as the Truth of thoſe Things which God reveals and teſtifies in the Scriptures. And therefore the Apoſtle, 2 *Pet.* 1. 18, 19. *Speaking of that miraculous voice that ſounded from Heaven.* Matth. 17. 5. *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleaſed.* We, ſaith the Apoſtle, heard this Voice when we were with him in the Holy Mount, but we have alſo a more ſure Word of Prophecy; or, as the Greek may well be rendred, We account more ſure the Word of Prophecy, unto which ye do well, that ye take heed. What a more ſure Word than a Voice from Heaven? When God himſelf ſhall vocally bear Witneſs to the Truth? Yes, we have a more ſure Word, and that's the Word of Prophecy, recorded in the Old Teſtament. And hence it will follow, that becauſe the Prophecies concerning Chriſt, may ſeem ſomewhat obſcure in Compariſon with this audible Voice from Heaven; therefore the Teſtimony of obſcure Scripture, is to be preferred before the Teſtimony of clear Senſe. Now therefore if you would know Things beyond all danger, either of Falſhood or Heſitation, be Converſant in the Scripture, where we may take all for certain upon the Word and Authority of that God, who neither can deceive, nor be deceived.

Sixthly, The Scripture alone gives us the true and unerring Knowledge of our Selves. Man that buſies himſelf in knowing all things elſe, is of nothing more ignorant than of himſelf; the Eye that beholds others Things, cannot ſee its own ſhape; and ſo the Soul of Man, whereby he underſtands other Objects, is uſually ignorant of its own Concernments. Now as the Eye that cannot ſee it ſelf directly, may ſee it ſelf reflexively in a Glaſs; ſo God hath given us his Scripture, which St. *James* compares to a Glaſs, *Jame* 1. 23. *And holds this before the Soul, wherein is repreſented our true State and Idea.*

There is a Fourfold ſtate of Man, that we could never have attained to know, but by the Scriptures.

His ſtate of Integrity.
His ſtate of Apoſtacy.
His ſtate of Reſtitution.
His ſtate of Glory.

The Scripture alone can reveal to us, what we were in our Primitive Conſtitution. Naturally Holy, bearing the Image and Similitude of God, and enjoying his Love, free from all inward Perturbations or outward Miſeries; having all the Creatures ſubject to us, and what is much more, our ſelves.

What we were in our ſtate of Apoſtacy or Deſtitution, deſpoiled of all our Primitive Excellencies, diſpoſſeſs'd of all the Happineſs we enjoy'd, and of all hopes of any for the future; liable every moment to the revenge of Juſtice, and certain once to feel it.

What we are in our ſtate of Reſtitution, through Grace, begotten again to a lively Hope, Adopted into the Family of Heaven, Redeem'd by the Blood of Chriſt,

Chriſt, Sanctified and Sealed by the Holy Spirit, reſtored to the Favour and Friendſhip of God, recovering the initials of his Image upon our Souls here on Earth, and expecting the perfection of it in Heaven.

What we ſhall be in our final ſtate of Glory, cloathed with Light, crowned with Stars, inebriated with pure ſpiritual Joys. We ſhall ſee God as he is, know him as we are known by him, love him ardently, converſe with him eternally, yea a ſtate, it will be ſo infinitely happy, that 'twill leave us nothing to hope for.

This Fourfold ſtate of Man the Scripture doth evidently expreſs. Now theſe are ſuch Things as could never have entred into our Hearts to have imagined, had not the Word of God deſcribed them to us, and thereby inſtructed us in the knowledge of our ſelves, as well as of God and Chriſt.

Now let us put theſe Six Particulars together. The Scripture inſtructs us in the knowledge of ſuch Things as are intelligible only by Divine Revelation; it teacheth us the moſt ſublime and lofty Truths; 'tis a moſt inexhauſtible Fountain of Knowledge, the more we draw, the more ſtill ſprings up; it teaches that Knowledge that is neceſſary to Salvation; it is of undoubted Certainty; and perpetual Truth; And Laſtly, it informs us in the knowledge of our Selves; and certainly, if there be any Thirſt in you after Knowledge, there needs no more be ſpoken to perſuade you to the diligent ſtudy of the Scripture, which is a rich Store and Treaſury of all Wiſdom and Knowledge.

Thus we have ſeen how the Scriptures inform the Judgment. Let us now briefly ſee how they reform the Life, and what practical Influence they have upon the Souls of Men. Now here the Word of God hath a mighty Operation, and that in ſunday Particulars.

Firſt, This is that Word that convinceth and humbles the ſtouteſt and proudeſt Sinners. There are two ſorts of ſecure Sinners. Thoſe who vaunt it in the Confidence of their own Righteouſneſs; and thoſe who are ſecure through an inſenſibility of their own Wickedneſs. Both theſe the Word when it is ſet home with Power, convinceth, humbles, and brings to the Duſt. It deſpoils the Self-Juſtitiary of all that falſe Righteouſneſs he once boaſted of and truſted to. *I was alive once without the law* (ſaith St. *Paul*) *but when the commandment came, ſin revived, and I died*, Rom. 7. 9. It awakens and alarms the ſenſeleſs, ſeared Sinner. How many have there been that have ſcorned God, and deſpiſed Religion, whom yet one Curſe or Threat of this Word hath made to tremble and fall down before the convincing Majeſty and Authority of it?

Secondly, This is that Word that ſweetly comforts and raiſeth them after their Dejections: All other Applications to a wounded Spirit are improper and impertinent. 'Tis only Scripture-Conſolation that can eaſe it. *The leaves of this book are like the leaves of that tree*, Rev. 22. which were for the healing of the Nations. The ſame Weapon that wounds muſt here work the Cure.

Thirdly, This is that Word that works the mighty change upon the Heart in Renovation. Take a Man that runs on in vile and deſperate Courſes, that ſells himſelf to do Iniquity, and commits all manner Wickedneſs with Greedineſs, and makes uſe of all the Arguments that Reaſon can ſuggeſt; theſe ſeldom reclaim any from their Debaucheries. Or if in ſome few they do reform the Life, yet they can never change the Heart. But now that which no other Means can effect, the Word of God can, *Pſal.* 19. 7. *The law of God is perfect converting the Soul.*

Fourthly, This is that Word that ſtrengthens and arms the People of God to endure the greateſt temporal Evils, only in hope of that future Reward which it promiſeth.

Fifthly, This that Word that contains in it ſuch a Collection of Rules and Duties, that whoſoever obſerves and obeys, ſhall in the end infallibly obtain everlaſting Life. Though I can but juſt mention theſe Haeds unto you, yet there is enough in them to perſuade you to be diligent in the Scriptures. *In them* (ſaith our Saviour) *ye think to have eternal life.*

We are all of us guilty Malefactors; but God hath been pleaſed to afford

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us the Mercy of the Book: And what, ſhall we not ſo much as read for our Lives?

This is that Book according to which we muſt either ſtand or fall, be acquitted or condemned Eternally. The unalterable Sentence of the laſt Day will paſs upon us, as it is here recorded in this Scripture. Here we may before-hand know our Doom, and what will become of us to all Eternity. *He that believeth ſhall be ſaved, but he that believeth not ſhall be damned.* 'Tis ſaid, *Rev.* 20. 12. That when the Dead ſtood before God to be judged, the Books were opened: That is, the Book of Conſcience, and the Book of the Scripture. Be perſuaded to open this Book, and to judge your ſelves out of it before the laſt Day: 'Tis not a ſealed Book to you, you may there read what your preſent State is, and foretel what your future will be. If it be a ſtate of Sin and Wrath, ſearch farther; there are Directions how you may change this wretched State for a better. If it be a ſtate of Grace and Favour, their are Rules how to preſerve you in it. 'Tis a Word ſuited to all Perſons, all Occaſions, all Exigencies. It informs the Ignorant, ſtrengthens the Weak, comforts the Diſconſolate, ſupports the Afflicted, relieves the Tempted, reſolves the Doubtful, directs all to thoſe Ways which lead to endleſs Happineſs; where, as the Word of God hath dwelt richly in us, ſo we ſhall dwell for ever glorioufly with God.

THE ALMOST-CHRISTIAN DISCOVERED;

In Several SERMONS.

ACTS xxvi. 28.

Then Agrippa ſaid unto Paul, ALMOT *thou perſuadeſt me to be a* CHRISTIAN.

IN this Chapter we have St. *Paul* in his Fetters pleading before that Honourable Seſſions of *Feſtus* and *Agrippa*; his Plea we have largely ſet down from the *1ſt.* to the *24th.* Verſe, in which he opens his Commiſſion, that he had received in an extraordinary manner from Heaven, for preaching of that Doctrine which was every where ſpoken againſt, and for worſhipping God in that way which was called Hereſie. I ſhall not at all enter into the conſideration of the Apology; but let us look only at the different Effects that it wrought upon the Hearers: *Feſtus* and *Agrippa* they were both of them Unbelievers, the one an unbelieving *Heathen*, the other an unbelieving *Jew*, and thus they both continue; yet St. *Paul*'s Speech works very differently upon them. In the *24th.* Verſe you have *Feſtus* raving; he *ſaid with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beſides thy ſelf, much learning hath made thee mad.* Thy Thoughts of a Viſion and an Apparition, of a Man dead and buried, lying ſafe under ground, that he ſhould riſe again and appear from Heaven to thee, being the Saviour of the World, is a meer Fancy, proceeding from a ſtrong Phrenzy: Thus he ſcoffs and raves. But this very Sermon which ſeemed Madneſs and an idle Tale to unbelieving *Feſtus*, carries a ſtrong Conviction in it to *Agrippa*, who was an Unbeliever too; *Almoſt thou perſuadeſt me to be a Chriſtian.*

Hence obſerve, *That the Word of God hath a far different effect, even upon thoſe, upon whom it hath no ſaving effect*; one raves and rageth againſt it, is feared and ſtupified by it; another is convinced and terrified by it. *Feſtus* he ſcoffes and mocks, goes away laughing at the Doctrine, and reviling the Preacher: But *Agrippa* is convinced, and half perſuaded, to believe and practiſe that very Doctrine, and highly to eſteem

eſteem the Preacher of it. And is it not ſo even among us? Are there not many who may come to the Ordinances in a natural and ſinful Eſtate and Condition, the ſame Word of God is caſt among them all; yea, but what is the Succeſs? The *Sword of the Spirit* when it is *brandiſhed* amongſt a great Croud of Conſciences, it is not likely that it ſhould miſs all, and ſtrike none of them; one perhaps goes away ſlighting and contemning; another goes away ſcoffing and railing againſt it; and another half-perſuaded by it to become a Chriſtian, to be almoſt a Chriſtian. If every Man's Breaſt had a Caſement in it by which we might ſee the inward Eſtuations and Boilings of their Hearts, how they work after a powerful and terrifying Sermon; ſhould we not behold and ſee ſome ſhifting, and ſhuffling, their Sins out of the way; ſome holding up the Bucklers of prejudicate Opinions, to ward and fence off the ſtroke of the Spirit; ſome fretting and ſtorming at the lancing of their Conſciences; ſome ſcorning and ſcoffing with *Feſtus*, that it is no better than Folly and Madneſs; ſome trembling with *Felix*; ſome convinced and wrought upon as *Agrippa* to faint reſolutions, and half-purpoſes; and yet all theſe remain under the Power of Unbelief and Unregeneracy. It is indeed a wonder among ſuch diverſity of Operations that the Word hath upon the Souls and Conſciences of Men, it could be poſſible that ſuch a multitude ſhould go away without any ſaving Operation by it; ſome blinded and hardned, ſome terrified, ſome ſtupified; ſome exaſperated and inraged; ſome convinced and half-perſuaded, and ſuch are thoſe that we now ſpeak of: Such are, as it were, half of one Complexion, and half of another that ſtick in the New Birth, whoſe Hearts have been warmed with good Motions; who have entertained approving and admiring Thoughts concerning the ways of Holineſs, who have taken up ſome reſolutions of doing better, and of being better; and yet do not come off roundly and ſpeedily from their Sins, nor cloſe fully with Chriſt. Theſe are the half-Chriſtians which the Text ſpeaks of.

The Words they are plain in themſelves; and therefore do not require much Explication. Only the Word tranſlated *Almoſt* thou perſuadeſt me, *&c.* if accurately rendred according to the Original, it is *a little* thou perſuadeſt me, *&c.* So in the Reply St. *Paul* makes with a holy kind of Gallantry in the enſuing Verſe you find there it is oppoſed to *much*, which we render *altogether*; but the Grammatical Conſtruction is, Would to God they were both *all and in much* ſuch as I am except theſe Bonds. So then *in a little* thou perſuadeſt me; that is, I could methinks be contented to be a Chriſtian *in a little*, in ſome few things; ſome part of the Way I could willingly go, ſaith *Agrippa:* But St. *Paul* concludes, it muſt not be only in a little, but in much, in all. If we follow this Sence and Interpretation of the Words; then obſerve,

Doct. 1. *There goes much to the making of a true Chriſtian, a little will not ſerve.*

It is not a little will ſerve; for many precious Ingredients go to the making of a true Chriſtian; and much of each Ingredient goes to the making of a ſtrong Chriſtian. There muſt be Profeſſion, Faith, Obedience, Self-denial, Patience, Humility, outward Preparation and inward Graces, outward Imbelliſhments and inward Ornaments, and a little of it is but little worth. There are many that are perſuaded to be Chriſtians in Name and Profeſſion, to be Chriſtians in outward participation of Ordinances and Communion with Saints, and the like; yea, but this is to be a Chriſtian but only in a little. Are you perſuaded to obey Chriſt in all, to take up his Croſs, and deny your ſelves, to oppoſe and mortifie your Luſts, and to perform the harſheſt and ſevereſt part of Religion? This is indeed to be a Chriſtian not only in a little but in much; yea, in all, to be ſuch as St. *Paul* himſelf was. But then if you take the *Words* according to our Tranſlation, which the Original alſo will very well bear. So it is within a little or *almoſt* thou perſuadeſt me; for King *Arippa* was fully convinced of the Truth of thoſe things which *Paul* related, as you may ſee, *v.* 26. He knew theſe things, and was ignorant of none of them, they were not hidden from him; for theſe things were not done in a corner. He could not be ignorant of the miraculous Converſion of him, who had been ſo furious and notorious a Perſecutor of Chriſtians: He, who was expert in all the Cuſtoms that were among the *Jews*, *ver.* 3. could not be ignorant of what the Apoſtle affirms, *ver.* 22, 23. This that *Moſes* and the Prophets foretold that Chriſt ſhould ſuffer and be raiſed from the dead, and ſhould give life to the *Gentiles*: Of all this King *Agrippa* was fully convinced; and yet when *Paul* ſo inſinuatingly preſſeth

upon him, *Believeſt thou the Prophets? I know thou believeſt.* The reſult of all is this, That he was but almoſt perſuaded, not fully perſuaded of the Truth of what St. *Paul* ſpeaks concerning Chriſt, concerning himſelf, and concerning Chriſtians; yet for all that he was but *almoſt perſuaded* to be a Chriſtian. Hence likewiſe obſerve,

Doct. 2. *That Perſons who are full and truly convinced, are many times but almoſt and half-perſuaded.*

There may be a powerful perſuaſion in the Judgment and the Conſcience concerning Chriſt and his ways, when there is but half a perſuaſion in the Will and Affections to cloſe with him. Theſe Obſervations I gather up as they lie ſtrewed in my paſſage. I ſhall not inſiſt upon them but only as they are ſubſervient to the fuller Proſecution of the General Doctrine, which you may take thus,

Doct. 3. *That thoſe who never were in CHRIST; yet may be almoſt Chriſtians.*

I need not here ſtand to tell you, that Chriſtianity may be taken either,

Firſt, For an *outward Profeſſion* of Chriſt, as it is oppoſed to all other Religions in the World, whether *Heatheniſh* Idolatry, *Mahometan* Stupidity, or *Jewiſh* Ceremony: Or,

Secondly, For *an inward and cordial embracing of Jeſus Chriſt*, thus profeſſed, as it ſtands oppoſed, either to the Prophaneneſs or Hypocriſie of carnal Goſpellers.

Evident it is, that the Chriſtianity that *Agrippa* was almoſt perſuaded into, was of the firſt ſort, not excluding the ſecond. Nay, it was ſeldom ſeen that in thoſe Primitive Times, wherein no carnal Reſpect or outward Advantage could commend the Goſpel to the Intereſts of Men. When the reward of profeſſing Chriſt was Perſecution and Martyrdom; then I ſay it was ſeldom ſeen that any would take Chriſt by Profeſſion, who would not alſo take him by Faith and Adherence. Few there were that would take up Religion, even upon this Condition, to lay down their Lives for Chriſt, who yet through their own Prophaneneſs or Hypocriſie, were to receive no Benefit from the Death of Chriſt. So that to perſuade Men then to be Chriſtians in Profeſſion, it was the ſame with perſuading them to be Chriſtians in reality. "But now, when the Name of Chriſt is ſo much courted, when the "denying of Chriſt would be repaid with the ſame puniſhment, that formerly the "owning of Chriſt underwent, you need not ſo much perſuaſion to take upon you "the outward Profeſſion of Chriſtianity. For you are not only *almoſt*, but *altogether* Chriſtians in the external Garb; but our perſuaſion to you, muſt be, that as you own Chriſt in an outward Profeſſion of him, ſo that you would cleave to him by a true Faith in him, and Obedience to him.

We are not then to ſpeak to *Pagans*, to convert them to a new Religion; but (if I may ſo ſay) we are to ſpeak to *Chriſtian* Infidels, to convert them to a new Life and Converſation. Nor yet among theſe doth my Subject lead me to the prophane and looſer ſort, whoſe being called Chriſtians doth not more honour them, than they diſgrace and reproach that holy Name; but to thoſe who are more elevated, and more refined, who go far in Chriſtianity ſo as to be near the Kingdom of God. In a word, ſuch as are *Almoſt Chriſtian*; and yet are Strangers to Chriſt, and remain in their ſinful State and unregenerate Condition.

Now in the Proſecution of this Point, I ſhall enquire into theſe following Particulars in this Method.

1. What *Progreſs* Men may make towards Chriſtianity, and yet fall ſhort of it.
2. Whence they are enabled to proceed ſo far, and what it is that carries them out to all their Attainments.
3. What it is that hinders them from proceeding further; and when they are *almoſt* Chriſtians, what keeps them from being ſuch *altogether*.
4. To ſhew you the folly and miſery of thoſe who proceed thus far only, as to be almoſt Chriſtians, and no farther.

Firſt, Let us ſee *what Progreſs a natural Man may make towards Grace* and Chriſtianity, and yet remain in a ſinful ſtate. Before I can come in particular to determine this, I muſt premiſe theſe two or three Particulars:

Firſt, That when we enquire what Progreſs an unregenerate Man may make towards Grace, this ſuppoſes that there is a tendency in what ſuch a Man doth, or may do towards the obtaining of Grace. Or how elſe can he make any progreſs towards it, if that which he doth hath no tendency to it? Let us therefore enquire what

what kind of tendency this is. There may be a twofold tendency ſuppoſed in the Actions of an unregenerate Man, towards the acquiſition of Grace,

1. Effective,
2. Subjective, } Tendency.

I. Actions may be ſaid to have an *effective tendency*, when they do by their own efficiency and caſuality produce that which they tend to; and in this ſence it muſt be denied that the Actions of an unregenerate Man, have any tendency towards Grace, be their progreſs what it will; thereby he cannot efficiently produce or cauſe Grace in himſelf; and therefore Grace is called the new Creature, as being the effect only of creating Power, which is the ſole Prerogative of God, and it is as utterly impoſſible for a Man to create Grace in the Soul, as to create the Soul it ſelf. Take but this one demonſtration to evince it: If an unregenerate Man by his own Power and Efficiency can produce Grace in himſelf, then one of theſe two groſs Abſurdities muſt needs follow, either, 1. That there are ſtill left holy Habits and Principles in the Will, which were never loſt by the Fall of Man: Or, 2. That a Man may make himſelf truly holy by a Will that is totally corrupt and ſinful; but either of theſe are very groſs.

Firſt, There are no holy nor divine Habits left in the *Will* of a *carnal Man*, whereby he ſhould be able to regenerate, and convert himſelf; for what holy Habit can there be in the Will of one that is wholly corrupted? If any ſuch be ſuppoſed, it may alſo be ſuppoſed that it is true *Grace*; and to affirm that a Man in a ſtate of Nature hath true *Grace* inherent in him, whereby he is able to convert and regenerate himſelf, is double nonſence and a flat contradiction; for it is to affirm that he hath *Grace* before he hath it.

Secondly, A Will totally corrupted, cannot make an holy Man, cannot produce *Grace*, nor make a Man holy, *Grace* is beyond and above its Sphere, all the motions of the Will in its fallen Eſtate, what through defect of a right Principle from whence they flow, and a right *end* to which they tend, they are all evil and ſinful. And it is very ſtrange to affirm that a gracious *Habit* may be wrought in us by ſinful Actions. And beſides the Will of a Man by the Fall, it is a Fleſhly Will; but in Regeneration it is made ſpiritual. Now it were a ſtrange kind of *Production*, if fleſhly could beget ſpiritual; nor would it any longer hold true what our *Saviour* ſaith in *John* 3. 6. *That which is born of the fleſh, is fleſh:* So that I think 'tis very evident, that all that a Man can do by the power of *Nature* cannot tend efficiently to produce *Grace* in him.

Secondly, There is a *ſubjective tendency* towards *Grace*; and this lies in thoſe moral preparations, and thoſe diſpoſitions of the Heart which fit it for the receiving of *Grace*, though it be wrought there only by the Holy Ghoſt. And thus we affirm that while Men are in an unregenerate ſtate, they may have and do ſomewhat that hath a tendency in it to *Grace*; that is, one unregenerate Man may have more of theſe previous diſpoſitions, and of theſe preparations for the receiving of *Grace*, than another hath: For though it be not in it ſelf ſingly neceſſary that ſuch *previous* diſpoſitions ſhould be wrought in the Soul before the implantation of divine *Grace*; ſince ſuch a ſubject as the Soul is in reſpect of *Grace*, doth not, as the Schoolmen determine, require its previous diſpoſitions for the production of its Form; yet this is the uſual common way of the Spirit's work,

1. To prepare the heart by ſome common Works of Conviction, legal Terrors and remorſe of Conſcience, firſt to prepare the heart by theſe before it works any ſaving and real work of *Grace* in it: And therefore when any unregenerate Man hath much of theſe previous preparations, we ſay that he goes *very* far towards *Grace*, and he may be ſaid to be *almoſt a Chriſtian*. And this is all that tendency that an unregenerate Man hath, or can poſſibly do towards it; *viz.* a preparatory, and not an effective operative tendency unto ſaving *Grace* and Regeneration.

2. Another thing premiſed is this, That what through wilful ſloth and *wretched negligence*, no unregenerate Man doth make ſo great a progreſs towards *Grace* as he is able and can poſſibly do. None go ſo far as they can do in thoſe previous preparations and diſpoſitions towards it. When they find difficulty in oppoſing Temptation, in crucifying their Luſts, in performing of Duties, in denying their ſinful Delights and Pleaſures, having nothing ſupernatural within them to naturalize and facilitate theſe things, and carry them on reſolutely through all, they never keep up to the utmoſt of that Power which they have; but as they yield to thoſe Temptations that they might reſiſt, and commit thoſe Sins that they might reject,

and neglect thoſe Duties which for Matter and Subſtance of them they might perform; ſo none of them goes ſo far as they have a natural power to do: No Man goes ſo far in the work of *Grace* as he might, if he would improve that power which he hath by Nature.

3. Did they make as great a progreſs towards *Grace* as they might, they would not fall ſo far ſhort of *Grace* as they do. I ſay if wicked unregenerate Men did but as much as they are able by the power of *Nature* to do, without the ſpecial Aſſiſtance of the Holy Ghoſt, they would not fall ſo far ſhort of *Grace* as they do. I would not enter into that Diſpute whether God be engaged to beſtow *Grace* upon the right Improvement of their natural power; yet it is certain, and agreed on by all, that he doth certainly do ſo. God uſually beſtows true and ſaving *Grace* upon thoſe who do rightly, and to their utmoſt, improve their natural power and ability for their acquiring of it. If God be not obliged by promiſe to aſſiſt them; yet through his *Goodneſs* and *Mercy* he is not wont to deſert them. Let them but labour to improve their natural ability to the utmoſt ſtrain and pitch that their own capacity can elevate, God will (according to his uſual method and wonted Goodneſs) come in by ſupernatural *Grace*, and inable them to do that which by Nature they are not able to do; for no inſtance can be given to the contrary. So then we may conclude that wicked Men never go ſo far as they can; and did they, yet they could not efficiently work *Grace* in themſelves, but nevertheleſs they would be diſpoſed and prepared for the receipt of *Grace*, which God upon ſuch preparations would undoubtedly beſtow upon them. For although he be not obliged to give it them, yet uſually he is wont to work it in them meerly through his own natural Goodneſs, free *Grace* and *Mercy* to them, pitying the weakneſs of their lapſed and fallen *Nature*.

I ſhall proceed to the Anſwer of the firſt Queſtion in the general. 1. Unregenerate Men may make a great progreſs, and may go very far towards Grace, and yet fall ſhort of it; that in general is to be *Almoſt a Chriſtian*. This I laid down in the Method propounded to you. Although I ſay not they go as far as they can by the power of *Nature*, and yet fall ſhort of *Grace*; for that can never be inſtanced in any; yet the ſad and wretched Apoſtacy of thoſe who have been eminent Profeſſors, ſhining, yea, and glaring *Lights*, exceeding, and alſo deſpiſing common attainments of others; their Apoſtacy hath too evidently confirmed it to us, that Men may go very far towards *Grace*, and yet fall ſhort of it. See what Chriſt ſaith *Mark* 12. 24. of that young Man, that forward young Man, *Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God*; that is, thou art not far from Grace; for ſo the Kingdom of God is oftentimes taken in *Scripture* for the Kingdom of *Grace*, ſo that we may ſay of ſuch Men, they were not far from the Kingdom of God, not far from *Grace*, not far from Heaven, climbing up almoſt thither, within view and ken of it, having one foot, as it were, upon the Threſhold of the Heavenly Gate; and yet even theſe tumble headlong, and never reſt till they have plunged themſelves to the bottom of Hell. It is with ſuch Men as it is with the Vapours that are drawn up into the Air, they ſhine with the ſame Light, with the ſame apparent Magnitude as the fixed Stars themſelves do, and we may think them moving in the very ſame Sphere with them; but when we ſee them dart down to the Earth, and ſpilling all that Light and Glory, which they gliſtered with by the way, and fall into a filthy Jelly, a thicker and more loathſom Subſtance than when they were firſt exhaled, we then conclude that all that Elevation of thoſe falſe and blazing Lights, was vaſtly ſhort of that Heaven in which they ſeemed ſometime to be fixed. So is it with many unregenerate Men; you cannot tell with what they are fraught till you ſee them ſhipwracked; then it is a ſign, that though they were never right and true Treaſure, yet they are ſomething very like it: When we ſee them tumbling down off a glorious Profeſſion through fatal Precipices of great, groſs, and deſperate Sins, we may ſadly conclude that that Man was not far from the Kingdom of God, though he was never yet there. Indeed every unregenerate Man, when he winds up himſelf to the higheſt pitch and ſtrain, he may be ſaid to be far from the Kingdom of God, in reſpect of his total deprivation of *Grace*; though his Actions be never ſo fair and ſpecious, yet they are very far from being gracious, as far as *Darkneſs* is from *Light*; yet he may be ſaid not to be far from the Kingdom of God likewiſe in a fourfold reſpect.

Firſt, In that he is far from that which is furtheſt from *Grace*; and that is, groſs, flagitious, and notorious Sins, which are fartheſt off from *Grace* of all others; and theſe a Natural Man may be very far and free from; and therefore not far from *Grace*.

Secondly,

Secondly, He may have that which very much reſembles and counterfeits Grace, ſo that as to outward appearance there is but very little Diſſimilitude diſcernible between them. Now that which is like another, may be ſaid not to' be far from that which it is like.

Thirdly, He may be ſaid not to be far from Grace, becauſe (as I told you before) in the ordinary Works of the Spirit upon his Soul, he may have thoſe preparations and diſpoſitions laid in them, which uſually are previous and antecedent to Grace, becauſe theſe are wrought uſually before Grace; and therefore the perſon that hath theſe wrought upon him may be ſaid not to be far from Grace.

Fourthly, He may be ſaid not to be far from Grace, becauſe if he did proceed but a little farther, he would poſſibly attain to true Grace. Had ſuch but improved their natural power to ſuch a degree farther, God would have come in with power ſupernatural, and have wrought that true and ſaving Principle in their lives, which would have been ſure to have brought them to eternal Life. Grace indeed hath ſuch a kind of dependance upon that which is *natural*; and that dependance is not ſo much of *Cauſality*, as of Order and Conſequence, which though it be ont neceſſary, yet it is commonly granted on all Hands. Thus then in the general I have ſhewn you that unregenerate Men may go far, yea very far towards. A Man may be *Almoſt* a Chriſtian, and yet be out of Chriſt; be near the Kingdom of Heaven, and yet not in it; and, poſſibly, be for ever excluded and ſhut out of it.

II. I ſhall proceed to the next thing propounded. As we have ſeen in the general, ſo now let us conſider in particular what *Progreſs* a natural Man may make towards *Grace*; and that I ſhall do, by conſidering the ſeveral ſteps and degrees by which they may ariſe up to a great height and glory of outward Profeſſion: And this we cannot better do, than by ſhewing, 1. What Grace is. 2. What reſemblance that which is wrought by a meer carnal Man may carry in it like true Grace; by comparing theſe together, we may ſee how near an unregenerate, carnal Man may come to true and ſaving Grace.

Firſt, What *Grace* is. I need not tell you that I ſpeak not now of an *Objective Grace* inherent in God; but terminated on us, whereby a change is wrought in our relation to him. And this *Objective Grace* is nothing elſe but the divine Love, Favour, and good Will of God expreſſed in us. But I ſpeak of *a Subjective Grace* inherent in us; whereby a real change is made in our Lives and Natures. And in brief you may take this Deſcription of ſubjective or inherent Grace: It is a ſupernatural Habit immediately infuſed into the Soul by the *Holy Ghoſt*, reſiding in every Power and Faculty of the Soul as a Principle of holy and ſpiritual Operation. And there is a fivefold change wrought by it.

1. Upon *the Judgment, or the direct Underſtanding*, by informing and enlightning it.
2. Upon *the Conſcience* in the reflex Underſtanding, by awakening and pacifying it.
3. Upon *the Affections*, by ſpiritualizing them.
4. Upon *the Will*, by converting it.
5. Upon *the Life and Converſation*, by reforming it.

This fivefold change is wrought upon the whole Soul by the true and ſanctifying Grace.

Now in the next place I ſhall ſhew how far a natural Man may attain to theſe, ſo as to be *Almoſt a Chriſtian*.

Firſt, As for his Mind or *Underſtanding*, he may be *irradiated with a clear and ſparkling knowledge of divine and ſpiritual Objects*, when yet the Soul is not truly converted to God. It is true as in the *Creation* of the World, the Light is number'd and reckon'd amongſt the firſt of God's Works: So likewiſe in this new Creation, the firſt work of the Spirit of God is to ſhed abroad his heavenly Light in the *Underſtanding*; and therefore we have this firſt in order, in that Commiſſion which our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt gives to St. *Paul*, *Acts* 26. 18. He ſent him to the *Gentiles, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkneſs to light*; and then it follows, *from the power of Satan to God*. But yet notwithſtanding, there is an Illumination about ſpiritual Things, which may *gild* and *beautifie* the Underſtanding of a natural Man, who like a Toad may be full Poiſon, though he hath a precious Stone in his Head. The Apoſtle, he lays down this as one of thoſe Attainments that an unregenerate

Man

Man may have, and yet be an Apoſtate, *Heb.* 6. 4. he may not only have a deep knowledge of Goſpel-Myſteries, ſo as to ſee the whole Compages and concatenation of the Doctrine of Chriſt, and to unfold them to others; but may have alſo particular diſcoveries of the Glory and Beauty that there is in theſe things. We may ſee it clearly by *Balaam*'s Ecſtaſie, *Numb.* 24. Such diſcoveries carnal hearts may have made to them, and ſee their Luſtre and Beauty. Nay further, a carnal Man may be convinced, that there is no other way of Recovery but by the Grace of God through the Merits of Chriſt, and of the ſuitableneſs of Chriſt to his Soul, of the Freeneſs of God's *Love*, of the Riches of his *Grace*, of the *Readineſs* of his *Heart* to receive them; of the Deſirableneſs of Happineſs, of the Beauty of *Holineſs*, and yet for all this remain in a natural State: But now, not to leave you under doubts and perplexities, ſuch an *Illumination* of a carnal Man, falls far ſhort of true Grace in theſe Two Particulars.

Firſt, In that it is but *Lumen ſterile, a barren light*; Illumination that is ſaving is not only Light, but influence too.

As the Light of the Sun doth not ſerve only to *paint the World*, and *varniſh* over the *Beauty* and Variety of ſeveral Creatures that are in it; but carries in it *a greatful heat and cheriſhing influence*, which operates into them, and refreſheth them; and as the Light diſcovers their Beauty, ſo theſe Influences increaſe it: So ſaving *Illumination*, not only *illuſtrates* the *Soul* by its Light; but likewiſe, by the *Congenialneſs* of its Influences, nouriſhes the Soul, draws Sap into it, and Fruit from it. Such is not the Illumination of an unregenerate Man; it is but a barren Light, and only ſerves to paint his Underſtanding, and hath no influence on it to make the Soul *grow in Grace, and bring forth the Fruits of Holineſs, to the Praiſe of God.*

That *Illumination* that is *ſaving* is *transforming*, 2 Cor. 3. 18. *We all, as in a Glaſs, behold the Glory of the Lord, and are changed into the ſame Image*, &c. If a Beam of the Sun falls upon a Looking-glaſs, it not only makes it *glitter* with a glorious Light, but it repreſents the very Image of the Sun in the Glaſs; but let it beat never ſo clearly and ſtrongly upon a Mud-Wall, though it enlightens it, yet it doth not thereby leave its Image upon it. So truly Illumination, that is ſaving doth not only *irradiate*, but transform. If you look upon the Sun, when ſhining in its ſtrength, the Light thereof will imprint the very Shape and Image of the Sun upon your Eye; and look where you will, ſtill you retain the appearance of the Sun before you: So every ſight that a true Chriſtian hath of the Sun of Righteouſneſs, will make as it were another Sun in his Soul. *But now the Illumination of wicked Men doth only enlighten, not change them; their Underſtandings may be irradiated with glorious Diſcoveries of God, Chriſt, and the Things of Heaven*; but this doth not transform them into the Image and Likeneſs of thoſe Things. The Illumination of godly Men and true Chriſtians, is like the Light which breaks through the Air, and turns every vaſt Body throughout the World all into Light. It is with wicked, unregenerate Men, as with thoſe that lie long in the Sun-ſhine; which though it inlightens them, yet doth but afterwards make them more black and ſwarthy. So thou may'ſt have as much notional Knowledge of God, Chriſt, and the Myſteries of the Goſpel as any Child of God hath, and poſſibly much more, yet this is no true Sign of Grace; for this Knowledge is not therefore ſaving, becauſe it is clear and comprehenſive, but becauſe it is influential and transforming. And uſually, we perceive that where the Light of Knowledge ſhines into a wicked Heart, it doth but *tann* and make the Perſon more black and ſwarthy, more ſinful than before: Thus, as to the *direct Underſtanding* of the Judgment, a natural Man may have a bright, clear, and glittering Light concerning Heavenly and ſpiritual Objects.

Secondly, As for the *Reflex Underſtanding* of the *Conſcience*. Neither yet the Peace nor the Trouble of *Conſcience*, is ſuch an Attainment to which a natural Man cannot reach.

Firſt, A *natural* Man may have *a quiet* and *peaceable Conſcience*. Indeed when this Peace is true, it is always an effect of Grace; and therefore we thus find them coupled together, *Rom.* 1. 7. 1 *Cor.* 1. 3. Yet there is that which looks very like Peace of Conſcience though it be not ſuch, and that is a *ſupine* Preſumption and a carnal Stupidity and Oſcitancy: Their Conſciences are never troubled at the ſight of Sin, or ſenſe of Wrath; but are like thoſe preſumptuous Sinners ſpoken of

Deut.

Deut. 29. 19. *And it come to paſs when he heareth the words of this Curſe, that he bleſs himſelf in his Heart, ſaying, I ſhall have peace though I walk in the Imagination of mine Heart*, &c. Now this Peace is founded only upon bold and confident Perſuaſions of God's infinite Mercy, and gracious Diſpoſition; and becauſe God will exalt his Mercy above all his Name, therefore they conclude, that as God hath exalted his Power in creating and ſuſtaining them, ſo he will much more exalt his *Mercy* in ſaving them. Thus as *Mad-men* often fanſie themſelves Kings or ſome great Perſonages, when indeed they are but wretched and miſerable Spectacles, ſo do theſe ſpiritual Mad-men; and as the Devil appropriates to himſelf all the Glory of the Earth, ſo theſe look upon Heaven, and all the Glory of it, and boldly call it all their own; yea, and through their wretched Security, are bold to cry out with *Thomas*, *my Lord, and my God.* To ſuch I may ſay with our Saviour in another Caſe, *God is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living.* God is not the God of ſuch as love, and live in their Sins and Luſts; and that call him Father, whom yet they diſhonour by a lewd and diſſolute Life: This is but *to Father one of Devil's Off-ſpring upon the holy God.* Indeed Men by enormous and flagitious Crimes have ſo wounded and waſted their Conſciences, that now they retain not ſtrength enough to accuſe, moleſt, and trouble them; and this they call Peace of Conſcience: Such a Peace as *Gallicus* (in *Tacitus*) exprobrates the *Romans* with, when they have laid all waſte. This they call Peace; but this Peace is rather *deadneſs of Conſcience*, and is far from that which ariſeth from the true Grace of God; and that is the work of the Holy Ghoſt in Conviction, which deſtroys this ill-grounded Peace; and it works in the Soul Horrors and Terrors, and affrights the ſecure Soul when it ſhews it how it ſlept upon the Top of the Maſt, and lay on the very Brink of the Infernal Pit. As therefore we muſt not diſcourage a broken Spirit, but embolden it to appropriate Chriſt, and all the Promiſes of the Goſpel to it ſelf in particular; ſo we muſt let wicked Men know, that when they preſume to call God, their God and their Father, and yet continue in their Sins and Wickedneſs, they will find that inſtead of being their Father, he will only be their Judge.

Now it will appear that this Peace of a carnal Man is only from deep Security, and the Spirit of Slumber that hath ſeiz'd upon them; becauſe when we come to examine the grounds of it, they plead only the goodneſs of their Hearts, and there is nothing more familiar and frequent than this they boaſt of; and though they live in a conſtant neglect of holy Duties, and wallow in the Filth of cuſtomary Sins, yet ſtill they boaſt of this, that they have very good Hearts, upright Intentions. This is a meer deluſion; for it is as utterly impoſſible that the Heart ſhould be good when the Life is wicked and prophane, as for a good Root to bring forth evil and corrupt Fruit.

Secondly, As *Peace* of *Conſcience* may be attained by natural Men, ſo many times ſuch may lie under the Regrets and Troubles of Conſcience. It is not Trouble of Conſcience that is the Attainment wherein true Grace doth conſiſt: A dull and a lethargick Conſcience that hath long lain under the cuſtomary Commiſſion of groſs Sins, may at length, by ſtrong Convictions, be ſtartled and awakened to a ſenſe of Sin, and be afraid at the ſight of it; but yet may retain an impure and defiled Conſcience: God may (even in this Life) kindle in their Breaſts ſome Sparks of the *unquenchable Fire*, and may give them ſome fore-taſts of that Cup of Trembling that they muſt for ever drink of. As he hath made himſelf a Devil incarnate by his Sin, ſo God may make his Conſcience a Hell incarnate. By his Conſcience you hear *Cain*, that Primitive Reprobate, crying out, my Puniſhment is greater than I can bear; nor could *Judas* find any other way to check his Conſcience but with an Halter: Theſe Regrets of Conſcience may proceed from a preparatory work of Conviction, which becauſe of Men's wilful deſerting them, often vaniſh away without any ſaving effect; and fall as far ſhort of true Grace, as the Region of the Air where Storms, Tempeſts, Thunderings and Lightnings are ingendred, falls ſhort of the Heaven of the Bleſſed, and that Eternal calmneſs and ſerenity: And as Worms uſually are the off-ſpring of corruption and putrefaction; ſo this *never dying Worm*, that muſt ever ſting them, oftentimes in this life, is bred out of a rotten and corrupted Conſcience, the Conſcience therefore may be defiled, when it is not feared; it may be awakened, when it is not ſanctified; a filthy puddle may be ſtirred as well as a clear running ſtream, the Conſcience

may

may work terrors and horrors, where the Spirit of God never wrought true ſaving Grace.

Thirdly, As to the *Affections:* There may be Affections and ſweet Motions of the Heart, which are oftentimes relyed on as certain evidences of true Grace; yet alſo may be in a carnal and natural *Man*, *Mat.* 13. 20. *Some received the word with joy*, &c. So *Joh.* 5. Chriſt tells the *Jews*, they did for a ſeaſon rejoyce in the Doctrine and Preaching of *John* the Baptiſt. Thus *Herod* is ſaid to hear *John* gladly, ſo that you ſee the Affections in holy Duties and Ordinances may be with joy, even in thoſe that have no true Grace at all in them. As there may be thoſe affections of joy and delight, ſo likewiſe of ſorrow for ſin, ſo we have it, *Mat.* 27. 3. It is ſaid of *Judas*, he repented himſelf, and *Ahab*'s humiliation was ſo ſo great, that God takes ſpecial notice of him, 1 *Kings* 21. Behold how *Ahab* humbleth himſelf, *&c.* Now all theſe affections are but temporary and vaniſhing, which may be excited, even in carnal Men, from ſeveral advantages that things have to commend themſelves, to their judgments and to their hearts.

Firſt, Sometimes the very *novelty*, and the ſtrangeneſs of them may affect them: *Novelty* uſually breeds delight, which longer cuſtom and acquaintance doth abate, and this may be given as a reaſon, why ſoon after converſion the new Converts affections are drawn forth more ſtrongly in the ways of God, more than afterwards when they grow ſettled and ſtable Chriſtians; the reaſon is, becauſe of the very novelty of that courſe and way they have now entred into, which affects them with delight, beſides the real deſirableneſs which is in thoſe ways themſelves; the very novelty doth affect them, and this too may ſatisfie us, that though many are turned aſide from the truth as it is in Jeſus Chriſt, and from the way of Worſhip which God hath appointed us, that have boaſted, that they have found more comfort, and more ſweet affections than ever, in thoſe new ways after which they have gone; yet it is not becauſe thoſe ways have any thing in them, that might yield them more comfort and delight, but only becauſe they are new ways, and all new things will for the preſent ſtir up the affections, but after ſome continuance in thoſe ways, they find their joy and their delight to flag; then they ſeek out other new ways, and commend them as much; and no wonder, for new ways will ſtir up new affections; that may be one Reaſon, why affections may be ſtirred up, even in the unregenerate and meer carnal Men, as to the things of God, even from the meer novelty of them.

Secondly, Good affections may be ſtirred up in Men, from the very *affecting nature* of ſpiritual Objects themſelves; for ſpiritual Objects may affect us in this natural way. Who can read *the Hiſtory of Chriſt's Paſſion*, without being affected with ſorrow, for all the ſorrow he underwent? He hath a heart harder than Rocks, that can hear of the Agonies, and Scourges, and cruel Indignities offered to ſo innocent and excellent a Perſon, as *Chriſt* was, that ſuffer'd even for Sinners, and not be moved thereby to grief and compaſſion; and yet poſſibly theſe affections may be no other than ſuch as would be excited from us, at the reading of ſome Tragedy in a Romance or feigned Story.

Thirdly, Affections may be moved by the *Artificial Rhetorick* of others, by the great abilities of the Miniſters whom we hear. God tells the Prophet *Ezekiel*, Chap. 33. 32. *Thou art to them as a very lovely ſong.* They may ſometimes have their judgments pleaſed, with the Learning ſhewn in a Sermon, and their affections excited by the Oratory, and powerful utterance of it; but theſe though they are very good helps to excite our affections, yet they are not true teſts of ſpiritual affections in us.

Fourthly, Pride and ſelf-ſeeking may in the performance of Duties excite our affections. Men may be much deceived in this particular, for inſtance, in Prayer, they may think they are affected with the things they pray for, when poſſibly their affections may be moved only with the words themſelves ſpoken, with the copious, free and admirable inventive way that they pray in: Whereas the contrite broken Spirit, who is only moved with truly ſpiritual affections, may not be ſo large, and ſo copious in his expreſſions of them. A true Chriſtian may *groan out a Prayer*, that cannot compoſe and make a Prayer, that hath a ſententious Coherence one part with another. As the Ground that is fulleſt of *precious Mines* hath leaſt graſs growing upon it; ſo ſometimes in holy Duties, when the heart is moſt full of Grace, there may be leaſt flouriſhing of expreſſions: You cannot gather the truth of ſaving

ing Grace, from ſtrong workings of the affections, which may ſometimes upon theſe accounts be deceitful and wicked, and unregenerate Men may have Affections ſtirred up in them upon theſe grounds, but then they are always vaniſhing and fleeting, and are only permanent while the violence of ſome external cauſe doth excite them, and they are always unfruitful; though their Affections may ſtir within them, yet they are not efficacious to put them upon a holy Life and Converſation.

IV. Every change that is wrought upon the *Will*, is no certain evidence of the truth of Grace; a Man may fall ſhort of true ſaving Grace, when there is yet a great change wrought upon the Will; it is true, it is the thorough change of the Will, wherein Grace doth principally conſiſt; this is the firſt principal Act from the Spirit of Life, without which, whatſoever other change is wrought upon us, it is no more than to ſet the hand of the Watch to the right hour when the Spring is broken. The Philoſophers call the *Will*, the commanding, ſwaying faculty of the Soul, that controuls all the Inferiour faculties, and makes them obey its inclinations; ſo that ſuch as the Will is, ſuch is the whole Man: And therefore the Scripture in ſetting forth the two-fold State of *Men*, doth it by ſhewing the temper of their Wills; unregenerate Men are deſcribed by their wilfulneſs, *Ye will not come to me that ye might have Life*, 2 *John* 4. The People of God are deſcribed by their willingneſs, *Pſal.* 116. 3. *They ſhall be a willing People in the Day of thy Power.* And here I ſhall endeavour two things.

Firſt, To ſhew you after what manner the Spirit of God doth work this renewing change upon the Will.

Secondly, What other change is wrought upon it which falls ſhort of true *Grace*, though oftentimes it is taken for it.

For the firſt, We muſt know that there are two ways, whereby God doth effectually change the Heart and Will of a Sinner: And theſe are *Moral Swaſions*, *and Phyſical Determinations*, which is nothing elſe, but God's All-powerful Grace, whereby he doth immediately turn the bent and inclination of the Will towards himſelf, and both theſe do always concur and accrue to this great change. He doth firſt convince a Sinner, and perſuade him of the rationality of the ways of God, of the vileneſs and emptineſs of thoſe vain things, which his deſires ſo eagerly purſue: And on the other hand, he clearly repreſents the Glory and Excellency of himſelf and his ways, that he is the greateſt good that we can enjoy, and yet there is no other way to enjoy him, but by loving and ſerving of him: To do this he makes uſe of moral Swaſions, and works upon our reaſon, by cogent and prevailing Arguments, which at laſt diffuſeth ſuch Heavenly ſweetneſs through the Heart of a Chriſtian, which makes him diſreliſh thoſe fulſom delights of ſin, that ſeparate from that infinite Good, with which it holds compariſon, ſo that he finds more true delight in God and his ways, and more alluring and charming joy in them, than ever he did before in ſenſual pleaſure; more are thereby carried forth unto them, by an infallible, yet altogether free, voluntary and amorous motion; and this is done by the real efficiency likewiſe of the Spirit of God upon the Will, and this efficiency is ſo ſweetly attempered to the native Liberty of the Will, that it will be a pain and a torment to the Soul, to be ſeparated from that God, whom now his underſtanding doth apprehend, and whom his Will doth claſp about, as the real and chiefeſt good. Here you ſee are both moral Swaſions, and Phyſical Determinations, of the Will to the Work of Grace; God doth really determine it by the efficacious touch of his Grace, whereby he powerfully turns the bent and inclination of it to himſelf, which before ſtood towards ſin and vanity; and that this might not infringe the Wills Prerogative of acting freely, he doth at the ſame time morally perſuade it, by repreſenting himſelf as the beſt and moſt ſatisfying object of it; notwithſtanding the irreſiſtableneſs of God's working upon the Will; yet ſtill Man's Will is free in God's working of Grace, which ſome have thought to be an irreconcilable difference.

For the freedom of the Will doth not conſiſt in redoubled pure Acts, for otherwiſe the Saints and Angels themſelves, that are under that bleſſed neceſſity, that they cannot but love and ſerve God, would not love him and ſerve him freely: The liberty of the Will, conſiſts in an acting upon rational grounds and motives, which by how much ſtronger they are, by ſo much more they turn the neceſſity of the Will to him, and yet by ſo much the more the Will is free in acting: So that here the liberty of the Will may not violate the cauſality of God's purpoſe, he

changeth it by the power of his irriſiſtible *Grace*. And yet that this irriſiſtible *Grace*, may not violate the liberty of the Will, which is its natural privilege, he perſuades it by ſuch natural Arguments, that it could not act freely if it ſhould diſſent from them, though God uſeth infinite power, yet he uſeth no violence, he ſubdues the Will, but doth not compel it. This is that victorious Grace, that doth not more overcome a Sinner's reſiſtance, than it doth his prejudice; it overcomes all oppoſition by its own irreſiſtable Power, and overcomes all its prejudices by its attractive ſweetneſs: And whenever it brings him to ſubmit to God, it makes him to apprehend, that his chiefeſt happineſs and joy is to do ſo. And it is the ſame that doth afterwards preſerve a Chriſtian from total Apoſtacy, for though there be ſuch a conſtant ſupply of Grace to keep them, that they ſhall never draw back to Perdition; yet withal, their own freedom is ſuch, that they may if they will, but when the Will ceaſeth its freedom, it never inclines but to that which is moſt pleaſing, and nothing is pleaſing to a renewed, ſanctified Will, ſo much as that *Sovereign good*, which comprehends in it all other good. Thus you ſee, how God diſpoſeth of the *Will* of Man, changing it without conſtraining of it, turning it not forcibly, but infallibly to himſelf, when he draws it by the ſweet and efficacious operation of his Grace; Thus I diſpatched the firſt thing, and ſhewed how God works the renewing change upon the Will of a Sinner.

The ſecond particular is to ſhew you, what other Change may be wrought upon the Will; which yet falls ſhort of true Grace, and may bring a Man almoſt to Chriſtianity, and yet leave him in a natural ſtate and condition.

Firſt, An unregenerate Man may have many faint and velleities, and wiſhings, and wouldings after Grace; when he hears ſo much ſpoken of the *Beauty* and Excellency of *Holineſs*, he is convinced in his Judgment that thoſe things are true, that without Holineſs no Man ſhall ſee the Lord, and that though while he his Carnal, ſpiritual Duties are tedious and a burthen to him; yet were he ſpiritualized, they would become more delightful to him than thoſe very Pleaſures of Sin, which keep him from cloſing with Grace: Were he renewed, thoſe very pleaſures of Sin would become unſavoury to him, that which now he is afraid to loſe if he would turn to Conſcience he would not value the loſs of it. When an unregenerate Man, I ſay, is thus convinced of this, it will make him to break out into *pangs of Affection* wiſhing for Grace. O that I were holy and gracious! I wiſh my Heart were changed and renewed: I wiſh I were better and could do better; I appeal to every Man's Conſcience, when he hath been convinced of the excellency and deſirableneſs of Holineſs, whether they have not breathed forth ſuch wiſhes as theſe are. When you have ſeen a Chriſtian that is eminent and exemplary for Piety; have not you wiſhed your ſelves in his Condition, not only in reſpect of his future Reward and Glory, but alſo in reſpect of his preſent Grace. Have you not wiſhed that ſuch had been your Comelineſs and Beauty, have you not wiſhed not only with *Balaam*, to *die the death of the Righteous*, and that your *laſt end* might be *like his*; but alſo your Life by living righteouſly; and yet ſtill continue in the ſame courſe and ſinful State as formerly? Why now ſuch empty Velleities, and idle Wiſhes an unregenerate Man may poſſibly have; he may wiſh he were a Saint, even as a fond fooliſh Man, according to his idle fancy, may wiſh that he were an Angel; but ſuch wiſhes do not put them upon a conſtant attempt and uſe of the Means whereby they might become ſuch, their wiſhes and their ſighs vaniſh away together, the one retaining no longer an impreſſion upon their Hearts, than the other in the Air; he runs into the commiſſion of that Sin, which with his Mouth he wiſhes he might not commit, and lives in the neglect of Holy Duties, and yet can wiſh that he had performed them; ſuch contradictory wiſhes have unregenerate Men; they wiſh themſelves Holy, and yet are wilfully Sinful; they wiſh that they were better, and yet will not endeavour their own amendment.

Secondly, An unregenerate Man, he may not reſt in theſe Wiſhes, but he may riſe to a *Reſolution*; I ſay, to ſome degree of Reſolution: They reſolve many things; That their Luſts ſhall no longer enſlave them; That the Pleaſures of the World ſhall no longer bewitch them; That the difficulties of Religion ſhall no longer affright them; but that they will break through all, and act like Men: And ſuch generous and ingenuous Reſolutions as theſe a Man in his natural Eſtate may fortifie himſelf with. Grace they know they muſt have, elſe they are eternally undone;

they

they know that God hath not been wanting to their Endeavours, and they peremptorily reſolve that they will not be wanting to themſelves. We may ſee the ſame ſtrong Reſolutions of thoſe that came to enquire of *Jeremy*, Chap. 42. 5, 6. *They ſaid, the Lord be a true and faithful witneſs between us, if we do not according to all things for which the Lord thy God ſhall ſend thee to us*, &c. And yet none more rebellious and diſobedient againſt God than theſe Men that make this Remonſtrance. And now notwithſtanding theſe Wiſhes, and theſe Reſolutions, the *Will* of a *Natural Man* falls ſhort of a ſaving Change, and that uſually in theſe Particulars.

Firſt, In that it is a *fickle* and *unconſtant Will*; their Deſires may be ſometimes violent and paſſionate, as if they would take Heaven by force, and wreſt Mercy out of the hands of God: Their Prayers may be importunate and earneſt, as if they would take no denial; but this violent Spirit is ſoon ſpent, and this full bent of their Souls ſoon flaggs, and returns again, as formerly, ever and anon into the commiſſion of ſome foul and groſs Sins. Such a *Will* as this is, though at firſt it hurries them apace, yet it is ſoon tired, and leaves them ſhort of Grace and Heaven. The Chriſtian Race is not to be run by ſo many fits, but by a conſtant courſe and progreſs, ſtill getting ground upon our Luſts, ſtill approaching nearer to the Kingdom of Heaven: But it is with ſuch Men as it is with the Sea when a ſpring-tide covers all the ſhoar; when it ebbs, it diſcovers nothing but Sands, which before was nothing but deep Water; ſo theſe affected and flowing Chriſtians, they diſcover that there is nothing but barren Sands at the bottom, that they are as *unſtable as Water*. A Chriſtian is not made in a Fit, neither is the Work of Grace wrought in a Paſſion; but it is a ſetled, ſolemn, and conſtant frame of Heart that brings a Man to Chriſt and Salvation.

Secondly, The *Will* of an unregenerate Man is never univerſally changed; ſtill they reſerve to themſelves ſome Luſt or other, that they will not part withal, and their Reſolutions concerning their Sins, are ſuch as the Reſolution of *Naaman* the *Aſſyrian*, 2 Kings 5. 18. *In this thing the Lord pardon thy Servant, that when my Maſter goes into the Houſe of* Rimmon, *to Worſhip there, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow my ſelf in the Houſe of* Rimmon, *&c. The Lord pardon thy Servant in this thing.* So Men may be peremptory in their Reſolutions to forſake their Sins, yet ſtill there may be ſome one dear Luſt or other that makes them cry with *Naaman*, *Lord, pardon thy Servant in this thing.* Now they will be willing to receive Chriſt if they may be allowed in one Darling Sin; now the partition that any one Sin makes between *Chriſt* and the Soul, muſt needs hinder the Soul from *cloſing with Chriſt*; as, if you throw but any little thing between the Branch and the Stock that it is ingrafted into, the Sap will never be communicated to it, and ſo it will never grow up to be a Plant.

Thirdly, The *Will* of an unregenerate Man is uſually *Irrational*; it would obtain the End, and yet not uſe the Means. Grace poſſibly they would have, but they cannot bring their averſe Wills to cloſe with the performance of thoſe unpleaſing and irkſome Duties wherein God uſually beſtows Grace, and by which he conveys Grace to the Soul. Could they be Holy with a wiſh, and a ſudden fancy that enflames them, then none ſhould be better Chriſtians than themſelves; could they enter into Heaven by being willing, there is none then ſhould ſhine above them in Glory; but when there is ſo much hard and unpleaſing Work, firſt that they muſt be Born of God, and after they are true Chriſtians they muſt exerciſe every Grace, and perform every Duty that may fit and prepare them for Glory, they look upon theſe things as too difficult, which makes them ſit down with idle Wiſhes ſhort both of Grace and Glory; their *Wills* are very *irrational*; they would have Heaven, but they ſlight Grace, the way to it; and poſſibly they would have Grace, but they cannot bring themſelves to the performance of thoſe irkſome and unpleaſing Duties in and by which Grace is uſually beſtowed and conveyed.

Fourthly, The *Will* of an unregenerate Man is uſually general, not a particular Will. If God ſhould ask them, *Sinners*, what would you do to be ſaved? They would anſwer, Any thing, every thing. But let God bid them leave ſuch and ſuch a Sin, perform ſuch and ſuch a Duty, they anſwer with *Naaman*, Any Sin but that, any Duty but that. So it is with theſe Men; Oh any thing in the general; but when God brings them down to Particulars to do this or that, then they are willing to do juſt nothing.

Now I have ſhewed you how far the Will it ſelf may be changed in unregenerate Perſons; they may wiſh after Grace, and reſolve to be better, and to do better, and yet fall ſhort of ſaving Grace; and alſo what it is that hinders this change from being a thorow work of Grace, what it is that obſtructs them when they are *almoſt*, that they are not *altogether Chriſtians*.

Fifthly, As for the *Life* and *Converſation*.

There may be a great change wrought in the Lives of unregenerate Perſons, who yet fall ſhort of Chriſtianity. The Apoſtle, 2 *Pet.* 2. 20. ſpeaks of ſuch who *having eſcaped the pollutions of the world, through Luſt were again entangled therein, and overcome*, &c. It ſeems to eſcape the Pollutions of the World, is no Argument of true Grace, unleſs they be alſo cleanſed from the Pollutions of the Heart; for Sin may be left merely from external and forced Principle, ſuch as Terrors of Conſcience for the heavy Judgments of God. When God ſets up a flaming Sword between a Sinner and thoſe Sins which he accounts his Paradiſe here; now to leave Sin upon ſuch a ſtrait as this is, is to leave it with a great deal of reluctancy; as when a Mariner in a Storm caſts his Goods over-board into the Sea, it is with his Will indeed; but it is with an unwilling willingneſs; he is frighted and terrified to it: So when the Soul is toſſed with the Tempeſt of Divine Wrath, and when ready to be ſplit upon the Rock of Ages, and ſunk and be ſwallowed up in a Sea of Fire and Brimſtone, he is forced to light himſelf, and to caſt this and that dear Luſt over-board; this he doth from his Will; but it is ſuch a forced Will as that of Mariners, who throw their Treaſure over-board, and as ſoon as the Tempeſt is over, the one gathers up his floating Wrecks, and the other his Sins. Theſe Men leave their Sins, as *Lot*'s Wife left *Sodom*; they dare no longer continue in it leſt Fire and Brimſtone rain upon them, and yet when they do leave them, they give many a wiſhly look back again, and have ſtrong and vehement deſires after them. That *Reformation of Life* that only frees us from debauchedneſs, that falls far ſhort of true Chriſtianity, and of making us *altogether Chriſtians*; this is that with which many ſooth up themſelves when they reflect back upon the wild Extravagances of their former time, how outrageouſly wicked they have been, Riotous, Drunkards, Unclean, Blaſphemers, and now they find themſelves deadned to theſe Sins, and grown Men of ſtaid and ſober lives, they ſtraightway conclude, Certainly this great change could never be made on them otherwiſe than by the renewing work of the Holy Ghoſt; and yet in this amendment there may be no work of Regeneration; for Men may gather up their looſe and diſſolute Lives within ſome compaſs of Civility and Morality, and yet be utterly Strangers to this Work. Much of this may be aſcribed partly to Convictions of God's Spirit, awakening natural Conſcience to ſee the horrour and danger of ſuch daring and *outrageous* Sins, and partly too from Prudence, gotten from frequent experience of manifold inconveniences that they brought upon themſelves by ſuch Sins; and both theſe Convictions and moral Prudence are Principles that fall very far ſhort of true Chriſtianity. Uſually all the ſpecious Reformation and Amendment of theſe Mens Lives, is in effect either a changing of the Sin, or a tiring out the Sinner.

Firſt, The *Life* may *ſeem to be reformed*, when Men exchange their rude and boiſterous Sins for ſuch as are more demure and ſober; from riotous, they grow worldly; from prophane and irreligious, they grow ſuperſtitious and hypocritical; from Atheiſts, they grow Hereticks; from Sins of Practice, to Sins of Contemplation: They are apt to think, certainly this change muſt needs be the change of their Nature, when indeed it is but the change of their Sins; and uſually it is ſuch a change too, though it render the Life more inoffenſive, yet it makes the Soul more incurable. St. *Auſtin*, in his 29*th* Epiſtle, tells us, That Vices may give place, when Vertue or Grace do not take it.

Secondly, The *Life* may *ſeem to be reformed*, when Men are only *tired out*; when they have out-grown their Sins. There are Sins which are proper and peculiar to ſuch a ſtate and ſeaſon of a Man's Life, upon the alteration of which they vaniſh and diſappear: Sins of Youth drop off from declining Age, as miſ-becoming them. Now this deceives Men, when they look back to the Vanities which they have forſaken; how deadned are they to thoſe Sinful ways which before they much delighted in? They conclude certainly this great change muſt needs proceed from true Grace, when they do not leave their Sins ſo much as their Sins leave them, and drop off from them as rotten fruit from a Tree; the Faculties of their Minds,

and

and Members of their Bodies, which before were Inſtruments of Sin and Unrighteouſneſs, are now become Inſtruments of Morality and ſeeming Vertues; this ſets them not free from the ſervice of Sin, but only reſtrains them from breaking out into notorious and ſcandalous Vices.

Thirdly, *A civil and harmleſs demeanour* doth not render a Man altogether a Chriſtian; there be many ingenuous Spirits, who lived blameleſly in the World, their good Natures nearly reſembling Grace; and ſuch was St. *Paul*'s before his Converſion: For he tells us, *As touching the Law, he was blameleſs*: So the young Man that came to Chriſt to know what Leſſon he had further to take out. This only argues a ſweet Diſpoſition, but not a gracious Heart. Thus you ſee how diſſolute Men may miſtake themſelves in this Work, upon which their eternal Happineſs depends. It is to be feared that many may reſt upon theſe, and think the great diſcriminating change to be wrought, only becauſe they are morally Honeſt, or gained over to a profeſſion of Truth, or to ſuch a Party or Sect of Profeſſors; when indeed true Chriſtianity conſiſts not in theſe things.

This ſhall ſuffice for the firſt General propounded; What Change may be wrought upon a Man ſo as to bring him almoſt to Chriſtianity, and yet leave him ſhort of being a Chriſtian: I ſhall cloſe up this Branch with ſome *Practical Conſiderations.*

Uſe 1. What then ſhall become of ſuch as fall ſhort of thoſe that fall ſhort of Grace, that are not ſo much as *Almoſt Chriſtians?* What will become of carnal, looſe and prophane Sinners? If thoſe that have been gazed at and admired for burning and ſhining Lights, yet have fallen into the blackneſs of Darkneſs, even into the Dungeon of Eternal Darkneſs; were we but ſerious in this Reflection, it would make all our Faces gather blackneſs, and fill all our Hearts with aſtoniſhment, to conſider that we are not gone ſo far in Chriſtianity as thoſe may go, who yet fall ſhort of Heaven. Have we all been *enlightened?* Have we all *taſted of the heavenly gift*, and of *the powers of the world to come?* Have we all been *made partakers of the Holy Ghoſt?* Are there not many among us poſſibly whoſe hearts have never yet been touched with the ſenſe of Sin, never affected with any of the ways of God, that give themſelves up to all Wickedneſs with greedineſs, who never have given ſo much as one ſerious Wiſh towards Holineſs, when thoſe that ſeemed to ſhine as Stars in Heaven, ſhall be at laſt burning in Hell; Oh, in what a diſmal caſe ſhall theſe *Firebrands* be?

Uſe 2. Hence likewiſe, ſee what a difficult thing it is to be a true Chriſtian. May a natural Man attain to all this that I have ſpoken of before? We may then take up that *ſame* Queſtion, which the Diſciples asked Chriſt, (when he had told them, that it was *as eaſie for a Camel to go through a Needles Eye, as for a rich Man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*) *Lord, who then ſhall be ſaved?* What may thoſe whoſe Profeſſion hath been eminent, who have been *Sainted* in every Man's *Kalendar*, may they at laſt miſcarry and periſh? Who then ſhall be ſaved? If ſuch be not Chriſtians, Chriſtianity ſeems to be rather ſome fanſied Notion, than any thing real and attainable. To this we may make the ſame anſwer that Chriſt gave to the Diſciples, *With Men indeed theſe things are impoſſible, but with God all things are poſſible:* It is impoſſible for Men by their own ſtrength and natural ability to become Chriſtians, but it is poſſible for God to make them Chriſtians; It is poſſible as *Miracles* themſelves are poſſible, only poſſible to the Almighty Power of God: There is not any Soul can be perſuaded to be a Chriſtian, but he hath a Miracle wrought upon him, and he himſelf muſt do that, which is little leſs than a Miracle, he muſt act beyond the power of Nature, and do more than a mere Man can do; therefore well may you ſuſpect your Chriſtianity, who find it ſo eaſie a matter to be a Chriſtian. Even natural Men find it a difficult task to attain to that height and pitch, where they ſhine in Moral Vertues, though far ſhort of Heaven, and it is eaſie for you to mount far higher than they, far beyond them; indeed it is an eaſie matter for any to make a ſlight formal Profeſſion, to run in a round of Hypocritical Duties, and live a Moral civil life, this is eaſie, there is nothing miraculous in this: But is it eaſie to pluck out the right Eye, and to cut off the right Hand? It is not eaſie to crucifie a darling Luſt, *to cut off the right Hand*, when it lifts up it ſelf to plead for mercy, and to be ſpared a little longer, *to pluck out the right Eye*, when it drops Tears to beg compaſſion, and a little favour to be granted to it? Is it eaſie to combat with

Principalities

Principalities and Powers, to baffle Devils, and deſpiſe the Scorns and Affronts of the whole World? Is it eaſie to live like an Angel? Nay to live like Chriſt, to live like God himſelf? Is this eaſie, when we ſee ſo many tottering Profeſſors aſpiring towards Chriſtianity, ſome mounting till they are giddy and brain-ſick with their moſt damnable Errors, others tumbling down *from the Precipices of great and dangerous ſins.*

We may well wonder that any are ſaved, when ſuch as theſe miſcarry: Well then, to conſider what it is that is wrought upon you, even that the Omnipotent God hath wrought, (and what it is that is wrought by you,) that that is beyond the Power of Nature: We may well conclude, what a difficult matter it is to become a true and ſerious Chriſtian altogether.

Uſe 3. May natural Men go thus far in Chriſtianity, O be you then perſuaded to go much further! Do not reſt in any attainment ſhort of Heaven and Glory. Reſt not in any preſent attainment; and this indeed is the moſt natural Uſe that can be made of this Subject, when you hear how great a progreſs wicked Men may make. I know that the Hearts of the beſt Chriſtians are ready to ſuggeſt to them, and they will be apt to conclude againſt themſelves: All that is wrought upon them is but the common work of the Spirit; therefore their Graces are but Counterfeit, and that themſelves yet are ſhort of Chriſtianity; I know that this Subject may cauſe ſuch jealouſies and ſuſpicions to ariſe in the Hearts of ſome; but the genuine uſe of this Doctrine is not ſo much to pore upon our preſent Condition, as to ſtir you up to make a future progreſs.

May a natural Man make ſo great a progreſs, as to be *almoſt* a Chriſtian, then certainly I muſt never reſt any where ſhort of Heaven. Well therefore, the Apoſtle in *Heb.* 6. 11, 12. After he had ſhewn them at large what a height a natural Man may arrive to, he preſſeth them to be earneſt in their endeavours after Perfection. Why, this will be the beſt Evidence to you, that you are *indeed Chriſtians*, that you have the truth of Chriſtianity.

Though *natural Men* may poſſibly *gliſter* in a glorious Profeſſion, and ſhine like the Sun in its radiant ſplendor; yet like it they have their Zenith, their higheſt degree, which when they have climbed to, they fall down again. But a true Chriſtian's courſe hath not any declenſion, he may proceed infinitely from one degree of Grace to another, he may aſcend and reach higher and higher till he hath reached Heaven, where all his Infirmities ſhall be ſwallowed up, and aboliſhed in conſummated Glory. And indeed this is the greateſt evidence of the truth of Grace; a natural Man's motion to Heaven, it is *violent* and unnatural, it is forced from him, by ſome external impreſſions upon the Conſcience, Illumination, and common Works of the Holy Ghoſt, which as ſoon as this external force is ſpent, he falls naturally back again to his former courſe of Sin. *As a Stone may be carried a great height towards Heaven, by an outward violent impreſſion upon it, but when that force is worn off, it falls naturally back again to the Earth. Now a Chriſtian mounts naturally to Heaven, which by reaſon of that dull mixture of* Earth *that is in him, his courſe tends to the Earth again.* But the true Chriſtian ſtill mounts upward from the Principle that carries him up, which indeed never totally ſpends its ſelf; therefore if thou wouldſt prove thy ſelf to be not almoſt, but altogether a Chriſtian, continue thy progreſs, ſtill gain ground towards Heaven, reſt not ſatisfy'd with any preſent attainments, but be ſtill riſing and ſoaring, until thou haſt gotten the World and them too under thy feet.

Fifthly, When you ſee any who have been forward in a Profeſſion, and gone far in Chriſtianity, to forſake their *Station*, and fall back to their former courſe of Prophaneneſs: Take heed that you do not reproach, that you do not ſcandalize Religion with their Apoſtacy; this is that which opens the Mouths and hardens the Hearts of wicked Men, when they ſee ſuch Glorious, but yet Temporary Profeſſors to return with the Dog to the Vomit; they indeed firſt bleſs themſelves in their own ways, as being better than the ways of God, as being better than the Profeſſion of Religion; otherwiſe why ſhould thoſe that ſo long have forſaken them, and with a great deal of Pomp, made ſuch a Glorious ſhew and Oſtentation of Religion, and of Conſcientiouſneſs, why ſhould ſuch return back again to their old ways?

Secondly, It makes them think, that all Profeſſors are but Hypocrites, that it is but a ſolemn cheat put upon the World, ſince ſuch forward Profeſſors of it are found

found forſakers of it. Some Men pleaſe themſelves with a few idle conceits of Grace, and the New-birth Communion with God, and the like unintelligible notions, there is no other difference between them and others, but what only their fancies make. O take heed therefore, that you do not blaſpheme the ways of God, when you ſee the Apoſtacy of Profeſſors: No, theſe Men were never in thoſe ways. *Had they been Chriſtians indeed, they would never have deſerted thoſe holy ways; their natures were never changed, and it is no wonder, that they are relapſed and fallen back again into their old Cuſtoms; to ſee the Swine that is cleanſed to return back again to the mire, it is nothing ſtrange. Had Chriſt changed the nature of theſe Swine, and make them his Sheep, then as they had firſt* eſcaped *the pollutions of the World, ſo they would have kept themſelves from ever being intangled by them.* But this makes highly for the honour of Chriſtianity, and proves it to be a thing ſo excellent, that it cannot be long counterfeited; Hypocriſie ſhall certainly betray it ſelf by its Apoſtacy, that it had never any thing of true and ſaving Grace, although it carried far in a ſhew and pretence of it. Thus much for the firſt thing propounded, how far a Man may attain towards Chriſtianity, and yet be in a natural ſinful State.

The next thing is to ſhew you, whence it is that natural Men are inabled to make ſo great a progreſs towards Chriſtianity. I ſhall give you a brief Reſolution to this Queſtion, and that ſhall be drawn, Firſt, from the conſideration of the Subject, and that is a natural Man himſelf. Secondly, from the conſideration of the Object, and that is Holineſs or Chriſtianity to which it tends. Firſt, if you look into the *Subject* the *natural Man* himſelf; And ſo you ſhall find that Man, and that which is wrought upon him, which may carry him out poſſibly to a very great progreſs in Religion, and that may be twofold. (1.) *The Power of Nature.* (2.) *The Elevation* and recruit which that power may receive from a common work of the Holy Ghoſt, much helping nature, quickening Conſcience, and reforming the Life.

Firſt, The Carnal Man may be carried very far towards Chriſtianity, from the meer ſtrength and power of Nature; for the meer power of corrupt Nature is of it ſelf ſufficient to raiſe a Man to any attainment that is ſhort of true ſaving Grace. A natural Man may ſo prepare and diſpoſe his heart, as that the very next thing to be wrought upon him ſhould be Grace; It may carry him out to the externals of Chriſtianity, and it may be with more pomp and grandure than ſometimes the power of Grace doth carry out a Child of God. When the *Power of Nature* takes on it the form of *Godlineſs*, it will make bright and glittering Profeſſors; now theſe externals of Chriſtianity they lie in two things, the *performance of Duties*, and the avoiding of Sin: As for Duties they may ſo far out-ſtrip and out-ſhine a Child of God, in the pomp and gaudineſs of them, as to be their emulation and example. And for Sin there is not any one particular Sin, ſetting aſide thoſe common and unavoidable Infirmities, which are inſeparable from the frailty of humane Nature; but a carnal Man may keep himſelf from the Commiſſion of it, by the meer Power of *Nature:* And there is ſcarce any Sin, that is branded remarkably in the World, but ſome wicked Man or other doth abſtain from it, and that meerly from the Power of Nature; there are ſome that by this Power abſtain from this Sin, another from that, and a third from another Sin: And each of theſe have Power to abſtain likewiſe from all theſe Sins, becauſe what Power the one hath, it may (poſſibly) be found in the other, ſince in Nature there is nothing partial for a Man naturally is not ſo.

Secondly again, The Devil when he tempts, he doth not force and conſtrain them; he doth not forcibly move the *black Tongue of the Swearer* to curſe and blaſpheme, nor doth he skrew upon the Drunkard's mouth by force, to pour down *intemperate Cups*, nor force the *Murderer's hand* to ſheath his Sword in his Brother's Bowels whether he will or no, but he ſollicites the Wills, and inſinuates into the Affections by his Temptations, and makes theſe freely move the *Engine* to that which his deſign tends; and therefore *all his Triumphs are but for Beggarly Victories*; he could not prevail over us, did not we prove Traitors to our own Souls; did not we ſurrender up our ſelves, by the conſent of our own Wills; elſe we could never be diſtreſſed, much leſs taken by the violence of the Tempter.

Secondly, As Men may proceed far toward Chriſtianity by the Power of Nature,

ture, ſo they may have common and ordinary Works of the Holy Ghoſt upon them, that may carry them out to a very great progreſs, they may be made, ſaith the Apoſtle, partakes of the Holy Ghoſt. *Heb.* 6. 4. and that is, of its common Gifts and Operations; it is the Spirit of God that inlightens their Underſtandings, that awakens their Conſciences, that excites their Affections, it is the Spirit that works Conviction, that works Reformation; yea, and Sanctification in wicked and unregenerate Men. For we have that expreſſion concerning them: There is a twofold Sanctification, (1.) Of the Fleſh, conſiſting in the removal of all carnal and exernal filthineſs, called by the Apoſtle an *eſcaping of the pollutions* of the World through luſt, 2 *Pet.* 2. 20. And that conſiſts in a ſeparation from all thoſe groſs and vile Sins, wherein the flagitious and debauched World do wallow. (2) There is likewiſe *a Sanctification of the Spirit* conſiſting in a ſeparation from a State of Nature to a State of Grace, the one is external by Reformation, the other is *internal* by *Renovation*; the former Sanctification a natural Man may be made partaker of by the Holy Ghoſt, ſo as to have his Life and Actions ſtand at a greater diſtance from, and a greater oppoſition to carnal groſs Sins, which the World is generally defiled with, but this is no more than a common and ordinary Work of the Holy Ghoſt, they may account the blood, whereby they are ſanctified an unholy thing: There is a far different force and energy, that the Holy Spirit puts forth, when it works Converſion, and when it works only outward Sanctification, in both it may work upon the heart, but in Converſion it works upon the heart ſo as to change it and renew it, but in the reformation of a natural Man, he works upon the heart indeed, but it is only to change and amend the life, the Spirit may perſuade the one to change his heart, but then he changeth the heart of the other: He may perſwade the Will of the one to ſubmit to Chriſt, but then he ſubdues the Will of the other, he perſwades the one to become a Chriſtian, but he makes the other a Chriſtian Now there is a very wide difference between theſe two ways of working, by the one he only excites Men to uſe ſomewhat of the Power they have, but by the other he gives them the dower they want: And thus you ſee, what there is in Man conſidered, both in nature and with the help of the common Work of the Holy Ghoſt, that may carry him ſo far towards Chriſtianity.

Secondly, There is alſo ſomething conſiderable in the *Object*, viz. *Religion and Chriſtianity* it ſelf, whence it is natural Men may make ſo great a progreſs towards it, and that is *twofold*, (1) *The Attractiveneſs of Religion.* (2) The *Subſerviency* of Religion to it ſelf (1) *The Attractiveneſs* of Religion, and this conſiſts not only in the inward and ſpiritual *beauty of Holineſs*, which theſe Men have not Eyes to diſcern, but alſo in that happineſs which is annexed to Religion and Chriſtianity. This is that which draws out natural Men to all their Attainments, *Happineſs* is the great bait of Men's deſires, and that which ſweetens the means tending to it, though they be in *themſelves* very difficult and burdenſome; yet leading to happineſs they cloſe with it; and therefore, as the apprehenſions of Heaven and Hell work upon a natural Man, more or leſs, forcibly, than the thoughts of the difficulty or tediouſneſs of holy Duties; ſuch is his progreſs, more or leſs, ſtrong and vigorous towards Chriſtianity. Secondly, Another thing in Chriſtianity or Religion, that advanceth ſome to ſo great a progreſs, is the *Subſerviency* of Religion to it ſelf. Religion doth mightily promote and advance it ſelf. (1) Firſt, in that the performance of one part, and of one duty of Religion, it obligeth and engageth to to the performance of another: As one Sin draws on another, by conſequence likewiſe doth one Duty draw on another. There is a connexion and dependance between them, *Hearing* engageth to *Meditation*, and *Meditation* to *Prayer*, and Prayer for Grace to endeavour after it, a glorious Profeſſion it obligeth to ſomething at leaſt that may be anſwerable to that Profeſſion. Thus one Duty of Religion, it hands a Man over to another, and when he is paſſed through one, another ſtands ready to receive him.

Secondly, A little progreſs in Religion it doth facilitate, it is hard at firſt to begin, then having begun to continue, becauſe uſe and cuſtom in any thing makes it eaſie. How! Is this ſubſerviency of Religion to it ſelf, that may carry Men very far in it, when they have begun Profeſſion, and entered upon one Duty, that Duty delivers them over to another, and makes it more facile and eaſie to them, becauſe the precedent Duty as it doth engage them to, ſo it prepares them for the ſubſequent Duty, as well as engage them to the preſent Duty: One Duty doth

doth as it were perform half the task, and bear half the burden of the other. Thus then you ſee, whence it is that natural Men may make ſo great a progreſs towards Chriſtianity, ſo as to be *almoſt Chriſtians*, from the Power of Nature, and from the attractiveneſs of Religion: Now here if you ask me, how ſhall I know, whether it be the Power of Nature helped by the common workings of the Spirit, or the Power of ſupernatural Grace, that carries Men out to all their Profeſſion?

I ſhall give you but this one *diſcriminating Character* of it: See whether your abilities be greater in the things that belong to Grace and Holineſs, than they are to natural things. A Child of God who is but of weak parts as to the things of the World, that can ſcarce give you a rational account of ſuch affairs, when propounded to him, Why, bring him but to the things of God, and how admirably will he be able to unfold, even the very *myſteries* that are hid from the wiſe and prudent of the World, but put him upon any common diſcourſe, how broken and incoherent is he, but engage him in *Prayer*, how doth he *expatiate and enlarge*, and what *a Torrent of Divine Rhetorick will he then pour into the Boſom of God?* Is this from nature that he is able to exceed and go beyond himſelf? No certainly; It is very obſervable concerning the ways of God what the Prophet ſpeaks, *Iſa* 35. 8. *A high way ſhall be there, and it ſhall be called a way of holineſs, the unclean ſhall not paſs over it.*

Though they wander and err in every other way, though they do not take the right way to be rich, and great, and honourable in the World; yet theſe that are fools in every thing elſe they ſhall not err from the way of Holineſs, and therein lies the only Wiſdom. But now take a meer carnal Man, that hath eminent abilities in earthly things; uſually, he is never weaker than when he is engaged in that which is holy and ſpiritual; at leaſt his chiefeſt excellency doth not lie there, though he doth perform the Duty well, yet he doth not do it beyond what he doth in ordinary and natural things. Now how is it with you? Do you find your ſelves carried much beyond the rate and ſize of your natural abilities, that you never ſo much exceed your ſelves, nor do ſo well as when you are about ſome holy and ſpiritual employment, that you are not ſo artificial in any thing as in holy performances; this is a good ſign, that it is from the Power of Grace, and not only the Power of Nature, that carries you forth to the Profeſſion of Religion you make. I take the extraordinary gifts beſtowed upon unregenerate Men in a vaſt diſproportion from their natural abilities, to be long ago ceaſed.

Thus you ſee what inables a natural Man to go ſo far towards Chriſtianity.

The third general propounded, was to ſhew what it is that hinders theſe proficients from making further progreſs, that when they are *Almoſt* what keeps them from being *altogether Chriſtians:* I anſwer to this in general; It is only through a *willful* and wretched *neglect* of what they might do, that any of them do fall ſhort of Grace here, and Glory hereafter. It is not from our want of Power, but our want of *Will*, or rather indeed our willingneſs that makes us miſcarry to our Eternal Perdition. I ſhall illuſtrate this by a plain and obvious *Similitude:* Suppoſe that God ſhould promiſe to beſtow Heaven upon us, if we would but reach forth and touch it with our hands: Now although we can never reach ſo high; yet if we do not ſtretch forth our hands, and reach as high as we are able to do, the fault of loſing Heaven will not lie upon the inability and impoſſibility, that was in us to touch it, but it lies in our *willful neglect* of ſtriving to our outmoſt to do what we are able to do; why, the reaſon why we fall ſhort, would not be becauſe our Arm is not long enough, but becauſe we do not ſtretch it forth to the utmoſt length.

The inſtance is ſomewhat plain and familiar, but yet it holds an exact proportion to the caſe in hand, God promiſeth Heaven to us if we will but touch it, that is, if we will lay hold on Chriſt by Faith, which Faith we can no more work in our ſelves by our own proper efficiency, than touch Heaven with our Finger; yet howſoever, if we do not do our utmoſt, our falling ſhort of Heaven and Faith cannot be imputed to the impoſſibility that we lay under, but to our willful ſloth and neglect. It is not Men's *cannots* but their *will nots*, not their *Impotency* but their *Obſtinacy*, that deſtroys them; *ye will not come to me that ye may have Life*, John 5. 40. *Ye will not.* Doth not Chriſt himſelf tell us, that no Man can come to him, except the Father draw him? True, but the fault lies in the ſtubbornneſs of your *Wills*; though you could come, you would not; therefore it is not your weakneſs but your willfulneſs, that keeps you from coming to Chriſt. Let me here appeal to your ſelves; Doth

not he deſerve Eternal Death who had a Power in his hand to make himſelf a Chriſtian, and yet would not? Certainly you will all conclude, this Man is very equally and juſtly dealt with, if ſentenced to Eternal Miſery, ſince he had a Power to avoid that miſery, and to lay hold on Eternal Life and Happineſs; his condemnation lies on his own head for his willful contempt of Salvation, which he had a Power to work out, and by a diligent improvement of the means tendered to him, to make ſure of it; every carnal Man if he had power to convert himſelf, yet through his willful neglect and obſtinacy he would not do it; and this appears, becauſe there is not one of us that doth as much as he might do.

There is not one natural Man that doth as much as he might do: Will not he now do what he can do to prepare and diſpoſe his heart for Grace, then much leſs would he work Grace in his heart, though he had a Power to do it; and therefore the whole default of Men's falling ſhort of Grace, lies in their willful neglects. Men indulge themſelves in carnal ſloth, and if they can but maintain the pace and rate of common ordinary Profeſſors in a formal courſe of Duty, or abſtain from groſs Sins; O then they are contented! And will be drawn on no further. Could not they command their thoughts to dwell more fixedly, and more abidingly upon Spiritual Objects? Cannot they be oftner in Meditation, and meditate more fervently, and with more affection? In both had they not Power to refuſe Temptations and ſinful Motions? Doth the Devil uſe any force or violence upon them? Did they ever find, when they threw themſelves upon their Knees in Prayer, that he ſtiffened them that they could not bend? Or that the Devil ſtopped their Mouths from ſpeaking, or their Hearts from thinking? Had he a Power to ſtrike Men lame when they ſhould come to the Ordinances, or ſtrike them deaf when they ſhould hear, or dumb when they ſhould ſpeak, then there were ſome ſhew and colour of Reaſon, why Men attended no more frequently, why they heard no more attentively, why they did not ponder more conſiderately, why they prayed ſo ſeldom and heartleſly; did but the Devil compel them to this, the *Sinner* might have ſome excuſe; but when he muſt woe their conſent and allowance, and wait their pleaſure and leiſure, it is meerly a wretched neglect or willfulneſs, that they yield to the Commiſſion of any Sin: Can you do all this and more, and yet will you not? Know that if you periſh, it is only your own fault, you your own ſelves are the bloody Murtherers of your own Souls. It will be in vain for you to plead, that you had no Power to make your ſelves Chriſtians; why, you never went ſo far as to make a trial, whether you had a Power or no; for a Man not to do the utmoſt that he might do towards Chriſtianity, though he hath no Power to make himſelf a Chriſtian; yet it is the ſame as if he had a Power, and yet will not make uſe of it. O let this that I have ſaid prevail with you, to be not only *Almoſt*, but *altogether* Chriſtians, and to put forth all the power and might, and ability, that you have in the working out your own Salvation. Is there not infinite Reaſon, why you ſhould ſpeedily ſet about this important Work, while you have time and opportunity for the doing of it? Is it not a matter of the greateſt moment in the World, and not to be delayed one moment? Be perſuaded then to the ſpeedy practice of it.

Object. 1. Some deſperate *Wretches* may think indeed, that *Arguments* to perſwade Men to work out their Salvation, may be of weighty import to inforce the Duty upon thoſe that do expect Salvation; but for my part I pretend not ſo high; let me but enjoy now the Sins which I ſerve, and the Pleaſures which I purſue, and for the State of my Soul hereafter, I commend that to the Mercy of God, and if I muſt periſh, I will periſh with as much eaſe and content as I may. It is hard to alter an irreverſible doom, and if it be to Perdition, it is but folly to hang down the head, and blubber the Eyes, and break the Heart for that which cannot be *altered*. If I muſt go to Hell I may as ſoon be carried down thither in a flood of tears, as in doing ungodly Actions: Why ſhould I conſpire with *God*'s *Decree* to make my ſelf miſerable. If he hath ſentenced me to Hell hereafter, I may as well ſentence my ſelf to an Heaven here; my future torments are in his Hands, but my preſent delights are in my own; therefore if Salvation and Happineſs be ſuch nice Points I forego them, and will embrace more eaſy and more obvious pleaſures.

Anſw. I know no pious heart here, but ſhivers with horror at ſuch Language, though it be but perſonated; methinks rather it repreſents the Speech of a Devil, who is without all poſſibility of Happineſs, than of Men who are in the way to it. Indeed it is the Speech of the Devil, but it is likewiſe in the hearts of Men, when they

they ſtorm and bluſter at the difficulties of Salvation, and narrowneſs of the Way, and ſtraitneſs of the Gate: The Devil interpoſeth this ſuggeſtion, It is as good to periſh with eaſe, as to be ſaved with ſo much labour and pains; but what, ſhall we leave Men to ſuch deſperate reſolutions as theſe, and ſuffer them to go dreaming to Hell and Deſtruction? Certainly Religion hath Arguments enough to prevail, even with theſe, if they would but ſhew themſelves to be Men, and but ponder how much Reaſon can ſpeak.

Firſt conſider, Thou that wilt rather periſh than make thy Life a trouble to thee by Obedience, God may under thy Diſobedience make thy Life a trouble, yea a Hell to thee by his Terrours. Thou thinkeſt that thy Garments of Sin and Pollution, will ſit more looſe and eaſie about thee, than the Garments of Holineſs that are too ſtrait-laced and troubleſome: Yea, but what if God ſhould roll theſe thy filthy Garments in Brimſtone, and fire them about thee? How dreadfully wouldſt thou be diſappointed, when inſtead of that eaſe which thou ſeekeſt in the ſervice of Sin, God ſhould make thee thine own Tormentor, and make thy Conſcience an Hell incarnate? Believe it, the wrath of God can fry the marrow in thy Bones, and reduce thy Soul to Aſhes. Read *Pſalm* 88. and you will think it a doleful and ſad deſcription of the State of the Damned. While I ſuffer thy Terrors I am diſtracted: And if the Wrath of the Almighty lay thus ſore upon an Holy Man, how fretting and corroding will it be upon the leprous Soul, and upon an ulcerated Conſcience? If it burns up the Green Tree, what will become of the Dry Tree, which is but as prepared Fuel for it to prey upon?

No Man hath his preſent delights and contentments in his own Power, becauſe no Man hath his own Conſcience in his own Power; it will ſpeak, yea, and that terrible things, even then, when a Sinner hath done all he can to ſear and ſtupifie it. Conſider again, how is it with you after the rage of your Sinning is over? Are you not haunted with fearful reflections and ghaſtly thoughts of deſpair and horrour? Could we but unbowel a Sinner, we ſhould find thoſe Conſcience-worms, gnawing and knotting about him, and devouring his Heart. And are theſe wont to reſolve into trouble, for fear Religion and Holineſs ſhould trouble them? Are they content to buy eaſe and quiet at ſuch a rate, as the loſs of Heaven and Eternal Torments amount to? And is this the eaſe and quiet that they purchaſe with it? The Devil puts a groſs cheat upon theſe Men, he changeth not the trouble but the time of it, only they ſhun the work of God, becauſe it is troubleſom in doing, though it doth leave behind it the bleſſed fruits of Peace, Joy, and Satisfaction; and they do engage in the Work of the Devil, which as ſoon as the heat and fury of it is a little over, leaves in their ſober thoughts, nothing but Anguiſh, Stings, and Torments; and therefore be not deceived, ſuffer not the Devil any longer to abuſe you, and impoſe his drudgery upon you, under the notion of eaſe and quiet: If your Conſciences were once awakened, I know the Work of the Devil muſt needs bring you more vexation, beſides the ſhame, than ever you would have from the work of God; yea, the very omiſſion and neglect of God's Work is a far greater trouble than the performance of it would be; therefore if you look no farther than your preſent Content and Satisfaction, if you would go to your final eſtate the eaſieſt way whatever it be, think not to attain this by giving up your ſelves to a way of Sin, nor by wounding your own Conſciences, which with trouble afterwards will be ſure to be avenged upon you, but in a way of Duty and laborious working, you only can find preſent Content, and ſhall certainly find future Happineſs.

Object. 2. True, may ſome ſay, Poſſibly the Work of God might be more pleaſing and ſatisfactory to us than the Work of the Devil, if we could work it; but to what end is it that God requires from us to work, to what purpoſe doth he command us? Doth not he himſelf know that we have no power? Doth not he himſelf ſay that we are *dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins?* Is it rational, is it juſt to bid a dead Man work? Or doth it become that God who would be thought by us to be infinitely gracious and merciful, to mock and deride humane Miſery, when he commands thoſe things from us which he knows to be impoſſible? Had he bid us blend Light and Darkneſs together, or to bend the Axle-tree of the World till both Poles meet; had he bid us fling the Stars out of their Orbs, or with our hands ſtop the Sun in the midſt of his courſe; all theſe great impoſſibilities are as eaſily atchiev'd, as by our own power to work any part of divine and acceptable Obedience without gracious aſſiſtance from God: We can as ſoon glorifie as ſanctifie our ſelves. What

ſhould we then do, but only ſit ſtill and expect, till efficacious Grace ſhould move and act us, and we not able to gainſay and reſiſt it? Till God ſo draw us as that we muſt run, and ſo call us as that we muſt anſwer? Till then our obedience is an impoſſibility, and all our Attempts are vain and fruitleſs. This now is a ſlothful Sinner's pretence why he will not work; and no doubt but that too often it doth flaſh into the thoughts of moſt Men, whereby their hearts are diſcouraged, and their hands weakned in the ſervice of God.

Anſw. In Anſwering this, I ſhall not enter into that great Debate of the Power of nature to do what is good and acceptable to God; but proceed in a plain and accommodated way to Practice, and that which will be moſt convictive to the Conſcience.

Firſt, Men will not plead thus in Matters of far leſs concernment than the Salvation of their Souls. Would a Maſter, when he commands his Servant to work, take this, think you, for a ſufficient excuſe, That he hath no power to work till God act and move him? It may as well be objected by your Servants to you, as by you to God. Tell me, what power have I to ſpeak, or you to hear one word, unleſs God do concur to it? Nay, we are not *ſufficient to think one good thought*, 2 *Cor.* 3. 5. And do we make this an excuſe to forbear thoſe Actions that are neceſſary and convenient? Do we therefore reſolve to do nothing, becauſe it is impoſſible for us to do any thing unleſs God concurs with it? What ſtupid, dull Folly were this, and we put it daily and hourly to trial, and produce me that Man that can ſay God was wanting to him in his concurrence. What a *miſerable* and *ridiculous* Task would it be, if in every Action of our Lives *that we cannot do without God*, yet we ſhould ſit ſtill, and queſtion God's concurrence? Do you ſit down to try whether God will enable you to riſe when you are down? Or, do you queſtion whether God will concur to another ſtep, though it is impoſſible you ſhould ſtir and move, unleſs God act and move you? Yet this hinders not Mens endeavours: *In him we live, and move, and have our being.* Why do not you do ſo in ſpiritual matters? We can do nothing without God. True; yet put it to the trial, whether or no God will concur with you. Certainly that Man muſt be nameleſs that can ſay, I was truly willing, and endeavoured to do any ſpiritual good, but God was wanting to me in his concurrence.

Secondly, Thoſe Men who thus make *Impotence* a pretence for their Sloth, do not indeed believe *what they* themſelves pretend. No, it is the inward and ſecret thought of them all, that they have a power to work out their own Salvation, and therefore whether they have or no, ſtill they are inexcuſable, while they think they have this power, yet they ſit ſtill. Although a Man be chained faſt down that he cannot go, yet he thinks himſelf at liberty, and notwithſtanding ſits ſtill, you may ſoon tell where the fault lies; it may be imputed for want of Will, and not for want of Power: So here; Wicked Men think they have power to work, however ſpeak otherwiſe; therefore they are *utterly inexcuſable* if they do not work. It is as clear as the light, that their *Sloth* proceeds not from their *Impotence*, but from their own *willfulneſs*. I ſhall endeavour by a few *Arguments* to convince you, that you do indeed think that you have power to work out your own Salvation; therefore if you do it not, you are altogether inexcuſable, whether you have that Power or no.

Firſt, Did you never, when *God* hath ſhaken his Rod and Whip over you, ſeriouſly promiſe and reſolve to work; his Rod, I mean, either of Conviction or Affliction? Have not theſe made you enter into an engagement with *God*, that you would ſerve, and obey him for the future? *Did you not really thus reſolve?* There are few here, but ſometimes at leaſt in a Fit and Pang of Conſcience have ſo done. And why did you reſolve all this, and yet at the ſame time think and believe you could do *nothing?* Did you only mock *God*, and play with your own *Conſciences?* Certainly your *Conſciences* then were too much provoked, and too much awakened to be thus jeſted and dallied with. We find this Temper in the *Iſraelites*, when they were frighted at the terrible glory from Mount *Sinai*, Exod. 24. 3. See how confidently they promiſe and reſolve. *And all the People anſwered with one voice, and ſaid, All the Words which the Lord hath ſaid will we do.* So the *Jews* in their great diſtreſs, *Jer.* 42. 6. *Whether it be good, or whether it be evil, we will obey the voice of the Lord our God*, &c. *that it may be well with us.*

Alas, how many pious Purpoſes and holy Reſolutions have your Dangers, your Fears, and your Sick-Beds been *witneſs* too? Have they not heard you breath out, *Spare, O Lord, ſpare a little longer; give ſome ſpace; try us yet once more, and O Lord, we will reform, we will amend our ſinful Lives, we will perform neglected Duties, and never more*

again

again return to folly? Are not theſe Reſolutions an evident Conviction? Certainly you thought you had a power ſo to do, and therefore if you do not endeavour to perform, you are altogether inexcuſable.

Secondly, Did you never in your whole Lives perform a Duty unto God? Did you never pray? Is there any here ſo deſperately prophane, ſo loſt to all ſhew of goodneſs, that hath not done this? And to what end have you prayed? For what did you perform your Duty? Was it not for Salvation? And did you work for Salvation, and yet think you had no power to work for it? It is impoſſible; Men's very Works do plainly ſhew, that they do think that they have a power; ſomething ſtill muſt be done, though it be but formally, ſlightly, and coldly; a mere *Lord have mercy upon me*, a cuſtomary *Lord forgive me*; yet ſomething Conſcience will require which Men reckon upon, and make account to be working out their Salvation.

Thirdly, Wherefore it is that you truſt unto, and relie upon your good Works, if you think you have no *power* to work out your Salvation? Would it be ſo hard and difficult a matter to take Men off from leaning ſo much upon their *Works*, if they did not think that they had power to work out their own Salvation? Men do apprehend a worth and ſufficiency in what themſelves do in order to Eternity, and bid them forgo their Works, and renounce their own Righteouſneſs, and this is a hard Saying; you may almoſt perſuade them as ſoon to renounce all their hopes of Heaven. This is an evident Conviction, whatever Notions Men may entertain to ſtop the mouth of a clamorous Conſcience, when it calls on them for working and labouring, yet they do not believe what they themſelves ſpeak concerning their Impotence.

Fourthly, Did you never when the Spirit of God was dealing with your Hearts, perſwading you to enter upon a courſe of Duty and Obedience? Did you never procraſtinate, and uſe delays? Did you never ſtifle the Breathings, nor quench the Motions of the Holy Spirit, by thinking it was time enough to do it hereafter? What need I begin ſo ſoon, or vex my fleſh, or deny my ſelf the Joys and Pleaſures of this Life, even as ſoon as I am come to reliſh them? When Sickneſs, or grey Hairs admoniſh me, and tell me, I am near unto Eternity; when old Age promiſeth me that the Severities of Religion ſhall be no long trouble, then will I look after the Concernments of my Soul; then it will be time enough; then I will repent, believe, obey, and work out that Salvation that will be then haſtning upon me. Tell me truly, Have not theſe been the fooliſh Reaſonings of your Hearts? Have you not thus often promiſed God and your own Conſciences? And doth not this plainly imply, you thought you had power to do it? *Wherefore thou art inexcuſable, O Man, whoever thou art:* It is in vain to plead want of Power, God will confute thee by thy very thoughts. Hadſt thou no Power? Although thou hadſt not, yet thou thoughteſt thou hadſt, yet wouldſt not endeavour to work; therefore thy Ruin is as wilful, and thy Condemnation as juſt as if thou hadſt a power, and wouldſt not work; for thou periſheſt merely thorow the default of thine own Will.

Anſw. 3. Whether wicked Men have this power or no to work out their own Salvation, I ſhall not now ſtand to enquire; but if they had it, yet they would not work with it; and therefore it is a moſt vain and inſufficient *Plea* to pretend they wanted power. Now this appears evidently, becauſe there is no wicked Man, that ever did ſo much as he was able to do by the mere ſtrength of Nature, without the aſſiſtance of ſupernatural Grace; and therefore it is not their Inability, but their wilful Sloth that doth deſtroy them. Do but anſwer your own Conſciences, Was there not one Duty more which you could have performed, nor one Temptation, nor one Corruption more which you could have reſiſted? Could not you have prayed, read, or meditated upon heavenly things, then when your Hearts and Thoughts have been vain, worldly, and ſinful, and deviliſh? Might not that Time have been ſpent in holy Converſe, which you trifled away in idle, impertinent Diſcourſe, or in doing nothing, or that which was much worſe than nothing? What force, what conſtraint is laid upon you? Can you think? And if you can, Cannot you think of God as well of the World? As well concerning fulfilling God's Will, and working out your Salvation, as fulfilling your Luſts? Can you not ſpeak? And if you can, Can you not ſpeak to God in holy Prayer, and of the things of God in holy Diſcourſe, as well as of your Trades and Bargains, thoſe low and trivial Matters that are not worthy of Men, much leſs of Chriſtians?

ſtians? What force is there upon you? Doth the Devil skrew open the Drunkard's Mouth, and pour down his exceſſive and intemperate Cups whether he will or no? Doth the Devil violently move the Tongue of the Swearer and Blaſphemer to revile the holy and *reverend* Name of God? Doth he ſtrike Men dumb when they ſhould pray, or deaf when they ſhould hear, or ſenſeleſs when they ſhould underſtand? Is there any ſuch force or conſtraint laid upon you? May you not avoid the one, and do the other if you your ſelves pleaſe? Yes, you can, but you will not; therefore neither would you work out your own Salvation if you could. Is there any hope that you that will not do the leſs that God requires from you, that you ſhould ever be induced to perform the greater? Let your Weakneſs and *Impotence* be what it will, yet your Condemnation will lie upon you ſo long as your Wilfulneſs is much greater than your Weakneſs. No, Sinners, your precious and immortal Souls will eternally periſh now for want of Will to ſave them. Pity your ſelves; will you loſe your ſelves for ever only out of Sloth? Will you ſleep your ſelves into Hell, and go drowzily into Deſtruction? Shall one end of your Souls lie already burning as a Brand of Hell-fire, and you not put forth a hand to ſnatch it out? Is it more painful to work the Works of God, than it is to periſh for ever under inſupportable Torments? Therefore do you what you poſſibly can, labour and ſweat at Salvation, rather than fail of it: Let this never grate nor fret your Conſciences in Hell, that they lie there burning for ever, merely for your wilful Neglects.

When a Man is gone far towards Chriſtianity, there are ſeveral things that make him neglect a further progreſs: As,

Firſt, His groundleſs fancying of Difficulties and hard Encounters in the Ways of God. Oh, were it but as eaſie to be holy as ſinful, he were wretched that would refuſe to be a Chriſtian; or were Chriſtianity but one hard pull, or difficult pang, that would ſoon be over, there were ſome encouragement for them; but when they have already ſtruggled, and wreſtled, and waited againſt the ſtream, thus far, and yet ſee no end, Duty to be performed upon Duty, and Temptation upon Temptation to be reſiſted, ſtill to be combating with Devils, ſtill to be croſſing and vexing of our ſelves, no reſpite, no breathing-time allowed them. This takes off their Wheels, and though they are able to do this, yet they will rather ſit down quite ſhort of Grace, than run thorow ſuch hardſhips to attain it, and ſo they come up in the mid-way, neither holy, nor prophane; but pleaſe themſelves with a mediocrity, and middle rank of Religion, and dare not go further for fear of difficulties; nor yet they dare not fall further back for fear of Conſcience; and ſo they lie hovering between Heaven and Hell. Now this is merely from wilful Sloth. *Prov.* 26. 13. *The ſlothful Man ſaith there is a Lion in the way, a Lion in the ſtreets.* Here the Wiſe Man brings in a drowſie Sluggard dreaming of dangers and difficulties, to excuſe his Sloth; I dare not ſtir abroad, for there is a Lion in the ſtreets: A likely matter that there ſhould be a Lion in the ſtreets; but yet ſee how this Fancy works with him: Any thing is an excuſe for the Sluggard. In *ver.* 14. *As the door turneth upon the hinges, ſo doth the Slothful upon his Bed.* A Door is often in motion to and fro, but it gains no ground, makes no progreſs, ſtill hangs where it did; ſo it is with ſlothful Profeſſors; that which they have attained to, is that they move to and fro like a door upon the hinges, ſtill the ſame motion over and over again, no new progreſs, no new attainment, and that merely becauſe they are ſluggiſh and lazy, and fanſie difficulties to themſelves, and ſtrange appoſitions in the Ways of God that makes them ſtand at a ſtay where they are, and dare not make one ſtep forward. As it was with the *Iſraelites*, who came to the very Borders of the Land of *Canaan*, *Numb.* 13. 32, 33. When the Searchers had brought reports to them, that *the Land indeed was good and fruitful, but the Walls of the City were built up to Heaven*, and that there were *many Giants*; and that they ſhould be *beaten* and *eaten:* They were not ſo much allured with the goodneſs of the Land, as they were deterred by the thoughts of the difficulties; and though God himſelf bad them riſe, and enter, and go on ſo difficult an enterprize: So there are many forward Profeſſors who are come to the very Borders of the Land of *Canaan*, to the very enterance into the Kingdom of *Heaven*, who, when they ſee what ſtrong holds of Iniquity they muſt caſt down, what Principalites and Powers they muſt fight with, and what gigantick Luſts, as the Sons of *Anak*, they muſt ſubdue and deſtroy, this frights them from attempting any further.

Secondly,

Secondly, To be *almoſt a Chriſtian*, carries in it thoſe advantages and thoſe accommodations, which, were they altogether ſuch, they muſt loſe; and therefore this is one Reaſon why ſo many ſtick in the New-birth: Such a one is no Saint, and therefore the Men of the World embrace him; ſuch a one is no prophane and ſcandalous perſon, and therefore the Children of God embrace him, and think well of him too; and thus he doth hold a correſpondency with both of them; which were he altogether either, one or the other, he muſt break of; and therefore finding the conveniency of this neutral Eſtate, he ſtops where he is, ſhort of true Grace. Were he a prophane Wretch, then thoſe that are truly godly would avoid his company; or were he truly godly, then the World would reject and ſcorn him; the godly eſteem and love him, and from their ready Charity they look upon him to be truly gracious. Thoſe that are true Chriſtians (thinks the almoſt Chriſtian) look upon me as ſuch as themſelves, and what need I begin by a forward Zeal to diſoblige the World? And the wicked and prophane reſpect me too, becauſe I go a little before them (though not quite croſs and contrary to them) and ſo I enjoy the good opinion of both ſorts, which were I fully one or the other, I ſhould hardly attain. This Man can (as it were) hold Heaven with one hand, and yet hold the World with the other, not loſe his intereſt in the one, and yet retain his intereſt in the other; he can enjoy the delights and pleaſures of the one, and then hope for the rewards and happineſs of the other. Were we lodged in a Star, then the Earth would appear very ſmall, and almoſt nothing, as the Stars do now to us; ſo were we more above, the Earth would appear either as very ſmall, or as nothing. Thus it is with a Child of God; he ſoars up by the wings of Faith and Love to the heavenly *Jeruſalem*, and the Earth appears very inconſiderable to him; but now an unregenerate Man, when he mounts higheſt, yet ſtill will be ſure to keep Earth in his eye; he will not loſe the ſight of that; and therefore when he hath got to ſuch a pitch that he is able to diſcover ſomething of Heaven, and yet not loſe the ſight of Earth, there he hangs in *æquilibrio*, and will be drawn no further; he keeps ſomething of the Earth in his eye, and will not loſe nor diminiſh his ſight or ſhare of it for the Hopes and Joys of Heaven.

Thirdly, *Falſe Opinions and Conceits* that they are already Chriſtians, hinder theſe forward Profeſſors from being true Chriſtians. It may be they would be Chriſtians indeed, did they not think they were already ſuch. When Men are gone far, then they are apt to think they are got home, and ſo they have taken up their reſt, and will be driven on no further; they think that what they have already gotten, is enough to bear their charges to Heaven, and ſo they grow careleſs of getting more; they are perſwaded that they are Chriſtians, and that keeps them from being perſwaded to be ſuch. I do not intend to forbid eminent Profeſſors to think they are indeed Chriſtians; but let them look how this perſwaſion works with them: Doth it tend to make them more careleſs, negligent and remiſs? When they have been under Troubles of Conſcience for their Sins, then they ſaw themſelves in a loſt and undone Condition, and had hot and ſcalding apprehenſions of the Wrath of God; then they were laborious to frequent Duties, conſcientious in their walking, and fearful leſt they ſhould ſin; but ſince their Troubles have been worn off, they have entertained better Hopes, and better Opinions of their ſtate. Are they not grown more looſe and more regardleſs? They do not take ſo much pains with their hearts, nor are they ſo ſtrict and holy, and ſevere in their Lives; I muſt tell ſuch what the Apoſtle tells the *Galatians*, Ch. 5. 7, 8. *Ye did run well; who hindered you? This perſwaſion cometh not of him that calleth you.* This perſwaſion that you are Chriſtians, cometh not of him that calleth you; poſſibly it would be well with them if they did not think they were ſo. Sirs, if ſo be that thoughts of your being Chriſtians, and in a ſtate of Grace, did encourage you to walk worthy of that holy Calling; if the hopes of your good and holy eſtate, do engage you to purifie your ſelves as God is pure, as they will work if they be right and genuine, then ſtill entertain and cheriſh them; but if they turn to looſneſs, remiſſneſs or preſumption, here ſuſpect them to be the overweening Conceits and Elevations of a carnal Heart, and ſuch as will certainly hinder you of what you thus fondly imagine your ſelves to be, hinder you from making further progreſs in the Ways of Chriſtianity, in regard you take up falſe conceits that you are Chriſtians already.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, Another Ground whence it is that forward Profeſſors many times fall ſhort of true Chriſtianity; it may be when they are already gotten far, then, the Devil eſpecially doth all he can to hinder them; when they have gone far towards Grace and Chriſtianity, then he unites all his Force and Subtilty to ſtop them from proceeding further, leſt they get from under his power and juriſdiction; he knows if they once become Chriſtians, they are then almoſt out of his reach; and therefore whatever Luſt be in the Soul, he will then eſpecially ſtir it up; whatſoever reſerve of Temptations there be, he will then ſend them upon the Soul: For none are more aſſaulted with Horrours and multiplied Temptations, than thoſe who make a great progreſs towards the Ways of God, and are near to the Borders of true Chriſtianity; becauſe then the Devil ſuſpects that he ſhall loſe them, and that they are even revolting from him. When they begin to move towards Heaven, and labour after true Grace and Holineſs, the Devil ſees that ordinary Temptations are not then ſufficient to ſecure them; that thoſe Luſts that before hampered and captivated them at his pleaſure, will not now ſo eaſily prevail; for he finds them too reſolute, too rough, and untractable to deal with; he begins then to fear to what a Rebellion this may grow, and therefore he ſets upon them with all his Power, way-lays them with all Ambuſhments, circumvents them with all his Wiles and Stratagems; and though theſe be only Armies and Muſters of Shadows, which a Man might break through without any danger, would he but arm himſelf with noble and undaunted Reſolutions; yet with theſe the Devil aſſaults and undermines them, and that inceſſantly, and doth at laſt ſtop them in their courſe towards Grace, if not beat them back again to their former courſe of Prophaneneſs. *Luke* 11. 24, 25. *When the unclean Spirit is gone out of a Man, he walketh through dry places, ſeeking reſt, and finding none, he ſaith, I will return to mine houſe whence I come out, and when he cometh, he findeth it ſwept and garniſhed.* V. 26. *Then goeth he, and taketh ſeven other Spirits more wicked than himſelf, and they enter in and dwell there, and the laſt ſtate of that Man is worſe than the firſt, i. e.* When Men Men have caſt out unclean, groſs Luſts by an external Sanctification, that the Devil ſeems to be diſlodged, when he ſeeks to return again to his ancient ſeat and poſſeſſion, he finds the Heart ſwept and garniſhed; ſwept from the filth of common Sins, and garniſhed with common Graces, as its Ornaments; ſo that there ſeems no re-admiſſion or re-entrance of this unclean Spirit; and then he goes and takes to himſelf ſeven other Spirits worſe than himſelf, that is, as I conceive, ſtronger Temptations, and more prevailing Luſts, and by them he enters, and dwells there, and defiles that clean-ſwept houſe, and not only keeps the Sinner from being better, but, makes his latter end worſe than his beginning.

Fifthly, When Men have gone far towards Chriſtianity, natural Conſcience then leaves them, and ceaſeth to excite and provoke them to a further proficiency. *Conſcience* is the Spur that quickens wicked Men to make that progreſs which they make. Now when it hath brought them paſt common Sins to known and common Duties, then it leaves them, and urgeth them no further, and ſo they ſit down far ſhort of true Grace and Chriſtianity, which they endeavoured after. Well then, let me ſay to ſuch Men, as St. *Paul* to the *Galatians*, chap. 5. 7. *You did run well; who hindered you?* Was it the difficulty of Religion, or the ſtrength of Temptation, the Flatters and Allurements of the World, the Violence and Rage of your own Luſts? But might you not nevertheleſs have armed your ſelves with peremptory Reſolutions? Might you not undauntedly and victoriouſly have broke through all theſe? Were you not able when you ſtood ſtill, or when you gave back as frighted and terrified at theſe things, to make one ſtep, and another ſtep ſtill forwards? Could you not proceed ſtill further, and preſs onwards through all theſe? Yes, you might have gone much further if you would; you might have made a further progreſs, though all Hell had armed it ſelf againſt you; therefore if you Periſh, there will be and cauſe reaſon to blame your ſelves; you can only charge your Damnation on your own wilful ſloth and negligence.

This may ſuffice for an Anſwer to the Third General; Whence it is that Profeſſors that have gone far towards Chriſtianity, yet fall ſhort of Grace, and of being true Chriſtians: They were too nice to encounter Difficulties; they were apt and forward to think well of themſelves; they were too faint-hearted to

cope

cope with Temptations, loth to diſoblige the World, and would not proceed further than ſpurred on by natural Conſcience, and therefore wilfully fell ſhort through their own Sloth and Negligence, of Grace here, and of Glory hereafter.

Fourthly, The laſt General propounded, was to ſhew you the Folly and extreme Miſery of thoſe who proceed thus far as to be *Almoſt-Chriſtians*, and yet will not be perſwaded to be ſuch *Altogether*. The Apoſtle ſeems to be very paſſionate, *Gal.* 3. 1, 3. *O fooliſh* Galatians, *who hath* bewitched you, *that you ſhould not obey the Truth, before whoſe eyes Jeſus Chriſt hath been evidently ſet forth, crucified among you*, &c. Verſe 3. *Are ye ſo fooliſh, having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the Fleſh?* What are you mad? Are you beſotted? Are you bewitched out of your common Reaſon and underſtanding; that having begun in the Spirit, and made ſo far progreſs in the Ways and Knowledge of Chriſt, that after all this, you ſhould fall back again to carnal, fleſhly Rudiments? Why, the ſame may I ſay to many: You that are Profeſſors, Why, who hath bewitched you? Why are you ſo fooliſh, as when you have not only begun, but proceed far towards Holineſs and true Grace, that yet you ſhould give over and ſit down in a ſtate of Nature and Unregeneracy ſhort of it; Conſider but your Folly and Miſery in theſe particulars.

Firſt, Conſider, Is it not extreme folly, madneſs, and miſery, wilfully to fall ſhort of that which you have already taken ſo much pains to attain? What, after all the labour and hardſhips, and difficulties that you have already gone through to obtain Grace, now to ſit down ſhort of it, and loſe all? Will you wilfully loſe all your Prayers and all your Tears? All your Convictions and all your Conflicts? Shall all theſe be ſo much labour in vain? Is not this much below the ingenuouſneſs of your Reſolutions in inferior matters? Do not you uſe to quicken your endeavours by ſuch Arguments as theſe, I have ſpent ſo much upon it, I have taken ſo much pains about it, therefore I will ſee the end of it, and go through with it. Do you think much to loſe your labour in any thing but Salvation, but in working out the Salvation of your precious Immortal Souls? What though it be hard and difficult to go further: Conſider, was it not hard and difficult to arrive at that which you have already attained unto; and are you ſo fooliſh as to be willing to loſe the fruit and benefit of the difficulties you have already paſt, only for fear of difficulties that are yet to come? If Chriſtianity be not worthy your pains, why did you ever engage in it? And if it be, why do you ſit ſtill? You will be guilty of extreme Folly either in this or that. For you enter upon Chriſtianity without ſitting down, and reckoning what it will coſt you; Chriſt himſelf there brands you for Fools, *Luke* 14. 28, 29. *For which of you intending to build a Tower, ſitteth not down firſt, and counteth the coſt, whether he have ſufficient to finiſh it, leſt haply after he hath laid the Foundation, and is not able to finiſh it, all that behold it begin to mock him, ſaying. This Man began to build, and was not able to finiſh it.*

If it was not worth your pains, what a Folly was it to attempt it? If you thought it worth all and more, what a Folly then was it to flag? And could you before you came ſo nigh to Grace, and ſo nigh to Glory, could you ſee that beauty, and that deſirableneſs in it at ſo great a diſtance, as to perſuade you to come thus far, and now when you are much nearer, and can ſee much more of its excellency and comelineſs; Dare you now deſpiſe and contemn it? When you have not only the promiſe of God to be your Incouragement, but you have alſo given Earneſt too for that Profeſſion, and thoſe Endeavours, and thoſe Duties which you have already paſſed through, they are all (as it were) the Earneſt of your further progreſs; this Earneſt you loſe, Profeſſion, Endeavours, and Duty, and all comes to Nothing, if after all you reſt any where ſhort of Grace, you loſe your Earneſt which you give, if you be but almoſt Chriſtians, and reſt any where ſhort of true Chriſtianity. Well, what extreme Folly is this for Men to diſquiet themſelves in vain, and take ſo much pains to pray and hear, and to keep themſelves from many Sins, and perform many Duties; and yet becauſe they will do no more, they loſe the Benefit of all this? Why, what is it that you do all this for? Is it not to obtain Grace and Glory? And will you do ſo much for ſuch an Excellent End, and yet wilfully fall ſhort of it? You may remain Graceleſs without all this Labour; if you are fully reſolved for Hell, why do you do any thing? To Hell you may go without Praying or Hear-

ing, without ſtriving, or conflicting, or performing one Duty, or reſiſting one Sin as you do; if you are reſolved for Heaven, why do you not do more, all your praying, hearing, ſtriving, and wreſtling they will be loſt and in vain, if you do not hold on, if you do not continue. Well, what a folly is it for you to have gone ſo far, and won every ſtep of Ground by clear force, who have toiled in the ways of Religion, with ſweat and anguiſh, and diſquieting to your Soul, and yet at laſt to loſe and fruſtrate all this pains through your curſed and wilful ſloth and negligence; to give all away, and fall wilfully ſhort of Grace and Salvation?

Conſider Secondly, Is it not groſs and inexcuſeable folly to deſiſt after ſo far progreſs, whereas for ought we know, had we but proceeded a little further, we might have obtained that grace which we fall ſhort of? And how know you, but that upon your further endeavours, God might have beſtowed that Grace you ſtrive for, God is not wanting in this kind; to thoſe who improve the Power of nature which they have, he gives the Power of Grace which they have not; Yet when Men arrive thus far, and come as it were to the very Porch of *Heaven*, what thick and dull folly is it, when there is as it were but a ſtep or two between them and Glory, to break off their Progreſs and ſit down ſhort? What is it more labour to go thoſe few ſteps more you are to proceed to, than thoſe which you have already gone.

Were you willing and contented to do all that you have already done for that which is but like Grace, and will you not be perſwaded to do a little more for that which is true Grace? It may be God may convert you by the very next Prayer you make, he may convert you by the next Sermon you hear, he may give you true Grace when you next of all oppoſe any Temptation, or when you next of all ſtruggle againſt any luſt, the very next ſtep you take in his way may carry you to Heaven for ought you know. Now the great probability of this, nay, were it only a bare poſſibility, it makes a Man guilty of the greateſt folly, who hath gone thus far towards Holineſs to neglect a further progreſs towards it.

Thirdly Conſider, what a dangerous and dreadful thing is it, for Men to climb ſo high, and yet to have no hold faſt to depend upon, no foundation to ſupport them; yet thus it is with every elevated carnal Profeſſor that falls ſhort of Grace; he is like a Man that ſtands upon the ſharp top of a Towering Pinacle, where he hath no other hold-faſt but a handful of Air: But the ſtanding of a Child of God is firm, his feet are fixed upon an immovable Rock, even the Rock of Ages, and God reacheth out his hand from Heaven to ſupport him. It is diſputed by ſome nice Inquiſitors, whether a Man if he were lift up above the Magnitude and attractive *Virtue* of the Earth, may not ſtand as ſafely and walk in the Air as he doth now upon the Earth. It is true of a Child of God, when he hath got beyond the reach of earthly Attractions, he may walk ſafely in that ſublime way which leads to Heaven; but now for wicked Men, that have not got beyond the Malignity of the Earth; it is exceeding dangerous, their earthly Minds and Affections, and their Earthly Converſations, will in the end bear them down headlong, unleſs they climb ſtill higher, untill they have got beyond theſe terrene Attractions.

Now would it not make you tremble, to ſee a Man born up in the Air, as the Poets feign of *Icarus*, with waxen Wings that are ſubject to melt and fall off, and betray their charge to certain ruin and perdition? Thus it is with every one that has gone far in Chriſtianity; and is it not you that fly only with waxen Wings, I mean the Power of Nature, and the common Works of the Holy Ghoſt, which may fall off and leave you in Eternal Ruin.

And from hence it follows in the fourth place, that theſe Mountainous Profeſſors, who have attained to an high pitch, yet fall ſhort of Grace, becauſe they want firm footing to aſſure their ſtanding; they uſually either deſperately tumble headlong into the Commiſſion of ſome foul groſs Sins, or elſe they grow brain-ſick, and turn aſide to the maintaining of ſome prodigious error. This is uſually the Iſſue of ſuch lofty Profeſſors, as we ſee a Cloud that hath been ſucked up by the Sun, how it hovers a while in the Air, but anon it is wrapp'd and whirl'd about with every Wind, and ſo it is utterly loſt and diſſipated, or elſe it falls down again to the Earth in Storms, and is turned only into mire and dirt; Even ſo fares it with many a Profeſſor, he is drawn up out of the Earth, and above the Pollutions of the World, by a common influence of the Holy Spirit, and for a while he hangs and hovers in a lofty Profeſſion, but having no firm Baſis to ſuſtain him, he is either blown up by an empty Cloud, and driven away by every Wind of Doctrine, and loſt amongſt various

various Sects and Opinions; or elſe after a while, he falls back again into the filthy converſation and worldly pollutions, that he had eſcaped, and ends only in mire and dirt, and this becauſe he hath not that incorruptable ſeed within him that ſhall never die. Indeed true Grace is of it ſelf Immortal, but it is from that engagement, that God hath laid upon himſelf to preſerve it in thoſe, who are diligent in the uſe of thoſe means, by which it may be maintained. But now an unregenerate Man is left wholly to his own Power, to preſerve him in that Station in which he ſhines: And if the Angels themſelves and *Adam* fell from their firſt Eſtate, merely through the mutability of their own Will, who had power to continue in it, how much more certainly then will theſe carnal Profeſſors fall from their high pitch, who have leſs Power to inable them to ſtand, and greater Power againſt them to caſt them down? To aggravate the exceeding great Folly and Apoſtacy of theſe elevated break-neck Profeſſors, ſee that moſt dreadful place, 2 *Pet.* 2. 21. *For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteouſneſs than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them.* Why, is not the Wrath of God certainly to be revealed againſt all thoſe, who know not God, and obey not the Goſpel of the Lord Jeſus?

It is better never to have known the Goſpel, and never to have gone a ſtep in the ways of God, than afterwards wilfully to diſert them and apoſtatize from them.

Firſt conſider, The Fall and Apoſtacy of thoſe who are great and eminent Profeſſors, it carries much of malice and wilfulneſs in it, which is the higheſt rank that can be in any Sin. If there be any in the World that commit the unpardonable Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, it muſt be theſe Men. There is indeed a great difference between ſinning willingly and ſinning wilfully; Prophane carnal Men they Sin willingly, but none but thoſe who have been forward Profeſſors in the ways of God, and have utterly deſerted thoſe ways; none but thoſe can ſin maliciouſly, and merely becauſe they will provoke and offend God by their Sins. Now ſee what the Apoſtle ſaith of ſuch. Heb. 10. 26. *For if we ſin wilfully, after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more Sacrifice for ſins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation,* &c. Heb. 6. 4, 5, 6. *For it is impoſſible for thoſe who were once enlightened, and have taſted of the heavenly Gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghoſt, and have taſted the good Word of God, and the Powers of the World to come, if they ſhall fall away to renew them again unto repentance,* &c. This is the firſt aggravation of their Sin and Miſery.

But then Secondly, when elevated and eminent Profeſſors fall away they uſually fall lower than they were before, when they took their firſt riſe towards Chriſtianity and true Religion; falling away from a Profeſſion, is like the falling down from a ſteep Precipice, where they can have nothing to ſtop them till they come to the very bottom: And it is obſerved, that none prove more notoriouſly wicked, and more deſperate haters and revilers of the ways of God, than Apoſtate Profeſſors.

Firſt, God doth judicially give them up to commit all manner of Sin with greedineſs; ſee that black *Catalogue* of the fouleſt Sins that can be imagined, *Rom.* 1. from 21. to 30. The Apoſtle ſpeaks there concerning the Heathens, but the caſe is parallel with our carnal Profeſſors, who do not like to retain God in their knowledge, therefore, *God gives them over to a reprobate mind to do thoſe things that are not convenient,* &c.

The Devil takes poſſeſſion of ſuch Men with ſtronger power and force than ever; (as the unclean ſpirit re-entred with ſeven Spirits worſe than himſelf, *Luke.* 11. 24.) to ſecure that Soul that hath been ſo likely to revolt from him, and therefore no wonder Chriſt ſaith, *the laſt eſtate of that Man is worſe than the firſt.* So that theſe eminent Profeſſors when they fall away they uſually fall lower than they ever were before their firſt riſe and motion towards Religion.

Unregenerate Perſons not only fall lower, but they ſeldom return to make a Profeſſion of their deſerted Religion; it is impoſſible to renew ſuch a one to repentance again. Now how ſhould theſe ſad and dreadful Conſiderations, make every one of us to do our utmoſt, that we are able to get true and ſaving Grace, If we reſt any where ſhort of it? When the Winds of Temptation tempeſtuouſly beat, and the Floods of Tryal, Affliction, or Perſecution ruſh in upon us, we ſhall fall, becauſe we have no Foundation, but have built merely upon the Sands. If you ſtand not built upon the corner Stone, you will fall of your ſelves, yea, that Stone will fall upon you, and gruſh and grind you to powder. Nay, you fall off from a ſteep and ſlippery Precipice, where there is nothing at all to ſtop, nothing to receive you but Sin

after Sin, and thus you rebound from one wickedneſs to another, till at laſt you be plunged irrecoverably into that Lake, which burns with Fire and Brimſtone: And this is the fourth Conſideration; diſcovering the Folly and Miſery of thoſe that go far towards Chriſtianity, and yet fall ſhort.

Fifthly, Though theſe Profeſſors may hover between Heaven and Earth in their lives, yet they ſhall not hover between *Heaven and Hell* in their Deaths. No, the half Chriſtian ſhall be as infallibly and as certainly caſt into Hell, as thoſe who were altogether wicked. Here it may be thou art neither Godly nor Prophane, but hereafter thou muſt be either Saved or Damned. There is none (as the Papiſts Picture *Eraſmus*) that hang between Heaven and Hell. Whoever thou art, thou muſt be either in a State of Nature or of Grace, and accordingly ſhall thy Eſtate then be for ever, either a ſtate of Salvation among the Saints, or elſe a ſtate of Damnation with the Unregenerate. Though thou art never ſo lofty and ſublime a Profeſſor, yet the ſame Hell that holds the Prophane, muſt eternally hereafter hold Thee too, if through thine own wilful Negligence thou ſtop any where ſhort of true Grace. If the *Almoſt* Chriſtians could by their glittering Profeſſion gain a cooler Hell, if they could get (I ſay) but a cooler place in Hell, if their Profeſſion could gain you this, if it could procure you Purgatory for venial Sins, or the moderate puniſhment which the Papiſts call *Limbus Patrum*, then you had ſome ſhew of Reaſon to reſt where you are, but when the ſame Hell, and the ſame everlaſting Fire muſt be the Portion of theſe, who have proceeded ſo far (and yet fall ſhort) as well as the portion of the vileſt Wretch, whom they have now as far exceeded in goodneſs, as the holieſt Saint alive exceeds them; it is the very height of folly and madneſs to ſit down any where ſhort of true Grace, unleſs they are fully reſolved to ſit down no where ſhort of Hell.

Sixthly and Laſtly, Conſider, It will be the inſupportable aggravation of theſe Men's juſt and everlaſting Condemnation, for them, to lie *grating upon this ſad reflection in Hell, that once they were near to Heaven, but loſt it through their own wilful default.* It will be the aggravation, (I ſay) of theſe Men's juſt and everlaſting Condemnation, to make this doleful and furious reflection upon themſelves in Hell, that once they were in a very hopeful State, that they were once near to Heaven, but loſt it through their own wilful default. O when they ſhall lie in Hell, and from thence give a ſad and ghaſtly look up to the Glory of the Saints in Heaven; O how will it pierce their Souls to think, that they were once near to that bleſſed Eſtate, though now there be an infinite and unpaſſable Gulph between them and that bleſſed Inheritance, which the Saints enjoy in Heaven! *Thus will they reflect upon themſelves, though now there be an unpaſſable Gulph between me and Heaven, yet once there was but a ſtep or two that parted us: Had I mortified but one Luſt more, had I oppoſed one Temptation more, had I put up but one fervent Prayer more; poſſibly I might now have been in Heaven: But, O my curſed, curſed folly, when I was at the very Gate and Threſhold of Heaven,* that even then I ſhould ſtop, and after the relinquiſhment of my Luſts, and after all my Progreſs in the ways of Holineſs, to return again to the commiſſion of thoſe Sins, in which I had formerly lived, when I had already gone through the hardeſt and moſt difficult part of Religion, then to break off my courſe! What is this but procuring for my ſelf this Damnation, which I now ſuffer, and muſt ſuffer *for ever?* O that Light, that once I enjoyed how it thickens this everlaſting Darkneſs! O thoſe taſts I once had of the Powers of the World to come, and reliſhed ſo much ſweetneſs in, how do they now imbitter this Cup of fury and trembling, that I muſt for ever drink of! O theſe Heavenly Gifts that once I had, do but now increaſe theſe Helliſh torments, and the ſight of Heaven which I have had, now diſcovers to me what I have loſt; nay, what I have wilfully thrown away through mine own ſloth and negligence. O how ſtrange is mine Apoſtacy! After I had gone ſo great a way towards Chriſtianity, rather than I would move one ſtep further, I choſe to lie here in this Hell for ever burning and conſuming? Oh what ſad and tormenting Thoughts will theſe be! How will they fret and gnaw the Souls of thoſe Wretches, with Eternal Anguiſh and Inſupportable Torments? Thus you have ſeen in theſe Particulars, ſomewhat diſcovered to you of the deſperate folly and madneſs, (and miſery alſo) that Men are guilty of that do proceed ſo far as to be *Almoſt*, and yet will not be perſuaded to be *Altogether Chriſtians.*

A DIS-

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DISCOURSE

On the Great DUTY of

MORTIFICATION.

Romans VIII. 13.

If ye live after the Fleſh, ye ſhall die: But if ye through the Spirit do mortifie the deeds of the Body, ye ſhall live.

IN theſe words, without any Preface or account of their Coherence, are, *Firſt*, A Promiſe; the greateſt Promiſe that God can make, or the Scripture propound, or we embrace, *Ye ſhall live:* that is, *Firſt*, Ye ſhall live a life of Grace and Comfort here; And *Secondly*, Ye ſhall live a life of Immortality and eternal Glory hereafter. I.

Secondly, We have the Condition upon which this Life both of Grace and Glory is propounded; *If ye mortifie the deeds of the Body*, εἰ θανατοῦτε, the word ſignifies to kill or put to death, *If you* kill *the deeds of the Body, ye ſhall live:* The Life of Sin and the Life of Grace and Glory are utterly inconſiſtent and repugnant, you muſt live upon the Death of Sin. II.

Now here we have the Object of this Mortification, what it is they muſt put to Death, and that is the *deeds of the Body*. By the Body we muſt here underſtand the ſame that the Apoſtle ſpeaks of in the beginning of the Verſe, *If ye live after the Fleſh*: Fleſh and Body are but equivalent terms, both of them ſignifying one and the ſame corruption of Nature. Indeed the proper Seat of Sin is the Soul, and they are the deeds of the Soul that we muſt chiefly mortifie; the deeds of the Body are ſinful but at the ſecond hand, as they are ſwayed and exerted by a ſinful Soul; yet the Scripture doth frequently call this Corruption Fleſh, the Body, the Members; oppoſing it to the Spirit, to the Mind, *Rom.* 7. 23. *I ſee another Law in my Members warring againſt the Law of my Mind.* And this it doth, I.

Firſt, To denote the degrading malignity that there is in Sin, it doth unſpirit and unſoul a Man. A Sinner is called a carnal Man, a Man made up of nothing but a lump of dull Fleſh, kneaded together without Spirit, without Life. And therefore the Apoſtle doth not bid them mortifie the deeds of their Souls, becauſe wicked Men act as though they had no Souls, or at leaſt not ſo noble a Soul. 1. *Sin hath a degrading malignity in it.*

Secondly, It calls Sin *the deeds of the Body*, to denote what it is that Sin tends to; it is only to pleaſe, to pamper the Body, the ſenſual, ſordid and baſer part of Man. The Soul of a wicked Man acts for no higher an end than the Soul of a Beaſt doth; the Soul of a Beaſt acts not for it ſelf, but is made a drudge and underling to the Body; it ſerves only to carry the Body to and fro to its paſture, and to make it reliſh its food and fodder. Thus truly it is with the Souls of wicked Men, they act not for themſelves, but are only the Bodies Caterers, that ſeek out and lay in *proviſion for the Fleſh, to fulfil the luſts thereof*, Rom. 13. 14. 2. *Sin tends only to the Pleaſing of the Body.*

Thirdly, Sins are called *the deeds of the Body*, becauſe though the Soul be the chief ſeat of their abode, yet the Body is the great inſtrument of their acting? *Rom.* 6. 19. *As ye have yielded your members ſervants to iniquity, ſo now yield your members ſervants unto righteouſneſs.* Indeed there are ſome refined Sins that hold little communion with the Body, and partake but little of that groſs Carnality and Corpulency 3.

lency (if I may ſo term it) that makes others Sins ſwell to ſuch a bulk, and yet theſe muſt be alſo mortified, and theſe are alſo *the deeds of the Body*; becauſe the Soul acting even theſe ſpiritual Sins, acts as much below it ſelf, as the Body's actings are below the Soul's.

As for the *deeds of the Body*, by Deeds we muſt underſtand not only the inward ebullitions and the outward eruptions of this Body of Sin, but alſo the ſpring and fountain it ſelf whence theſe flow. The corruption of Nature it ſelf muſt be mortified, the Body of Death muſt be put to death. All theſe are called *the deeds of the Fleſh*, not only thoſe that the Apoſtle reckons up and tells us are manifeſt, *Gal.* 5. 19. but alſo the inward motions, yea, the depraved root and habit it ſelf; which are ſecret, becauſe though theſe be not outward acts, yet they would be ſo, and Sin is not perfected nor finiſhed till it be ſo.

II. *Secondly*, As the deeds of the Fleſh are the Object of Mortification, ſo here we have the Perſons on whom this duty of Mortification is preſs'd, *If ye through the Spirit do mortifie*; that is, ye who have received the Spirit, ye who are Believers, for ſuch are thoſe whom he deſcribes in the foregoing part of the Chapter, *ver.* 1, 5, 10, 11. both theſe branches are comprehended in the condition required to Life, *If ye mortifie the deeds of the Body, ye ſhall live.*

III. *Thirdly*, Here is likewiſe the way and means whereby Believers are enabled to mortifie the *deeds of the Body*, and that is, *through the Spirit*; *If ye through the Spirit do mortifie.* Whatſoever other helps either of outward or inward rigour and ſeverity Men uſe againſt their Luſts, they may indeed thereby for a time ſtifle and ſuppreſs them, but if the Spirit of God do not ſet in with the work, it can never amount to a true Mortification.

Now from the words thus open many Propoſitions may be drawn out, as,

First Doctrine. *First*, From the promiſe of Life, if we take Life for the Life of Comfort, and the Life of Grace, made upon the Condition of Mortification; obſerve,

That it is impoſſible for that Soul to have lively Comforts and lively Graces, whoſe Luſts are lively and unmortified.

There is a neceſſity for it, that the *deeds of the Body* be put to death, if you intend that either your Grace or your Comfort ſhould ſurvive. I do not abſolutely ſay that Grace cannot live in the Children of God under every preſent neglect of Mortification, but yet certainly this will deſtroy their Comfors; yea, and eat out the vigour, activity and livelineſs of their Graces, that though they do live, yet they will live but a lingring and decaying Life; they will but live ſuch a Life as Sin doth in thoſe who exerciſe a conſtant Mortification, that is, they will but live as it were a dying Life.

Second Doctrine. *Secondly*, If we take the Life promiſed for eternal Life, then obſerve,

That the future Life of Glory is infallibly aſſured to the preſent death of Sin.

If ye mortifie, ye ſhall live; not that Life proceeds from Mortification, as the Effect from the Cauſe, but only it follows upon it as the end upon the uſe of the means.

Third Doctrine. *Thirdly*, From the Perſons on whom this duty of Mortification is preſs'd, obſerve,

That Believers themſelves who are freed from the reigning power of Sin, have yet continual need to mortifie the inherent remainders of it.

Fourth Doctrine. *Fourthly*, From the aid and aſſiſtance that Believers muſt call in to this work; obſerve,

That whatever advantages Men have gained againſt their Luſts, either in ſuppreſſing their motions, or in reſtraining their eruptions, yet if this be not from the working of the Spirit of God in them, it is not true nor right Mortification; *If ye through the Spirit do mortifie.*

I ſhall not handle all theſe Propoſitions, but only the third, That the Children of God, have continual need to exerciſe Mortification; and the other Points will be ſubſervient to the proſecution of this.

This the Apoſtle urgeth *Coloſ.* 3. 5. where he ſpeaks to thoſe that were *riſen with Chriſt*; as you may ſee *v.* 1. to thoſe who were *dead* with Chriſt, and whoſe *Life* was *hid with Chriſt in God*, *v.* 3. to thoſe who ſhall certainly *appear with Chriſt in Glory*, *v.* 4. and yet ſuch as theſe are he commands to *mortifie* their *members which are upon the earth.* And it may appear ſtrange if you conſider what Members they are which muſt be mortified; not vain Thoughts, deadneſs of Heart, uneven Walkings,

ings, and thoſe inward Sins, which if Men did throughly mortifie, they would be made perfect, and become even as the Angels of God; but they are the great and the viſible Limbs of the old Man; they are *fornication, uncleanneſs, inordinate affections, evil concupiſcence, covetouſneſs*; and in *v.* 8. he bids them again, *put ye off all theſe, anger, malice, blaſphemy, filthy communication, and lying.* Strange it is, that Believers of ſo eminent a rank ſhould need calling upon to mortifie ſuch groſs and foul Sins as theſe, and yet it is no more than neceſſary. The beſt Chriſtians on Earth have a ſtock of Corruption in them, which doth habitually diſpoſe them unto theſe Sins as great and hainous as they are; and the Devil will ſo ſuit his temptations, as will certainly draw forth this Corruption into Act, unleſs they keep a ſtrict hand, and a ſtrick watch over themſelves in the conſtant exerciſe of Mortification. And therefore as we urge it upon wicked Men, that they not ſlight Sin becauſe it is ſmall, and ſay, *is it not a little one, and my ſoul ſhall live?* So we muſt preſs it upon the beſt and greateſt of Saints, that they would not ſlight any Sin becauſe it is great and hainous; and ſay with themſelves, Is it not a great one and my Soul ſhall never commit it. As we preſume upon the pardoning Mercy of God in the commiſſion of ſmall Sins, ſo we are apt to preſume upon our own ſtrength to preſerve us from the commiſſion of great and crying; and ſo by their ſecurity and careleſneſs the beſt do ſometimes find themſelves ſurprized by them. If we ſhould be earneſt in exhorting you to beware that you murther not, that you blaſpheme not, that you turn not Apoſtates from the profeſſion of your Religion; would you not reply with *Hazael, are we Dogs, that we ſhould do this great wickedneſs?* Yes certainly, this great Wickedneſs you would do, yea, there is no Abomination ſo Abominable which you would not doe, if you do not bring the Croſs of Chriſt into your Hearts by a daily Mortification.

But I ſee before I can proceed farther I muſt lay down this for a general Principle, That all Mortification is the weakening of Sin in reſpect of ſome Strength and Power that it formerly had over the Soul.

Now there is eſpecially a threefold Power obſervable in Sin.

1. *A Damning Power in Sin.*

Firſt, Its damning and condemnatory Power, whereby it makes the Soul liable to Wrath.

2. *A Ruling Power in Sin.*

Secondly, Its ruling and reigning Power, whereby it keeps the Soul under a wretched ſlavery and vaſſalage.

3. *A Captivating Power in Sin.*

Thirdly, Its in-dwelling and captivating Power, whereby through its continual aſſaults it oftentimes breaks in upon a Chriſtian, beats him from his Defence, batters his ſpiritual Armour, routs his Graces, waſts his Conſcience, and at laſt leads him into a woful, and it may be a long Captivity.

Now according to this threefold Power, ſo we muſt likewiſe diſtinguiſh of a threefold Mortification of Sin.

1. *Sin mortified in its condemning Power.*

Firſt, There is a Mortification of Sin, as to its condemning Power. *There is therefore now no Condemnation to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus*, Rom. 8. 1. Sin, though it may ſtill hale us before God, and make our Conſciences confeſs guilty, yet it cannot now caſt and ſentence us if we believe; it is ſtill ſtrong enough to drag us before God, to accuſe us to God, to affright and terrifie Conſcience; but it is not ſtrong enough to drag us into Hell, to adjudge us to everlaſting Wrath; it hath loſt its Power in that reſpect, and is become a weak and mortified thing. Whence is it that Sin hath its condemning Power but from the Law? *The ſtrength of Sin is the Law*, 1 Cor. 15. 56. Had not the Law threatned Condemnation to the Tranſgreſſour, Sin could have had no ſtrength at all to condemn him. But is this Sentence of the Law ſtill in force againſt Believers? No, ſays the Apoſtle, *we are delivered from the Law, that being dead wherein we were held*, Rom. 7. 6. and if the Law's Power to condemn Believers be dead, Sin's Power to condemn them, which was but only borrowed from the Law, muſt certainly be dead alſo. But how came the Law thus mortified? The Apoſtle tells us in *Coloſ.* 2. 14. that Chriſt *took it out of the way, nailing it to his Croſs*; and no wonder then if it be dead: That is, the Croſs and the Sufferings of Jeſus Chriſt have ſo fully ſatisfied for thoſe who believe, that the Law is as it were now dead, and hath no ſtrength nor power left to condemn them. But this is not that Mortification I intend to ſpeak of, nor which my Text exhorts us to: Therefore,

Secondly,

2. *Sin muſt be mortified in its Reigning Power.*

Secondly, There is a Mortification of Sin in reſpect of its reigning Power. What ſaith the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 6. 11, 12. in *v.* 11. ſaith he, *reckon your ſelves to be dead to ſin*: What then? Why upon this he founds an Exhortation in *ver.* 12. *Let not ſin therefore reign in your Mortal Bodies.* Now this Reign of Sin conſiſts not in the multitude, greatneſs, or prevalency of Sins, for all theſe are conſiſtent with a ſtate of Grace, and may be in a Child of God, in whom Sin doth not nor cannot Reign; but in the in-being of Sin without Grace, whether it acts more or leſs violently, yea, whether it acts at all or no, yet if the habit of Sin poſſeſs the Soul without any principle of Grace implanted that is contrary to it, that Man may be ſaid to be ſtill under the Dominion of Sin. Now then this Mortification of Sin as to its reigning Power, is compleated in the firſt act of Converſion and Regeneration; for in that very inſtant that any is Born again, he hath a Principle of Spiritual Life put into him; the habit of ſupernatural Grace, which luſteth againſt the Fleſh, weakens the whole Body of Sin, croſſeth and contradicts every corrupt motion, ſo that though he cannot do what he would, yet he would not do what he doth; and this breaks the Tyranny of Sin, and mortifies it as to its reigning Power.

3. *Sin muſt be mortified in its Captivating Power.*

Thirdly, There is a Mortification of Sin in regard of its captivating and indwelling Power. And this is that which the Text chiefly aims at.

Corruption whereſoever it is doth not uſe to lie dormant, but where it cannot reign there it will moleſt: Stir, and ſtruggle, and fight it will, and it may be prevail to a victory, even over thoſe over whom it ſhall never prevail unto Condemnation. This now calls for a conſtant work of Mortification; every day and hour there are corrupt propenſions to be reined in, ſinful thoughts to be ſtrugled againſt, ſinful motions to be ſuppreſs'd; and it is not the mere habit and principle of Grace, without a vigorous and continued exerciſe of it in a way of Mortification; that indeed gave Sin its death's wound in our Regeneration, but ſtill we muſt follow it, doubling ſtroak upon ſtroak, while it hath any Life and Motion in it. We do not content our ſelves that we cruſh the Head of a Serpent; no, but while it ſtirs and writhes it ſelf we ſtill lay on. So ſhould we do with Luſt; 'tis not enough that the Head of it is cruſh'd, that its firſt wound in our Converſion is incurable; but ſtill as long as it ſtirs and moves within us, we muſt be continually ſtriking at it by continued acts of Mortification; nor muſt all ſuffice till Death comes in to our part, and by one Blow deſtroys it.

In theſe three ſenſes Sin may be ſaid to be mortified: In its Condemning Power; and ſo it was at once mortified for all the Elect by Chriſt hanging on the Croſs: And this Mortification is particularly applied to them when they believe. In its reigning Power; and ſo it is mortified in the firſt moment of Regeneration, by the implantation of an active Principle of Grace and Holineſs, which diſſolves its Government, and frees the Soul from its Dominion. And laſtly, in its Captivating Power, as it rebels and makes an inſurrection againſt the Sovereignty of Grace; and ſo it is mortified by weakning its forces, hindring its inroads, reſiſting its aſſaults, beating down its firſt riſings and motions, and all this by conſtant, careful and ſincere Endeavours, even all our days.

I might now eaſily demonſtrate in ſeveral particulars how abſolutely neceſſary it is, even for the beſt and higheſt Chriſtians, to keep up the conſtant exerciſe of Mortification. Take only ſome few.

1. *An unmortified Courſe fruſtrates the end of Grace.*

Firſt, In an unmortified courſe you fruſtrate the very end of your Graces. Hath God implanted in you a noble, active and divine Principle, that will certainly in the end prove victorious if it be employed? And will you while Luſts and Temptations are overrunning your Souls, and making a prey of you, will you, I ſay check it, and keep it under a reſtraint? Grace hath in it a natural antipathy and repugnancy againſt Sin, and would where it hath its free ſcope naturally and neceſſarily deſtroy it. *Galat.* 5. 17. the Apoſtle tells us *the Fleſh luſteth againſt the Spirit*: And what, doth the Spirit ſit down tame and quiet under ſuch an affront and oppoſition? No, ſaith he, *the Spirit alſo luſteth againſt the Fleſh.* It doth no ſooner ſee a Corruption begin to heave and ſtir in the Heart, but it would be preſently upon it, it would beat it down and keep it under, did not your deceitful Hearts betray it, or did they but concur with it. Now conſider,

1. *Firſt*, Is not this a foul piece of ingratitude and diſingenuity againſt God, the God of all Grace? He ſeeing thy weakneſs and impotency to deal with thoſe mighty

mighty Corruptions that ſtorm, rage and domineer within thee, hath ſent thee the Auxiliaries and Succours of his divine Grace to aid thee; and thou either turneſt treacherous, and diliverest them up bound to be abuſed, yea, if poſſible to be ſlaughtered by thy Luſts; or elſe cowardly deſerteſt them in the Combat. How canſt thou anſwer it to God, that thou goeſt the way not only to betray thine own Soul to ruin, but his Grace, that Grace that doth ſo naturally oppoſe, and would in the end infallably ſubdue all the Corruptions thou ſtrugleſt with?

Secondly, Is it not deſperate Madneſs and Folly to neglect or hinder that which would ſide with thee, and fight for thee? Alas! the quarrel is not Grace's but thine; and it is no leſs than thine eternal Salvation or thine eternal Damnation about which this War is commenſed. When Corruption comes up againſt thee in a full Body, and the Devil in the Head of it leading it on, doſt thou think thou canſt of thy ſelf ſtand againſt theſe many Legions? And yet ſhall Grace ſtand by and proffer thee a ſure aid, and thou refuſe or neglect it? What elſe is this but to make void the uſe and office of Grace, and to be injurious to the Goodneſs of God, who hath therefore given thee Grace to this very end, that thou ſhouldſt employ it againſt thy Luſts? That's the firſt thing. 2.

II. *The neglect of Mortification weakens and waſts Grace.*

Secondly, Unmortified Sin doth not only fruſtrate the end and uſe of Grace, but what is worſe, it doth alſo miſerably weaken and waſte Grace. It is impoſſible that both Grace and Corruption ſhould at once be ſtrong and vigorous in the ſame Soul; if the one thrive the other muſt needs languiſh, if Corruption proſper and be well-liking, Grace muſt needs pine away into a Conſumption. They are like Plants growing together in the ſame Soil, that have a mutual antipathy, they cannot both flouriſh at the ſame time. If a Garden be over-run with Weeds, they choak up and ſtarve the profitable Herbs, that they cannot live there; and why is it, but becauſe they draw away the ſap and moiſture that ſhould feed them? So is it with Grace and Sin in the Soul, if thy Soul be overſpread with unmortified Sins, like ſo many ſtinking and hurtful Weeds ſprouting up in it, Grace muſt needs decay and whither, for it cannot have its ſap to nouriſh it.

Now there are two things that do as it were nouriſh Grace unto a mighty encreaſe both of ſtrength and beauty, and they are holy Thoughts and holy Duties. A Man ordinarily needs nothing more to ſtrengthen him but Food and Exerciſe: Holy Thoughts are as it were the Food of Grace, that proviſion that we are always to lay in to ſuſtain it in life; and holy Duties are as it were its Exerciſe, whereby Grace is breathed and preſerved in Health. But now an unmortified Luſt hinders Grace from gathering ſtrength from Thoughts or Duties. For,

Firſt, An unmortified Luſt doth uſually ſequeſter a Man's Thoughts to it ſelf. How doth ſuch a Luſt ſummon all the Thoughts to attend upon it; ſome it ſends out upon one errand, and ſome upon another, and all muſt be buſied about its object. Where Covetouſneſs, or Pride, or Wantonneſs are the unmortified Sins, how is the Imagination crouded full of Thoughts that are making proviſion for theſe Luſts? Some fetch in their Objects, and ſome beautifie and adorn them, and ſome buz and whiſper the Commendations of thoſe Objects to the Soul; nay, and leſt any thought ſhould be vacant, ſome it will employ in fancying Fictions and Chymeras, things that never were, nor are like to be, if they have but any tendency to the feeding and nouriſhing of that Corruption. I appeal to your own experiences for the confirmation of this. And this indeed is a good mark whereby we may find out what is our unmortified Sin: See what it is that moſt of all defiles your Fancy, that the ſtream and current of your Thoughts moſt run out after. Do your Thoughts, when they fly abroad, return home loaden with the World? Do they ordinarily preſent to you fantaſtick Riches, Poſſeſſions, Gains, Purchaſes, and ſtill fill you with Contrivances how to make them real? Then Covetouſneſs is your unmortified Luſt. Do they dwell and pore upon your own Perfections? Can you erect an Idol to your ſelves in your own Imaginations, and then fall down and worſhip it? Or do your Thoughts like flies pitch only upon the Sores and Imperfections of others? Then your unmortified Sin is Pride. And the like trial may be made of the reſt. Now, I ſay, when an unmortified Luſt hath thus ſeized all the Thoughts, and preſt them to the ſervice of a corrupted Imagination, Grace then wants its Food, 'tis ready to be ſtarved, and no wonder if it languiſh and decay. And,

Secondly, An unmortified Luſt doth much hinder and interrupt the Life, Vigour and 2.

Unmortified Sin hinders the Life of Duty.

and Spiritualneſs of Holy Duties; and this it doth two ways: Either by deadning the Heart through the guilt of it, or by diſtracting the Heart through the Power of it.

1. *Unmortified Sin deadens the heart in Duty.*

Firſt, An unmortified Luſt deadens the Heart in Holy Duties through the ſenſe of the guilt of it lying upon the Conſcience: Alas! how can we go to God with any freedom of Spirit? How can we call him Father with any boldneſs, while we are conſcious to an unmortified Luſt that lies ſtill at the bottom? Speak, do not your Conſciences fly in your Faces, and even ſtop your Mouths, when you are praying with ſome ſuch ſuggeſtions as theſe? What! Can I pray for pardon of Sin, for ſtrength againſt Sin, who yet do harbour and foſter a known Luſt unmortified? Do I beg Grace againſt Sin, and yet maintain a known Sin? What! Dare I beg Grace to have it abuſed, to have it baffled, to have it deſtroyed by this Sin of mine that is yet unſubdued? Is not ſuch a Prayer mere Hypocriſie and Diſſimulation? Will the Lord hear it, or if he doth hear it, will he not count it an Abomination to him? You now whoſe Conſciences thus accuſe you, do you not find ſuch Reflections to be a great deadning unto Duty, ſuch as clip the Wings of the Spirit, and take off the Wheels of the Soul, that it can drive on but heavily and ſlowly? Certainly, Guilt is the greateſt impediment to Duty in the whole World, it takes off from the freeneſs and filialneſs of our Spirits, and fills us with Diſtruſt, Diffidence, and a ſlaviſh Fear of coming before God, rather as our Judge than as our Father.

2. *Unmortified Sin diſtracts the heart in Duty.*

Secondly, An unmortified Luſt hinders holy Duty, by diſtracting the Heart through the Power of it. It draws away the Heart from God, it entangles the Affections of it, it ſcatters the Thoughts, it diſcompoſeth the whole frame of the Soul; ſo that at the beſt it proves but a broken and a ſhatter'd Duty. And herein lies the cunning of *Satan*, that if there be any Corruption in the Soul more unmortified than another, that Corruption he will be ſure to ſtir up, and interpoſe betwixt God and the Soul in the performance of Duty. Now when Luſt thus hinders Duty, Grace hath not his breathing nor exerciſe, and no wonder if it grow faint and decay. That's the ſecond thing.

3. *Thirdly*, Some foul and ſcandalous actual Sin lies at the door of a neglected Mortification. Do we ſee a Profeſſor at any time break out into the Commiſſion of ſome notorious Wickedneſs, what can it be imputed unto but that Corruption took advantage of his neglect of Mortification? When inward motions are ſuffered perperpetually to ſolicite, tempt and importune the Soul, it is a ſad ſign that Luſt hath already gained the Affections; and could Conſcience be laid aſleep, nothing would hinder it from breaking out into act: And alas! when all the work of Reſtraint lies meerly upon Conſcience, it is a great hazzard to that Soul, leſt the violence of Temptations, and the importunity of Occaſions, or ſome other advantage that Luſt gains, do not force its Guards, and break out to the eminent provocation of God, and ſcandal of Religion. And therefore beware you do not licenſe Corruption to ſtir and act within, you cannot ſet its bounds, nor ſay to it, Thus far ſhalt thou go and no farther; thou ſhalt go as far as Thoughts, as far as Fancy, but Conſcience, look thou to it, that it proceed no farther. If you would therefore ſecure your ſelves from this danger, mortifie Luſt in the very Womb, there ſtifle and ſuppreſs the motions and riſings of it, otherwiſe you know not to what a prodigious height of Impiety it will grow. The leaſt and moſt inconſiderable ſinful Thought tends to an infinite Guilt. An unworthy and unbecoming Thought concerning God tends to horrid Blaſphemy; every lacivious Thought to open uncleanneſs, every envious Thought to bloody Murther; and unleſs Mortification be daily exerciſed to ſuppreſs and beat down theſe Motions you know not into how many Soul-deſtroying Sins they may hurry you.

4. *Unmortified Sin alienates the Heart from its Acquaintance with God.*

Fourthly, One unmortified Luſt doth mightily alienate the Heart from its Acquaintance and Communion with God. God and the Soul grow eſtranged as ſoon as any unmortified Sin and the Soul grow familiar. What God ſaith, *Ezek.* 14. 5. concerning the Idols of the Houſe of *Iſrael*, the ſame I may ſay concerning Mens Luſts, which while unmortified are as ſo many Idols ſet up in the Heart; *They are all eſtranged from me through their Idols.* And yet theſe very Men of whom God thus complains, as being grown Strangers to him, we find them in the firſt verſe crowding about the Prophet to enquire of God by him, they come to him, and yet are eſtranged from him. Such is the wonderful malignity of unmortified Luſt,

Two things keep up Acquaintance betwixt God and the Soul.

that

that it makes Men Strangers to God, even when they are neareſt Attendants upon him. There are but two things that keep up Acquaintance between God and the Soul.

Firſt, On God's part the Gracious Communications of his Spirit, through which, by enlightening, enlivening, ſupporting and comforting Influences, he converſeth with that Soul to whom he vouchſafes them. And,

1. *On God's part, the Communications of his Spirit.*

Secondly, On our part, the Spiritual frame of the Heart, whereby it doth with an holy Delight, Freedom and Frequency converſe with God in the returns of ſincere and cordial Obedience.

2. *On our part, a Gracious frame of Heart.*

But now an unmortified Luſt breaks off this Acquaintance as to both the parts of it.

Firſt, it provokes God to ſuſpend the influences of his Spirit, and ſo to cut off the intercourſe on his part, *Iſai.* 57. 17. *For the Iniquity of his Covetouſneſs was I wrath, and ſmote him: I hid me, and was wrath.* So truly in the day of our Deſertion, whether it be in reſpect of Grace or Comfort, it is for the iniquity of ſuch or ſuch an unmortified Sin that God is wrath and hides himſelf. Think you that God will ſo debaſe himſelf to be in the ſame Heart an Inmate with Luſt, when that ſhall be regarded and he ſlighted, that attended and he neglected? Will not this provoke him to call in the influences of his Grace and depart? Wherefore elſe is it that Chriſtians do ſo often complain, that God is unto them but as a Stranger, and as a Way-faring Man that turneth aſide to tarry but for a night, nay for a moment; that God is not unto them as in the days of Old; that thoſe quickenings, revivings, ſupports and comforts are now loſt, which before they enjoyed, and they become as the Heath and Wilderneſs, barren as to Grace, and parched as to Comfort? If they look inward in this caſe, will they not find ſome Iniquity regarded, ſome Sin allowed and indulged to be the cauſe of all this? Certainly if Mortification doth neither ſtrike at this Root of Bitterneſs, nor lop off its Branches, it will ſpread it ſelf over the whole Soul; and intercept both the light of God's Countenance and the influences of his Spirit.

1. *Neglect of Mortification provokes God to ſuſpend the influences of his Spirit.*

Secondly, One unmortified Luſt doth mightily untune the Soul, and diſorders the Spiritualneſs of that Frame and Diſpoſition which it ſhould be kept in, if we would maintain Communion with God. Look how eſtrangement and diſtance grows between familiar Friends; ſo likewiſe grows the eſtrangement between God and the Soul: If a Man be conſcious of any Injury that he hath done his Friend, this will make him afraid and aſhamed to converſe with him, leſs free and leſs frequent in his Society: So it is here in this caſe, an unmortified Luſt fills the Soul with a guilty ſhame ariſing from the conſciouſneſs of an Injury done to God: This guilty ſhame is always joined with ſome degrees of a ſlaviſh and baſe fear of God who is thus wronged. Both theſe take off from that holy Freedom, which reverently to uſe towards God, is the great Privilege of a gracious Heart in its Communion with him. And this leſſens that ſweet and unſpeakable Delight which formerly it could enjoy from the Intimacy, Freedom and Spiritualneſs of this Fellowſhip. And all theſe do finally cauſe a ſhyneſs, diſtance and eſtrangement in the Soul towards God. The root of all this is ſtill in ſome unmortified Luſt which is the occaſion of the whole Breach.

2. *Unmortified Sin unfits the Soul for Communion with God.*

Now reflect upon your ſelves, you that have indulged any Sin, hath it not by degrees eaten out the Spiritualneſs of your Hearts, and weaken'd the Life and Vigour of your Communion? Hath it not made you dead, and cold, and indifferent unto the things and ways of God? Have you not beheld God as it were at a great diſtance, and cared not for a nearer converſe with you? Is it not high time, think you, that this Luſt, which hath thus divided betwixt God and your Souls, ſhould now at length be mortified, and this Make-bate being once removed, you again ſhould renew the nearneſs of your Acquaintance with him; otherwiſe let me tell you, 'tis ſadly to be feared leſt this eſtrangement grow into a woful Apoſtacy, and that end in a fearful Perdition.

Fifthly, One unmortified Luſt gives an additional Strength to others alſo which of themſelves were weak and impotent things, and could not otherwiſe have ſuch power over the Soul. And this it doth as it is the ring-leading Luſt that unites all others under a Deſcipline and Government: Scattered Enemies are not ſo powerful nor ſo formidable, as when they are combined together in a Body; then their Deſign is one, their Enterpriſe one, and they all Act as one Enemy.

5. *One unmortified Sin gives ſtrength unto other Sins.*

Now an unmortified Luſt doth as it were rally all the reſt under a Decipline; this heads them, this leads them on, and they all promote the Deſigns, and fight under the Conduct of this Luſt; which union adds a mighty Strength and Power to them. It may be a Temptation which could not prevail for it ſelf, and upon the account of its own intereſt that it hath in the Soul, will yet certainly prevail, when it pleads its Subordination and Serviceableneſs to the unmortified Sin the Maſter-Luſt. This is very remarkable; and therefore ſuppoſe (for inſtance) that Pride be the unmortified Sin, the great ring-leading Luſt, and a Temptation to Covetouſneſs aſſaults the Soul; poſſibly this being but an underling Sin, and not having made ſo great a party for it ſelf as the other, might be eaſily rejected, did it plead only for it ſelf; but when it pretends the intereſt of the Maſter-Luſt, and pleads how ſerviceable great and rich Poſſeſſions would be to the Advancement of Pride and Ambition, this adds a double enforcement to the Temptation, and thereby bears down the Soul, before it, as unable to make any available reſiſtance. And thus proportionably it is in all other Sins whatſoever, they have a dependance one upon another; the great Sin that ſways principally, and cannot ſubſiſt unleſs Proviſion be laid in, and a way made for it by inferiour Sins, which it countenances and bares out by its own Authority, and derives to them the ſame prevalency that it ſelf hath gained over the Soul. Let not Men therefore think that their Captivity to Sin is more tolerable, becauſe they find but one the moſt prevailing: Alas! this doth ſerve to unite and drive the reſt to a head, which perhaps otherwiſe would be vagrant and wandring, and uncertain in their Tempting; and by this one unmortified Luſt the Devil hath gotten a fit handle to the Soul whereby he may turn and wind it to whatever other Sin he pleaſeth. 'Twas therefore a wiſe Command of the King of *Siria* to his Captain, 1 *Kings* 22. 31. to *fight neither with ſmall nor great ſave only with the King of Iſrael.* He well knew if the Chief Commander were once ſlain, the ungoverned Army might eaſily be routed and put to flight. We muſt in the mortifying of the Deeds of the Body, take the ſame counſel, and follow the ſame courſe; fight if not only, yet chiefly againſt the Commanding Luſt, if that be once mortified, the reſt are as an Army without an Head, who quickly will find themſelves without Hands too: Otherwiſe while any one Luſt remains unmortified, the Soul is almoſt in as dangerous a condition, as if every Luſt were violent and raging.

6. *Unmortified Sin hinders Peace and Comfort.*

Sixthly and Laſtly, An unmortified Sin will moſt certainly bereave the Soul of Peace and Comfort, and hinder it from ever enjoying that Heaven upon Earth of Aſſurance. If you ſend to enquire of your Souls, (as *Joram* did of *Jehu*) Soul, *Is it Peace*? Is not this ſad Anſwer returned, *what haſt thou to do with Peace?* Or, what Peace, ſo long as thy Pride, thy Covetouſneſs, thy Intemperance, while ſuch and ſuch a Luſt remains unmortified? Now an unmortified Luſt hinders Peace, and Comfort theſe two ways.

Firſt, As it blots our evidences for Heaven. Let any Man in the world tell me that his Title to Heaven is clear, and paſt all uncomfortable doubtings, whoſe Conſcience doth not witneſs his ſincerity to him that he doth maintain an univerſal Oppoſition againſt all ſin, and exerciſe a conſtant mortification of it; and I ſhall preſently conclude that Man's Aſſurance to be the falſe and glowing Preſumptions of a Spirit of Errour and Delution. We know no better Teſt of a Man's Condition than what my Text affords, *If ye mortifie, ye ſhall live.* Now when any Luſt is allowed and indulged, will not this blaſt a Man's Comfort, and raiſe in him Fears and Jealouſies concerning his eternal Welfare? Such a Corruption I do not ſtrive nor ſtruggle againſt, I do not labour to beat down and keep under: and how then ſhall I aſſure my ſelf that I am free from the Reigning Power of it, or ſhall be free from its Condemning Power? Let me tell you, though Freedom from the dominion of Sin may poſſibly conſiſt with a much neglected Mortification, yet a comfortable evidence of that Freedom cannot, and therefore no wonder if through the careleſsneſs of Chriſtians in this great work ſo few attain ſolid and conſtant Comfort, the moſt being ſadly perplexed with Doubts and Jealouſies of their Hypocriſie and Unſoundneſs even all their days. This all riſeth from ſome unmortified Luſt or other, which either leaves a deep blur upon their evidences for Heaven, or elſe raiſeth a thick miſt before their Eyes that they cannot read them.

Secondly,

Secondly, An unmortified Luſt hinders Peace by fomenting a perpetual Civil War in the Soul. Sometimes ſo it fares, where there is no higher a Principle than meerly natural Conſcience; this ſtrives and combates (as it is able) againſt the Sin before it is committed; this cries out and rageth againſt the Sinner after it is committed. But it is always ſo where there is a Principle of true Grace implanted to excite and aſſiſt Conſcience. Let Corruption be never ſo great, its faction never ſo potent, yet Grace, though but mean and weak will ſtill fight it; it will neither give nor take Truce, till at length the great unmortified Luſt be ſubdued and fall conquer'd and ſlain under it. What Tumults, what Uproars, what bandying of Affections againſt Affections, Will againſt Will, Thoughts againſt Thoughts, do wofully diſquiet that Soul where Corruption will not ſubmit, and Grace cannot! There is no deliberate Act either of Grace or Corruption exerted, but what muſt firſt break through a whole Army of its Enemies, ſet to oppoſe it. *Gal.* 5. 17. *The Fleſh luſteth againſt the Spirit, and the Spirit againſt the Fleſh: So that ye cannot do the things that ye would*; That is, neither can ye act according to the bent of your Corrupt Will, nor yet of your Sanctified Will, without Oppoſition and Reſiſtance from one of theſe two quarrelling Principles within, the Fleſh and the Spirit. Such Men are like thoſe Builders in *Nehemiah*, that wrought with one Hand, and with the other held their Weapons: So truly a Child of God in whom Corruption is yet too prevalent, if he work the works of God with one Hand, he muſt hold the Weapons of his Spiritual Warfare in the other. This is that unpeaceable and turbulent Condition, into which an unmortified Luſt will certainly bring you. And though indeed in the moſt mortified Chriſtian on Earth, there will ſometimes be Combatings between theſe two contrary Parties; yet it is not with ſo much diſtraction, anguiſh and terrours, as where Corruption is more violent and outragious. That's the laſt thing.

2. Unmortified Sin foments a Civil War in the Soul.

I might add, that an utter neglect of Mortification, binds you over to eternal Condemnation; *If ye live after the Fleſh, ye ſhall die*: Your Election it ſelf cannot ſave you; your Vocation, Regeneration, and whatever elſe you might build the certainty of your Salvation upon, are all in vain if you do not mortifie. There is no other way by which you can poſſibly get to Heaven, but by marching over the Necks and Bellies of all your Luſts. But I ſhall inſiſt no longer on this Head.

And now if to profeſs God with our Mouths and to deny him with our Hearts and Lives, if to talk of Religion and live without it, if to have a Form of Godlineſs and to deny the Power of it, be indeed this neceſſary Mortification, I need preſs this Duty no farther, we have ſuch mortified ones more than enough; but if Wantonneſs, Cenſoriouſneſs, Contempt of the means of Grace, Giddineſs of Opinions, Libertiniſm, and ſtrange large Allowances that Men take to themſelves in their Converſations, be ſigns of an unmortified Heart; never certainly was there any profeſſing Age in the World that had more need to have this Doctrine often preſs'd upon them, than that in which we live. I am not now urging you to that churliſh and rigorous way of Mortification conſiſting only in a froward Abſtinence from the Comforts and Conveniencies of this Life, which ſome perhaps blind Devotioniſts have too rigidly exerciſed themſelves with: I know the Maceration of the outward Man is not the Mortification of the old Man; and yet were there among Profeſſours a greater moderation even in the uſe of the lawful Comforts of this Life, there would not poſſibly be ſo great an advantage given to deceivers as now there is, who under the ſpecious ſhew of Self-denial in theſe things, draw away numbers of Proſelytes after them, as being the only mortified Men. It is the inward Mortification that we labour to preſs upon you, which were it once induſtriouſly exerciſed, outward Exhorbitancies would of themſelves fall into a Decency and Sobriety.

But alas! when Men ſhall talk at ſuch a rate of Spiritualneſs, as if ſome Angels ſat upon their Tongues, and yet live at ſuch an exceſs of Vanity, it may be of Prophaneneſs, as if Legions poſſeſſed their Hearts; what ſhall we judge of ſuch Men? If we judge the Tree by the Leaves, what other can we think of them, but that they are Trees of Righteouſneſs, and Plants of Renown? But if we look to their Fruits, Unprofitableneſs in their Relations, Envy, Strife, Variance, Emulation, Wrath, Exceſſive Pride, Worldlineſs, Selfiſhneſs, what can we think of them, but that Heaven and Hell are now as near together, as theſe Mens Hearts and Mouths? And truly to let go theſe groſs Profeſſours, have we not cauſe to take

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up ſad complaints even of true Chriſtians themſelves, in whom the reigning power of Sin is in their Regeneration mortified? May we not take up the ſame Speech concerning them, as St. *Paul* doth concerning the *Corinthians*, 1 *Cor.* 3. 3. *Ye are yet carnal, and walk as Men?* If the Apoſtle could have laid in charge againſt theſe *Corinthians*, not only Envy, Strife and Diviſions; but Hatred, Bitterneſs, implacableneſs of Spirit, brain-ſick Opinions, and ſelf-ſeeking Practices, joined with a great meaſure of Neglect and Contempt of the Glory of God; as juſtly as we can againſt the Chriſtians of our times; certainly his reproof would not have been ſo mild, as to tell them that they walked as Men, but rather that they walkt as Devils---Would to God their miſcarriages were not ſo generally known, as that every one could not ſupply the ſenſe.

I have already ſet before you the great Evils that follow upon a neglected Mortification: As to your own particulars, if that cannot affect you, there is but little ground to hope that your Charity to others ſhould prevail; yet give me leave to mention two grand Evils that hereby befall others.

1. *Neglect of Mortification hardens others in Sin.*

Firſt, Hereby they are induced to think all Profeſſours are but Hypocrites, Religion a meer Mockery, and ſo come to have their Hearts imbittered againſt the ways of God, as being all but meer Deceit and Couſenage. 'Tis a ſad accuſation *Rom.* 2. 24. *The Name of God is blaſphemed among the Gentiles through you.* How ſo? Becauſe as in the former Verſes, they reſted in the Law, and had a Form of Godlineſs, and were confident that they were Guides to the Blind, and Lights to them which were in Darkneſs; eminent Profeſſours they were, like the Men of our days: Well, but mark, *Thou that teacheſt another, teacheſt thou not thy ſelf? Thou that makeſt thy boaſt of the Law, through breaking the Law diſhonoureſt thou God?* Thou that profeſſeſt Mortification, doſt thou indulge thy ſelf in thy Luſts? Thou who pretendeſt to near Fellowſhip and Communion with God, doſt thou live as one without God in the World? Tremble at it, the Name of the Great God is blaſphemed among wicked Wretches through you; thoſe who were Prophane you make Atheiſtical, ſcoffing and deriding Godlineſs, as an idle Whimſie; and becauſe they ſee ſo little in their Lives, they preſently conclude there is no other difference between Saints and Sinners at all, but that the one have their Tongues a little better tipt, and their Fancies a little higher wound than the other. What's the common Raillery of theſe prophane Perſons? Oh! this, forſooth, is a Saint, and yet how covetous, how griping and greedy? Well, of all Men, deliver me from falling into the hands of a Saint. Well, beware leſt theſe their Blaſphemies be not at laſt charged upon you, who through a looſe, wanton, and unmortified Converſation have made Religion even to ſtink in their Noſtrils. 'Tis only Mortification that can convince the World that Religion is any thing real: But while Men profeſs largely and live at large too, this keeps Men off from Religion; not becauſe they think it a thing above them, but becauſe they ſcorn it as a baſeneſs below them, ſo to juggle and diſſemble with the World.

2. *Secondly*, Hereby alſo wicked Men flatter themſelves in their ſinful Eſtate, ſupporting themſelves upon the Lives of unmortified Profeſſours, that certainly they are in as good a condition as they. They are proud, and impatient, and earthly; and if theſe Men get to Heaven, why may not I? 'Tis true, they talk of Self-denial and Mortification, but look into our Lives, and mine is as harmleſs and innocent as theirs; they diſcourſe of Experiences, and Communion and Acquaintance with God, and a Road of Words that I skill not; but certainly, if God will not condemn them, although they do nothing but talk, he will not condemn me for not talking as they do. And thus the Hands of wicked Men are mightily ſtrengthned, and hereby they fortifie themſelves in their Unregeneracy.

Now, Chriſtians, if you would adorn the Goſpel, and bring a Credit upon Religion, live ſo that your Converſations may be a Conviction to all the World, that God is in you of a truth, which will be when Mortification is more endeavoured and practiſed. You have a principle within you, which would you exert to the utmoſt, mere Moraliſts with all their Civility, and Legaliſts with all the forc'd Harſhneſs which they uſe to curb and reſtrain Sin in themſelves, muſt confeſs that they fall ſhort of true Mortification.

Now though there be in the whole Courſe of Chriſtianity, no other duty that can plead more for it ſelf than this of Mortification, yet there is none that hath

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more cauſe to complain of a general neglect from the moſt of Profeſſours than this hath. A ſlight ſuperficial Chriſtianity is that which now ſerves the turn, and if Men can but keep themſelves from the groſs and ſcandalous Pollutions of the World, and together with that maintain a ſhining blaze of Profeſſion, whatever other Mortification is preſt upon them, they reject as a needleſs Rigour and Severity. To enquire into the Cauſes why it ſhould be ſo, would be to uncaſe a conſiderable part of the deceitfulneſs of Sin, and the ſtratagems of Satan. I ſhall therefore content my ſelf with the diſcovery of ſome few Grounds that are more obvious and apparent. As,

Firſt, The Harſhneſs and Difficulty of a thorough Mortification, deters many from going to the bottom of it. If Luſt will take pet and die of ſpight and ſullenneſs for a few ſharp Words ſpoken againſt it, or for a few hard Thoughts conceived of it; then indeed the Profeſſours of our Age are generally very mortified Chriſtians. But when we tell them Corruption is both tenacious and powerful, and muſt be dealt roughly with as with a ſtubborn Enemy, that it will coſt much Sweat and Blood, many ſad Thoughts, many bitter Conflicts and Agonies of Soul to ſubdue it; this frights them from ſo hot a Service, 'tis a hard ſaying and they cannot bear it. What ſaith the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 9. 26, 27. *So fight I, not as one that beateth the Air, but I beat down my Body* (for ſo the Word ſignifies) *and bring it into Subjection.* But is there any ſuch hardſhip in this? Would any Man be frighted with the difficulty of ſuch a Combat, where he may beat down his Enemy, and yet ſuffer nothing from him? Were it no more but to beat it down, trample upon it, and triumph over it, who would ever detract this Spiritual Warfare? See 2 *Cor.* 12. 7. *There was ſent me a Meſſenger of Satan to buffet me. Paul* beats down his Body, and the Meſſenger of Satan buffets him, he and his Corruption are already at blows, and the conteſt grows ſharp between them. *Heb.* 12. 4. The Apoſtle ſpeaks of *reſiſting unto Blood in ſtriving againſt Sin.* Striving againſt Sin and mortifying of it, is not ſo trivial and eaſy a work as the generality of Profeſſours make it; it will draw Tears from the Eyes, and Groans from the Heart, and Blood from the Conſcience. Whoſoever gets to Heaven wades through a Red Sea as well of his own as the Blood of his Luſts. Our Saviour compares it (and indeed the compariſon is drawn home) to plucking out the right Eye, and cutting off the right Hand, *Matt.* 5. 29, 30. Now there are two things that make this exceeding difficult. 1. *The difficulty of Mortification deters many from the practice of it.*

Firſt, The Pain, the Anguiſh and Unnaturalneſs of it. And both theſe are ſuted to a double Diſtemper too prevalent in the beſt Chriſtians, whereby the work of Mortification is rendred very hard and difficult; and they are, 1.

Firſt, A ſinful Niceneſs, Tenderneſs and Delicacy, utterly misbecoming Spiritual Soldiers; whereby they are ſo ſoftned and effeminated, that they cannot endure Pain nor Hardſhip. 1.

Secondly, A ſinful Fondneſs and Compaſſion; which being ſtill in Part, Carnal, they do bear unto their Carnal Part; and this makes Mortification ſeem very unnatural. 2.

Firſt, Chriſtians through a ſpiritual Sloth that hath ſeized upon them, are grown Nice and Delicate; and this makes the work of Mortification ſeem very Painful. A little Pain is more intolerable to Men accuſtomed to a tender Education, than Torments are to others. Truly Chriſtians by too much indulging their Corruptions, do bring them up tenderly, ſeldom croſſing or moleſting them, that when they come in earneſt to ſet upon the work of Mortification, the extreme Anguiſh and Torment of it is ſuch, that they cannot bear it; and ſo either they ſhrink from it, or elſe perform it very ſlightly. I may well ſay through the Niceneſs of Chriſtians, Mortification is now a days grown ſo eaſy and gentle, that Corruption it ſelf ſcarce feels it: Some excreſcences and ſuperfluities of Naughtineſs they may poſſibly Prune off, but when is it that they lay the Axe to the Root? What is it for a Man to pare the Nails, or cut the Hair? This goes not to the Quick. Truly that which Chriſtians now call their Mortification, is but very little more; they do but pare away the ſuperfluous and leſs ſenſual Parts of Corruptions, that of a wild, over-grown thing, which elſe it would be, they might hereby reduce it to a Decorum and Decency. And ſhall I call this mortifying, or rather, is it not an adorning of Luſt? Shew me almoſt the Chriſtian that ſtabs Sin to the Heart, that draws blood at every encounter, that cuts off Limb after Limb, and 1. *Spiritual Slothfulneſs makes Chriſtians neglect Mortification.*

Member

Member after Member, contemning that Smart and Anguiſh, that frights tender and delicate Chriſtians from ſo rough an Engagement.

2. *A ſinful fondneſs unto Luſt makes Mortification ſeem cruel.*

Secondly, there is in the beſt, too much of a Sinful Fondneſs and Compaſſion that makes Mortification ſeem to be cruel and unnatural; and how can it otherwiſe be, while in the very beſt there are ſtill remainders of that other Self, I mean Corruption! Every Chriſtian hath a double Self, his Carnal and his Spiritual Self; and Mortification is as it were Self-Murther, he doth what in him lies to Murther himſelf, that is, his Carnal Self. Now look how difficult it is for a Man to offer violence to himſelf; for the Right Eye to be torn out by the Right Hand, and that again to be cut off by the other; ſo difficult it is (abating only that it is another Self that doth it) for a Chriſtian to exerciſe Mortification; becauſe it is a kind of Self-Deſtruction. Luſt is ſo cloſe and intimate with the Soul, ſo inlaid with the Principles, and wrought into the very Bowels of it; that what the Apoſtle ſaith, *Eph.* 5. 29. *No Man yet ever hated his own Fleſh*; I may apply to this caſe, No Man yet ever hated his fleſhly Part; this is, with ſuch an utter Antipathy and Deteſtation as he ought. With what Compaſſion, or rather, with what extremity and rage of Paſſion, would a Mother ſee an Infant of her own Conception delivered up to the Slaughter! Truly there is in all Men ſomewhat of the like natural Affection towards the Conceptions of their own Luſt, ſo that it is with a great deal of Reluctancy and Violence offer'd to Nature, that they expoſe their Infant Luſts as ſoon as born to the ſword and ſlaughter of Mortification. Now until this Fondneſs be removed, and Chriſtians more hardened againſt their Corruptions, that their Hearts ſhall not pity them, nor their Eyes ſpare them, though they are their own offspring, though they are ſo much themſelves, yet they can with their own Hands thruſt the Sword of Mortification through them, and with delight look upon their gaſpings and blood; this great Work can never go forward proportionable to the great and abſolute neceſſity of it. That's the firſt particular.

2. *The perpetuity of Mortification frights many from it.*

Secondly, As the difficulty, ſo the conſtancy, the perpetuity of this work frights many from engaging in it. If Sin would be laid dead by a blow, moſt Men would for once ſtrike home, but when they think that Mortification is a perpetual quarrel, which they muſt all their Life time proſecute, without a day's or minute's reſpite, that ſtill they muſt be in Arms, ſtill upon the Watch, and ſtill fighting without the Truce of a breathing allowed them; this makes ſome give it over quite as an endleſs thing, and others to follow it but very remiſsly. And truly unleſs this work of Mortification be purſued with an indefatigable Conſtancy without intermiſſion, theſe two Evils will neceſſary follow.

1. *Firſt*, In the interval, Luſt after it hath been defeated, will again recruit and gather Head, and poſſibly aſſault the Soul with a redoubled force.

2. And *Secondly*, Grace will for want of Exerciſe grow unwieldly, unactive, and leſs fit for ſervice than it was. If at any time there be a neglect of Mortification, all that was formerly done againſt Corruption is meerly in vain, and but ſo much labour loſt; Luſt will rally after a Rout, and therefore Grace when it hath defeated it, muſt purſue it cloſe, ſtill gaining upon it, and diſputing its ground by inches, till it hath at laſt quite forced it out of the Soul. Men that are to empty a Pond, in which there are many Springs riſing, muſt be ſtill caſting out the Water as it is ſtill bubling up; if they ſtop, the Pond grows preſently full and their labour is again to begin.

Truly our Hearts are like this Pond, in which there are many Springs ſtill ſpouting out Corrupt Streams: Mortification is the Laving of this Pond, if Chriſtians do but for a while ceaſe and give it over, the Heart grows full again of all manner of Wickedneſs, and the work is ſet as far back as it was at the beginning. Now theſe inceſſant Pains few will bear, and therefore it is that this work of Mortification is generally ſo much neglected, in the World.

Thirdly, The many Diſcouragements which even Chriſtians themſelves meet with in the work of Mortification, to do them backward to it, and negligent in it. Many Diſcouragements I might here mention both from without and from within; as the evil Examples of unmortified Profeſſors, the Auxiliaries that Luſt receives from the Policy and Power of Satan, the manifold Enforcements which when a Temptation is in its hour, it hath from Objects, Occaſions, and ſuch like outward Advantages; the inward ſecret Conſpiracies of the Heart it ſelf with

with Luſt: All which and many more, are great Diſcouragements unto Chriſtians, making not only the Hands of their Enemies ſtrong againſt them, but many times their own Hands weak, and their Hearts faint; ſo that they are ready to ſay they ſhall one day fall by the Hands of theſe mighty Luſts; and that therefore it is as good to give themſelves up for loſt Men, and never more to ſtruggle againſt what they cannot poſſibly ſubdue: And truly, did not the Spirit of God in the midſt of theſe ſad Thoughts, break in with extraordinary Supports and Aſſiſtances, all their Hopes and Confidences would here give up the Ghoſt; and they abandon themſelves over to the Power of their Luſts to be captivated by them at their Pleaſure. But omitting theſe, I ſhall only ſpeak to two great diſcouragements drawn from the bad event of an endeavoured Mortification.

Two great diſcouragements in the work of Mortification.

Firſt, The little viſible Succeſs they gain after all their Pains and Labour. 1.

Secondly, The many ſad Defeats and Foils, which notwithſtanding all they receive from their Luſts. 2.

Firſt, The little viſible and apparent Succeſs of the Exerciſe of Mortification, doth mightily diſhearten even true Chriſtians from it. And this Diſcouragement is by ſo much the greater, if before there Converſion Conſcience was tender, and Luſt never outragious nor broke out into any ſcandalous foul Sin. Such Chriſtians can hardly perceive the difference between themſelves now, and themſelves long ago; after all the labour and toil they have taken in Mortification, they are they think, but almoſt where they where; little progreſs have they made, little ground have they got, they are not conſcious to themſelves of any wilful neglect; they have conſtantly ſtood upon their guard, kept their watch, carefully uſed the means for Mortification; and yet after all, Luſt they think is ſtill as prevalent with them as before; and this diſcourageth them from taking ſo great pains (as they think) to ſo little purpoſe. Now there are two grounds why the Succeſs of Mortification is not always viſible and apparent. 1.

Firſt, Becauſe of the Rooted Permanency of every Luſt in the Soul. Mortification doth not utterly kill, but only wound and weaken Sin. And therefore though you ſingle out any one particular Luſt, and ſet the whole ſtrength of Grace againſt it, though you do as *Samuel* did with *Agag*, hew it in pieces before the Lord, that you would think it ſhould never be able to ſtir more; yet it is in this like to Worms and Serpents, every piece will move; the very next Temptation, Object or Opportunity, will draw forth the ſame Corruption again, which you thought you had utterly kill'd. Mortification doth not put Sin to death, ſo as that it ſhall never move more in the Soul: And therefore Chriſtians aiming at this death and Extirpation of Sin, think that all their labour is but loſt, when they find every one of thoſe Corruptions to ſtir and move as they did formally. And this diſcourageth them. 1.

Secondly, Another thing that hinders the viſible ſucceſs of Mortification, is the great variety and multiplicity of Corruption, whereby it comes to paſs that one follows upon the Neck of another, and as ſoon as one is beaten down, another riſeth up; that though a Chriſtian exerciſe a daily Mortification, yet he can ſcarcely tell whether the number of his Enemies be diminiſhed or augmented; every day he fights, and every day he conquers, and yet every day he hath as many to fight againſt, and to conquer as before. Now what a Diſcouragement this is, any who is loth to put himſelf to a great deal of trouble to no purpoſe, may eaſily imagine. Oh! ſaith ſuch a one, could I perceive that I gain'd advantage againſt my Corruptions, that I ſubdued and put to death any of them, I ſhould count all my pains well beſtowed: But alas! there's ſuch a Luſt that I have been ſtruggling againſt ſo long, and yet am not free from it; nay, there are ſo many thouſand Luſts that are ſtill riſing in me, and when I turn my ſelf againſt one, another ſurpriſeth me: If I oppoſe that another gets within me; all my victories are in vain, my work is endleſs, and ſtill I have as many Enemies to combat with as at the firſt. And hereupon he is ſtrongly tempted to give over Mortification, as a fruitleſs work. That's the firſt Diſcouragement, the little viſible ſucceſs by reaſon of the permanency and multitude of Corruptions. 2.

Secondly, Another great Diſcouragement in the work of Mortification, is the many ſad Defeats and Foils, which notwithſtanding all their Endeavours, even the beſt Chriſtians have often received from their Luſts. Though the conqueſt at the laſt be aſſured, yet it is not without many doubtful Trials and various 2.

Succeſſes. *Paul* the greateſt Champion that ever fought the Lord's Spiritual Battels, and maintain'd the Cauſe of Grace; yet complains of his Captivity to the Law of the Members, *Rom.* 7. 23. *David* no leſs a Warriour againſt uncircumciſed Luſts, than againſt uncircumciſed *Philiſtians*, yet he cries out of his wounds, *Pſal.* 38. 5. *My wounds ſtink and are corrupt, becauſe of my fooliſhneſs.* It would be a very ſad and diſcouraging Spectacle if we could ſee all the ſpoils which Satan and Corruption have by force taken from the moſt Eminent Chriſtians. Such a Man's Shield of Faith loſt in ſuch an Encounter, ſuch a Man's Sword of the Spirit wreſted from him in another, another looſeth the Breaſt-plate of Righteouſneſs, another the Helmet of Hope. Yea, there is no Chriſtian but is in ſome Encounter or other deſpoil'd of part of his Armour, and himſelf taken Priſoner. Now hereby they are diſheartned from again attempting that Enemy whom they have found too hard for them. When they find Luſt to be an over-match for them, they flee and give place, and conclude it utterly in vain for them with their ten thouſand, to make War with him that comes againſt them with twenty thouſand, and ſo they ſit down under the neglect of Mortification.

Theſe now are ſome of the Grounds why this great Duty is ſo little practiſed among Chriſtians; and what is at the bottom of all this but only a great deal of Spiritual Sloth and Lazineſs, that makes them loth to put themſelves upon difficulties and hazards; yea, and poſſibly makes them fancy more difficulties and hazards in Mortification that indeed there are. *Prov.* 26. 13. *The ſlothful Man ſaith, there is a Lion in the way, a Lion in the Streets*, 'tis a very unlikely thing that a Lion ſhould be in the Street; yet this his Sloth ſuggeſts to him as an excuſe to keep him from the labour of going abroad. Well, what doth the Sluggard do! In the next Verſe the Wiſe-Man tells, *As the Door turneth upon his Hinges; ſo doth a Slothful Man upon his Bed.* The Door turns often but gains no ground, ſtill it is where it was. So truly it is with a Slothful Chriſtian, that neglects Mortification for fear of difficulties; let him turn himſelf to whatſoever he will, yet ſtill he is but upon his Hinges, he gains no ground upon his Luſts, nor makes no progreſs towards Heaven. Alas! Heaven and Happineſs are not to be obtained with eaſe, by ſitting ſtill and wiſhing againſt Luſt; but by a laborious contending and ſtruggling againſt it. What ſaith our Saviour, *Matt.* 11. 12. *The Kingdom of Heaven ſuffers violence, and the violent take it by force.* There muſt be an holy Roughneſs and Violence uſed, to break through all that ſtands in our way, neither caring for their Allurements, nor fearing their Oppoſition; but with a pious Obſtinacy, and (if I may ſo call it) Frowardneſs, we muſt thruſt away the one, and bear down the other. This is the Chriſtian who will carry Heaven by force, when the whinning puſillanimous Profeſſor who only complains of difficulty, but never attempts to conquer it, will be for ever ſhut out.

The next thing to be enquired into is, what is this neceſſary and yet much neglected duty of Mortification, and wherein it doth conſiſt. An exact Method would perhaps have called for this at firſt, ſince it were in vain to preſs the Neceſſity, and not to open the Duty: But I know there are few here, who when mention is made of Mortification, do not in the general notion, apprehend it to be ſome earneſt and conſtant ſtriving againſt Sin, ſo as to weaken and conquer it. Which ſuppoſition is a ſufficient ground for adjourning the more minute explication of this Duty until now. And herein I ſhall proceed, (1.) Negatively, to ſhew you what it is not, which is made apparent by the many counterfeit Mortcations that are in the World, either diſciplinarily Severity, and a pontificial Rigour in tormenting, rather than ſubjecting the outward Man; or elſe at beſt civil Morality, are reſted in as true Mortification. It will be therefore of conſiderable advantage, to uncaſe to you thoſe appearances of Mortification, which yet indeed are not it. And (2) Poſitively, I ſhall endeavour to open what is neceſſarily required unto true Mortification, and wherein that great Work and Duty doth conſiſt.

1.

1. *Mortification is not an utter Extirpation of Sin in the Soul.*

Firſt, Negatively, what it is not. And here I need not tell you.

Firſt, That Mortification is not the utter and total Extirpation and Deſtruction of Sins In-being in the Soul. There are a ſort of Phanaticks, or Phranticks rather, riſen up among us, who by pretending to that in this Life unattainable Priviledge of a perfect immunity from all Sin; do make Mortification inconſiſtent with

with Mortality; and while they promiſe to themſelves that Liberty which God never promis'd them, they are become the Servants of Corruption. St. *John* frequently gives theſe Men the plain lie. 1 *John* 1. 8. *If we ſay we have no Sin, we deceive our ſelves, and the truth is not in us*; *ver.* 10. *If we ſay we have not ſinned, we make God a Liar, and his word is not in us.* This is that which the manifold Falls, the grievous Out-cries, the bitter Repentings, the broken Bones, and the bloodied Conſciences, even of the beſt and perfecteſt Saints on Earth, have too ſadly Atteſted beyond all Contradiction; unleſs it be from thoſe Men to whom Cuſtomarineſs hath made the difference between Sinning and forbearing to Sin unperceivable. It is indeed the ſincere Deſire and Endeavour of every Child of God, ſo throughly to mortifie Corruption, that it ſhould never more ſtir, nor tempt, never more move nor break forth unto Eternity. Oh! it was a bleſſed word of Promiſe, if God ſhould ſay to us concerning our Luſts, as *Moſes* did to the *Iſralites*, *thoſe Egyptians whom you have ſeen this day purſuing your Soul, ye ſhall ſee them again no more for ever.* No, God is (if I may ſo ſay) more Provident than to ſpoil Heaven, by fore-ſtalling that Happineſs which makes it ſo infinitely deſirable. And therefore he here ſuffers theſe *Cananites* to be Thorns in our Eyes, and Scourges in our Sides, to ſweeten the place of our Reſt; and when we are moſt victorious over them, all that we can do is but to make them ſubject and tributary. They have ſopoſſeſt the faſtneſſes of our Souls, that there is but one Mortification can drive them out, and that is our Diſſolution. Under the Ceremonial Law, if an earthen Veſſel were Polluted by any unclean thing, the only way of Purification preſcribed, was to break it. Truly, we are ſuch earthen Veſſels, though Mortification may ſcoure and cleanſe us from much of that Filth which cleaveth to us; yet we can never be fully Purified till Death breaks us to pieces. It was only Sin that brought Death into the World; and it is only Death that can carry Sin out of the World. So that every true Chriſtian is another *Sampſon*, he ſlays more of the uncircumciſed at his Death, than he did in all his Life time before. 'Tis true God is many times pleaſed to vouchſafe eminent and ſignal Succeſſes, in a way of Mortification; but yet theſe are but as it were pickeering ſmall Conqueſts, obtain'd by ſingling out ſome particular Luſts; but it is only Death that makes the general Defeat and Slaughter. And therefore as the weakeſt Grace is ſufficient to deſtroy the Reign of Sin; ſo the ſtrongeſt Grace exerciſed in the moſt conſtant and ſevere courſe of Mortification, is inſufficient to deſtroy its reſidence. That's the firſt thing.

2. *Severity uſed only to the outward Man is not true Mortification.*

Secondly, A Harſh Severity and Rigour uſed only towards the outward Man is not true Mortification. This is that which blind Devotioniſts reſt upon, who by ſharp Penances, long Faſtings, and other ways of ignorant Will-Worſhip, do go the way rather to deſtroy themſelves than their Corruptions. This churliſh and rugged way of Mortification, is altogether as incongruous, as if a Man ſhould lay a Plaiſter upon his Cloaths to cure a Wound in his Body. Should he tell down rivers of Tears for every vain Thought, ſhould he fine himſelf in a thouſand Prayers for the commiſſion of every Sin, ſhould he Faſt till his Skin cleaveth to his Bones, and his Bones ſtared him in the Face; yet all this would be as far from the Mortification of Sin, as it is from a Satisfaction for Sin: All theſe cannot reach that bottom and centre of the Soul, in which Luſt ſits Enthron'd, and deſpiſeth all the Attempts and Batteries that Men make againſt the outworks only. But I need not inſiſt much longer on this particular; the greater Light, yea I may ſay the greater Atheiſm and Prophaneneſs of our days will diſcharge me from that trouble. Yea, Profeſſors themſelves by neglecting that moderation they ſhould uſe towards the outward Man in Diet, in Attire, or in any other Enjoyment; do omit if not a part of, if not a means to Mortification, yet certainly that Sign and Character which ſhould evidence them to all the World, to be mortified Perſons. The Truth is, Men now live as if it nothing at all concern'd their Souls what their Bodies do: Whatſoever theſe Men pretend, yet it muſt needs be very difficult to believe that there can be Humility and Mortification in the one, where there is not Sobriety and Decency in the other. I will not undertake to preſcribe how far a true Mortification muſt in particular reach the outward Man; yet in the general take theſe two Rules.

Mortification muſt reach the outward Man in two caſes. 1.

Firſt, All that indulgence which indiſpoſeth to Holy and Spiritual Duties or hinders us from them, or in them, muſt by the exerciſe of Mortificaion be ta-

ken off and removed. There must be Rigour and Severity used, even towards the Body, if formerly we found the want thereof made us unfit for, or remiss, in the duties of Religion. It is fittest for your own Christian Prudence to descend unto particulars, and examine what it is that indispoſeth you, either in Hearing, or Praying, or any other means of Communion with God, whatever it be; whether it proceeds from infirmity, or custom and habitude; if it be an occasion to hinder the life and spiritualness of our Duties, Mortification must be here set on work, though not without violence and regret unto the outward Man. What saith the Apostle, 1 *Cor.* 9. 27. *I keep under my Body, and bring it into Subjection.* That is, he made it useful and serviceable to his Soul. Where Mortification is neglected, even the Body, that underling and servile part of Man, grows wild and unruly, rebelling against the Soul, and hurrying it whither it self will.

2. *Secondly*, All that Provision which Indulgence towards the outward Man lays in for the Flesh, to fulfil it in the Lusts thereof; must be cut off by the careful exercise of Mortification. Do you find that the pampering of the outward Man, is the strengthning of the old Man? That outward Ease, Plenty, or any other Conveniencies, are but Instruments for Lust to work with, or objects for it to work upon? It is high time for Mortification to be exercised, even about those things which are lawful; when once Lust turns them into food and nourishment for it self. I leave it to your own experiences to frame Instances, and accordingly to proceed in Mortification for the future.

These two general Rules being supposed (which it were to be wished Professors were more careful in observing) whatsoever other severity Men execute upon themselves, may be called Cruelty and Will-Worship; but cannot be reckoned for true Mortification. That's the second thing.

3. *The not breaking forth of Sin in a scandalous Life is not true Mortification.*

Thirdly, The not breaking forth of Corruption into a scandalous Life and Conversation, is no evidence of true Mortification. Many Men's Lusts are like secret Imposthumes that breed within in the Breast, that are never known till they prove their Deaths. It is not necessary that unmortified Sin should be like a running Sore, offensive and noisom to others; it may rankle and fester within, till it become incurable and mortal. Lust hath a large and ample Dominion inwards in the Heart; There are Thoughts, Contrivances, Desires, Affections, and Motions; all which may be altogether unmortified: When yet the Life and Conversation may be so innocent and blameless, as not to be justly chargeable with the guilt of any one notorious Sin. What can we judge of such an one, but that he is a very mortified Christian; yea, but God who knoweth the Heart, yea, and possibly his Conscience, sees abundance of Pride, Uncleanness, Worldliness, Unbelief, Contempt of God and his Ways, reigning and raging within, in all that Strength and Power which they have gotten to themselves by so long a continuance, without the least check from Mortification. Now it may be attributed to a threefold cause, why a Lust that is unmortified doth not always break forth into gross and scandalous Sins.

The reasons why unmortified Sin breaks not out into Act.

1. *First*, To that quiet reserved Temper and Disposition that some Men are of. Their very Nature is such, that they will do nothing violently and outragiously, and therefore they will not sin so. Some Men are rude Sinners, and boisterously Wicked; others are of a more calm and retired Spirit; and yet possibly as far from being mortified as the other. Take a true Christian who hath often sweat and toiled in the mortifying of some particular prevailing Lust and Corruption to which his Temper enclin'd him; as suppose Passionateness, or the like; and compare him to one of a smooth, sedate, and even Temper, though altogether unacquainted with the great work of Mortification; and how unlovely shall the Passion of the mortified Christian appear, in comparison with the Sedateness of the unmortified Sinner: Such is the great advantage which a Man's natural Inclination gives either to the acting or suppressing of Sin. And therefore take this Rule by the way, in examining thy Mortification; never reflect upon that seeming prevalency thou hast over those Lusts which are not strengthened and advantaged by the bent and tendency of thy natural Inclination; for this will prove a very deceitful mark; rather look what Success thou gainest over the Sin of thy Nature, be it what it will; or against those Sins which no natural Temper can ever counterfeit the Mortification of, such as are Unbelief, Hardness of Heart, Impenitency, and such like Spiritual Sins; which are common to all Men of what Temper and Disposition

poſition ſoever. Otherwiſe, to conclude that Corruption is mortified and ſubdued, becauſe thou breakeſt not forth into ſuch Sins to which perhaps thy natural Inclination is not ſo ſtrongly bent, is but a falſe and deceitful Evidence.

Secondly, The not breaking out of unmortified Corruption, may often be imputed to the abſence of Temptations, Opportunities, and Occaſions of Sinning, and ſuch like outward advantages; which were they preſent, would certainly draw it forth into act. Either the Devil is wanting to Mens Corruptions, in fitting them with ſuitable Temptations, or elſe God's Providence in fitting them with a convenient opportunity, one or both of which, is the true reaſon why we ſee no more Wickedneſs committed in the World (though it doth now too fearfully abound) and not the weakning or abating the Power and Rage of it by Mortification. When the Prophet told *Hazael* what Cruelties he ſhould act upon the *Jews*; *What* (ſaith he) *is thy Servant a Dog, that he ſhould do this great thing?* While he was in his private Eſtate, he could not think his Nature had been ſo cruel; but when he was advanced to the Kingdom of *Syria*, and had ſubdued the *Iſraelites*; then the Temptations of a Conqueror aſſault him, and he ſhews that Cruelty which before lay lurking and dormant. And ſo it was with *Peter* in denying his Lord and Maſter. Now look inward a little, you pretend perhaps to be mortified Perſons; and why, Oh! Not any one Sin beſides common failings hath broken from me ſo long time; hath there not? Tell me, were there no Temptations to provoke and draw out thy Corruptions? Were there no Opportunities wanting to let out thy Corruptions? If there were, this thy not Sinning proceeds not from a mortified Heart, but from a negligent Devil, or a gracious God. That Man gets a good opinion of himſelf at too eaſie a rate, who thinks himſelf mortified for not Sinning, when he is not Tempted. 2.

Thirdly, It may be imputed to a powerful Reſtraint laid upon the eruptions of Luſt. This hinders them from breaking out into act; but yet this doth not mortifie nor weaken them. I do not now ſpeak of that Almighty Reſtraint that God in his ordinary Providence lays upon the Luſts of Men; by which indeed he mortifies them, even as he mortified *Jeroboam*'s Hand, which he ſtretched out againſt the Prophet, by taking the power of Sinning from them; but of that Reſtraint which Men themſelves lay upon their Luſts; who yet are altogether ignorant of and unexperienced in the Spiritualneſs of this Duty of Mortification. Men may lay a check and curb upon their Luſts, that whereas formerly they let themſelves looſe unto all manner of Prophaneneſs and Impiety; they may now relinquiſh that Exceſs of Riot, and bind their Corruptions within a narrower Pale and Compaſs; and thereby appear both to themſelves and others to be much mortified and changed Chriſtians. 3.

Now this Reſtraint may proceed from a twofold cauſe.

Firſt, From groſs Hypocriſie and deep Diſſimulation, for ſecular ends and advantages, with which the extravagancy of Wickedneſs poſſibly would not conſiſt. And truly, we may juſtly fear, that much of that ſeeming Mortification which is among Profeſſours, ſtands only upon this bottom. Certainly that ſinful Liberty which they allow themſelves, where it is not prejudicial to their worldly Intereſts, is a very ſad ground to ſuſpect all other Reſtraints that they impoſe upon themſelves, to be from no higher a Principle, than compliance with the genius and current of the times. Such Mens curſed Hypocriſie ſhall in Hell bear the puniſhment of all thoſe Sins that it ſelf hindred from being committed; that's all the Reward it ſhall have. 1.

Secondly, This Reſtraint may likewiſe proceed from the Strength of Convictions, and the Terrours of a natural Conſcience. Wicked Men many times dare not commit thoſe Sins, which yet notwithſtanding their Hearts and Affections are bent upon; ſhould they, Conſcience would hurl Fire-Brands in their Faces, and haunt them with fearful Threatnings and Outcries; and ſome there are who without queſtion do ſtand in as much dread of an enraged Conſcience, as they do of Hell it ſelf. Now this keeps Men in ſome awe and order, that they dare not commit Sin with ſo much Impudence and Greedineſs, as otherwiſe they would do; but yet this amounts not to a true Mortification: This all proceeds from the Power of Conſcience, forcibly reigning in Corrupt Nature, not from the Power of Grace, changing that Nature. As it is with wild Beaſts kept up in a grate, they cannot ravin after their Prey; but ſtill their Natures are ravenous: So it is with 2.

with Conſcience, it many times coops up Men that they cannot ravin after their Luſts, as were they free from ſuch a Reſtraint they would; but ſtill their Natures continue unſanctified, their Sins unmortified, their Affections, Deſires, and Delights eager after them, though they dare not commit them; yea and poſſibly (which is the uſual effect of a forcible Reſtraint) by ſo much the more violent, by how much the more debarred from them. This is the third thing.

4. *Forſaking of Sin is not true Mortification.*

Fourthly, The relinquiſhment and forſaking of a Sin, is not at an evidence of a true Mortification. I do not here mean only ſuch a temporary forſaking of Sin as theirs was in 2 *Pet.* 2. 20. who *having eſcaped the Pollution of the World through Luſt, were again intangled:* Certain it is that theſe Mens Corruptions were but for a time diſſembled, and never mortified; but take it for a perpetual relinquiſhment and an utter divorce, ſo that the Soul never again returns to the commiſſion of it, or at leaſt not with any proportionable Frequency and Delight; yet this forſaking of Sin, may be without the Mortification of it. Take this in two caſes.

1. *Firſt*, When Men do change and barter their Sins, then there is a forſaking of Sin, but no mortifying of it. Multitudes of Luſts lie crowded together in the Soul, and each of theſe muſt have its alternate Reign; and therefore when one hath for a while ſwayed, and been the Maſter-Luſt, it gives place to another, and that to another, till the Sinner hath run through the bead-roll of them. And therefore the Apoſtle, *Tit.* 3. 3. ſpeaks of *Serving divers Luſts and Pleaſures:* Divers in their turns and ſucceſſions. Now this deceives many; they find an old tyrannical Luſt that hath kept them under long and laborious Thraldom, begin to grow weak and feeble, and hereupon they conclude it is mortified in them; but alas, they do not obſerve ſome other Luſt reigning in its ſtead, it doth but give way to make room for another; ſo that though the ſtream of Corruption be diverted and turned out of one Channel, yet it runs with as full a tide in another. Let not him who of a Senſual Perſon, is grown a Worldling; of a Prophane Perſon, an Hypocrite, think that he hath mortified any one of theſe Luſts. A changed Man indeed he is, changed from one extreme to another, from Sin to Sin; but this change is far from Mortification.

2. *Secondly*, When a Luſt rather forſakes the Sinner, than he it; then there may be a perpetual Separation, where there is no Mortification. There are Sins that are proper and peculiar to ſuch an Eſtate and Seaſon of a Man's Life, upon the alteration of which they vaniſh and diſappear. The Sins of Youth drop off from declining Age, as incongruous and misbecoming; the Man doth as it were out-grow them. Now if he reflect back to take a view of the numberleſs Vanities and Follies he hath left, how deadned his Heart and Affections are to thoſe things which before he delighted in; this may poſſibly make him think himſelf a very mortified Man; when alas! he hath not ſo much forſaken his Sins as they him; as long as his natural Vigour could reliſh the Temptation, and as long as it comports with his State and Condition; ſo long he ſerved it and lived in it. Let not ſuch a Man deceive himſelf, though now he hath forſaken it, yet he never mortified it; the Sin deſerted him, and fell off of its own accord; this Fruit of the Fleſh was never beaten down by Mortification, but being full ripe, fell off of it ſelf without violence. That's the fourth thing.

5. *Every victory over Sin is not true Mortification.*

Fifthly, and Laſtly, Every Victory and Conqueſt gained over Sin is not a true Mortification of it. I doubt not but many unregenerate Perſons have yet had eminent Succeſſes in oppoſing their Corruptions, ſo as to hinder them even when they have been raging and impetuous from breaking forth, either to the defiling or wounding of their Conſciences; nay, ſometimes ſo far as ſenſibly to abate the Power and Force of them; but all this amounts not to a true Mortification: And that upon a double account.

1. *Firſt*, Becauſe all ſuch Conqueſts are atchieved by Principles altogether foreign and extraneous unto Grace; that hath no hand in the work, but natural Conſcience acted by ſlaviſh Fear, or ſome other carnal Conſideration manageth all the Fights and Scuffles that wicked Men maintain againſt their Luſts. And,

2. *Secondly*, Becauſe though by theſe Victories, Luſt ſeems to be weakned in its Branches, yet it is much ſtrengthned in its Root; if one Sin be pulled down, it is that another may be advanced: All the Conqueſts that wicked Men obtain do not deſtroy the Government, but only change the Governours: Nay, indeed it is only

only one contrary Luſt that fights againſt the other, and which ſoever of them is defeated, yet ſtill the Body of Sin thrives. That's the laſt thing.

Now ſeeing there are ſo many things like true Mortification in the World, it nearly concerns us to beware, leſt we be deceived by them, and ſo flatter our ſelves with a falſe Evidence for Life; to prevent which, it will be neceſſary,

Secondly, To open to you this great duty of Mortification Poſitively, and in this poſſibly ſome uſeful Progreſs may be made when theſe two things have been ſearcht into *Firſt*, Wherein it doth conſiſt. *Secondly*, What things are indiſpenſibly required thereunto. II.

For the *Firſt*, I take the Nature of Mortification to conſiſt in theſe three things. I.

True Mortification conſiſts in three things.

Firſt, In the weakning Sin's Root and Principle.

Secondly, In Suppreſſing its Riſings and Motions. And,

Thirdly, In Reſtraining its outward Actings and Eruptions.

It is the firſt of theſe that makes the other two any part of this true Mortification: Let a Man oppoſe himſelf all his days againſt the workings of Corruption within, and the actings of it without; yet unleſs the radical Power and Force of Corruption be in ſome good meaſure abated; let him not think he hath mortified any one Luſt. 'Tis a task utterly impoſſible to kill it, if it be not firſt wounded at the Heart. It were eaſy to demonſtrate the vanity and unſucceſsfulneſs of all endeavours, to mortifie theſe Limbs and Out-parts of the old Man, unleſs his Vitals be firſt periſhed, and his inward Strength decayed. For,

Firſt, Hereby you can never arrive at any comfortable Iſſue in the Work. 'Tis but like beating down Leaves from a Tree which will certainly ſprout forth again, the Root is ſtill remaining in the ground full of Sap and Juice, and will ſupply every Branch of Corruption with the ſame Nouriſhment, and make it Flouriſh into the ſame Strength and Verdure; which all your Endeavours will but fruitleſsly attempt to deſpoil it of. And, 1.

Secondly, Hereupon finding no better Succeſs, but that after all, he ſees himſelf deluded, and that Luſt is not mortified; ſtill as thick Fogs and Streams of it riſe within him as ever, ſtill it is as unruly and boiſterous as ever, and more to ſuppreſs and weaken it in his way cannot be done; hereupon, I ſay, he deſpairingly gives over all future contendings, and abandons himſelf to the Power and Violence of his Corruptions; and thoſe which before he ſtrove in vain to ſtop, he now ſpurs on and drives furiouſly towards Perdition. 2.

This is the fearful and yet too frequent Iſſue of ſuch Endeavours as have their beginnings meerly from the Convictions of natural Conſcience; they receive no encouragement nor recruit from the decay of Corruption, and therefore uſually expire either in a looſe Formality, or in a profeſſed Diſſoluteneſs. Very ſad it is to conſider how much pains and induſtry have been loſt in ſtrugling againſt Sin, only upon this account, that to all their Endeavours there hath been no Foundation laid in the radical and inward weakning of the Habit and Body of Corruption.

Now this inward weakning of Corruption is twofold,

The *Firſt* proceeds from that mortal and incurable Wound which the Body of Sin received in the firſt implantation of Grace. Then was the Head of this Serpent cruſht; and whereas before it had the Power and Authority of a King and Sovereign in the Soul, in that very moment it was depoſed, and hath ever ſince harraſſed it only as a Rebel and Traitor. 1.

The *Second* proceeds from thoſe redoubled ſtrokes which mortified Chriſtians follow their Corruptions with, whereby they every day and hour draw Blood and Spirits from them; and ſo by degrees waſt and weaken them. The firſt indeed is not any part of that Mortification whereof I am now a treating, but rather a neceſſary Antecedent to it; and the latter would not be Mortification did it not preſuppoſe the former: For therefore doth a Man by oppoſing the Motions and Actings of Corruption in his daily Converſation, weaken the Habit of it, becauſe of that firſt weakning which it received in Converſion. The Apoſtle ſpeaking of this weakning of Sin, calls it a Crucifying of it with Chriſt, *Rom. 6. 6. Our old Man is Crucified with him, that the Body of Sin might be deſtroyed:* Now look, how was Chriſt Crucified? Firſt he was hung upon the Croſs, and then pierced with a Spear. So truly it is in the Mortification of Corruption; our firſt Converſion unto God hangs 2.

it upon the Croſs, whence it ſhall never come down alive; and then our conſtant Endeavours are as ſo many Spears continually piercing it, till the Body of this old Man becomes all over one great Wound, whence daily iſſue out the Blood and Spirit, the Strength and Vigour, and at length Life it ſelf. This is it which makes the keeping under the motions of Corruption, and the keeping in its Eruptions to be true Mortification in the Children of God, when yet the very ſame Endeavours in unregenerate Men are nothing ſo. Sin in them is upon the Throne, and not upon the Croſs, and therefore they cannot wound nor pierce it, they cannot weaken nor deſtroy it.

Objection. Yea, but may ſome ſay, muſt there in true Mortification be not only a ſtriving againſt the Motions and Actings of Corruption, but alſo the weakning of its Root and Principle? Alas! then I fear all my Endeavours have been fruitleſs and in vain. Some ſucceſs indeed I have gained againſt the Eruptions of Luſt, but ſtill I find the Temptations of it as ſtrong and violent as ever: I perceive no weaknings, no decays in it, but it rather grows more rebellious and head-ſtrong every day than other; and therefore all that I have done againſt them hath not been true Mortification.

This no queſtion is the caſe of many a mortified Chriſtian, and therefore for anſwer hereunto,

1. *Anſwer.* *Firſt*, Conſider, Poſſibly thou mayeſt be herein miſtaken, that thou thinkeſt that Corruption moves ſtronger than before, when only thou takeſt more notice of its Motions than thou didſt before. When the Heart is made tender and ſoft by a long exerciſe of Mortification, a leſs Temptation then troubles it more than formerly a greater would. Every the leaſt riſing of Corruption in the Heart ſeems now a deſperate and hainous thing, whereas before through the deadneſs and ſtupidity of Conſcience, it was made light of and ſcarce regarded. This ſeeming Strength of Sin is not a ſign that Sin is not a dying, but rather a ſign that thou art Spiritually alive, becauſe ſo very ſenſible of its Motions. The ſtronger the Oppoſition is which Grace makes againſt Sin, the ſtronger alſo will Sin ſeem to work, though indeed it never was weaker. If a ſtrong natur'd Man fall into a little Sickneſs and Diſtemper, it ſeems more violent and raging in him, than a greater would in another of a weak Conſtitution; becauſe the natural Vigour conflicts more with the Diſeaſe, he is unquiet and turbulent, and toſſes too and fro, meerly becauſe the Strength of Nature is impatient till the Sickneſs be removed. So is it here, if a gracious Soul fall into any ſinful Diſtemper, what Conflicts and Agonies are there, as if he were in the very Pangs of Death? Doth this argue the Strength of Corruption? No, nothing leſs; it rather argues the Strength of Grace, which makes the Soul to wreſtle thus impatiently, till the Corruption be overcome and removed. None ſo much complain of the Strength and Power of their Sins, as thoſe in whom it is unto ſome good degree mortified, becauſe they have that contrary Principle of Grace in them, which makes them ſenſible of the leaſt Riſings and Motions of it.

Secondly, Conſider, Corruption may act ſtrongeſt in the Soul, then when it is in it ſelf weakeſt. It may be very ſtrong in Acting, when it is but weak in Being. You know with what a great Blaze a waſted Candle goes out, and with what violent Pangs and Struglings Men uſe to depart this Life; ſo ſometimes a mortified Luſt makes ſuch a Blaze as if it would ſet the whole Soul on Fire; when indeed it is but Expiring; it ſo ſtrugles as if it would maſter Grace, when indeed it is but its laſt pull and Death-Pang. What is ſaid of Chriſt when hanging on the Croſs, *Mark* 15. 37. *He cried with a loud Voice, and then gave up the Ghoſt.* The ſame may I ſay of Corruption hanging on the Croſs with a loud Voice in a Temptation, as if it were not only alive, but ſtrong and vigorous; yea, but this loud Voice is many times its laſt Voice, and then gives up the Ghoſt, and draws it laſt Breath crying. And,

Thirdly, Some accidental Improvement may make a Luſt that is ſubdued and truly mortified, yet ſeem no way weakened, but rather much more active and vigorous than ever before. Sometimes the very *Craſis* and Temper of the Body may ſo alter as to cauſe a greater Propenſeneſs to ſuch or ſuch a Corruption than formerly: And ſometimes a Man may lie in the way of more Temptations than ever. Now upon ſuch Advantages as theſe are, Corruption though it be mortified, yet it will be ſtirring; yea, and be ſtirring it may be more violently than ever it did

while

w hile it was unmortified ; for though then it had more Strength and Power of its own, yet it had not ſuch odds of Grace, as through theſe external Aids it hath gotten. And,

Fourthly, What is abated in the Strength of Luſt's Temptations, is many times eked out by the Temptations of the Devil. And theſe though they are of different kinds, yet are ſo cloſely and ſo indiſcernably pieced together, that the Soul not knowing what muſt be imputed to the Strength of its own Corruption, and what to the violent Aſſaults of the Devil, aſcribes all to his Luſt, and then ſadly looks upon himſelf as an unmortified Sinner. And unmortified Sin when it moves and Temtps only of its own accord, will not ſeem to be ſo raging and impetuous, as a Mortified Sin will when it is blown up by the Temptations and Injections of Satan. And therefore Chriſtians not being able to diſtinguiſh (as indeed none ſufficiently can) are neceſſarily troubled with many Fears and Doubts, whether or no Corruption which acts ſo ſtrongly be at all weakned in them. And indeed, if the Devils helps any Mens Corruptions by his Temptations, they are eſpecially thoſe which Mortification hath already dealt with and ſubdued. In wicked Men he ſees Luſt able enough to ſubſiſt of it ſelf, and to manage the affairs of its own Dominions, and therefore leaves them to the Plague of their own Heart to deſtroy them. But in the Children of God, where this Enemy is broken and conquer'd, he backs and enforceth ; lends its Auxiliaries of Objects, and Suggeſtions, and numberleſs Temptations, leads it on to the Combat, and by many Wiles and Methods enables it to moleſt, if not to foil the moſt conquering and mortified Chriſtian ; here upon the Soul finding ſuch a wonderful recruit of Strength and Vigour in Corruption, preſently concludes it is all its own, and that certainly it was never yet ſubdued, never weakned in him, That's the laſt thing. So then although were true Mortification is exerciſed, there Corruption is weakned and doth decay, yet this decay is not always diſcernable. And thus much ſhall ſuffice to open to you what Mortification is. 4.

The next thing is to ſhew you what is of neceſſity required thereunto. You have already heard that Mortification conſiſt of two parts, the weakning of the Habit, and the conſtant endeavour of repreſſing the Motions and reſtraining the Eruptions of Sin. Accordingly two things are thereunto neceſſarily required, Firſt, a vital Principle of Grace that may weaken and deſtroy the Habit of Sin. And Secondly, the Influences of the Spirit of God, that may draw forth this inward Principle of Grace, and act it unto the ſuppreſſing of theſe Motions, and reſtraining theſe Eruptions. II.

Two things neceſſarily required unto true Mortification.

Firſt, Therefore, there cannot be any exerciſe of true Mortification, where there is not a vital Principle and Habit of Grace, radically to weaken and deſtroy it. 'Tis not Nature, 'tis not Conſcience, 'tis not Education, 'tis not Conviction, nor is it any other Principle but Grace alone that is a fit match for Corruption. How can it with reaſon be ſuppoſed, that where there is nothing elſe but Sin, any thing ſhould deſtroy the Power of Sin. What though one Luſt quarrels with and contradicts another ? And what though Conſcience contradicts them both, yet the main Body of Luſt is not concern'd in theſe petty quarrels. Some Luſt or other muſt be Chief in the Soul, where Grace is not advanced as the prevailing Principle ; and whether this Luſt be ſet up, and that pulled down is not much material, ſtill the Regality and Tyranny of Sin is equally maintained and upheld by the one as by the other ; and till Grace diſſolves this Government, and be laid as the Axe to the Root of the Tree, all our Endeavours after Mortification will be but vain and fruitleſs Attempts, which Luſt will eaſily baffle ; And I.

A Principle of Grace is neceſſary unto true Mortification.

Hence then by way of Conſectary.

Firſt, How neceſſary it is to our comfortable undertaking this great work of Mortification, to ſee that the firſt Grace of our Converſion be true and ſaving ? Alas ; where there never was Converſion wrought, there never was Mortification exerciſed. The killing of Sin is not a work that can be done by a dead but by a living Man. I ſhould be loth to caſt in Doubts and Scruples that ſhould more trouble than benefit you ; yet give me leave to ſay, that unleſs the Evidence of the Truth of your Grace be in ſome good proportion cleared up to you, your Hands muſt needs be faint and feeble in conflicting againſt your Luſts : How know you that all your ſtruglings and ſtrivings are not from weak and inſufficient Principles, and conſequently far ſhort of Mortification ? I ſpeak it not that you ſhould 1.

abate your Endeavours, but to quicken you, to look after the Truth and Sincerity of Grace; which when you have aſſured to your ſelves, you may be likewiſe certain, that though in all your Conflicts you may not find a viſible decay of the Strength of Sin, yet it is in the Root and Principle of it inſenſibly weakened.

2. *Secondly*, See alſo what the ſad and deplorable Condition of wicked Men is, who are Strangers to the Life of Grace. Without Mortification no Life is to be expected, without Grace no Mortification can be exerciſed; and what doth this when it is caſt up amount to leſs than the eternal Damnation of ſuch Men. The War which we are to wage againſt our Luſts, admits of no other terms but kill or be kill'd; either the Blood of your deareſt Sins muſt be ſpilt, or the Blood of your precious Souls. Is it not now a ſad thing for Men in ſuch a mercileſs War to be thruſt naked upon the ſharp Swords of their Enemies? So it is with Sinners, who are many times by Conſcience or Convictions thruſt on to fight with armed and cruel Luſts, and yet have neither Weapons to wound them nor to defend themſelves. What can be imagined more ſad, than is the caſe of theſe Men? On the one Hand Conſcience ſcourgeth them, on the other Sin wounds: Conſcience drives them on, Corruption beats them back; and yet in all theſe Conflicts never can they obtain ſo much Succeſs as to ſubdue the leaſt and weakeſt Luſt.

Now what ſhould theſe Men do? Should they give over this Oppoſition ſuch as it is, and ſit ſtill under deſpair of Mortification? No, let them ſtill ſtrive and ſtruggle and make what ſtrength they can, and act as far againſt Sin as natural Conſcience will carry them out unto. Let not the Doctrine you have heard to day of a carnal Man's impotency to mortifie any one Sin, ſlacken your Endeavours; ſtill preſs upon it: For, *Firſt*, Though all that you can do without Grace will not amount to a true Mortification, yet it may cauſe much outward Reformation; though hereby you cannot kill Corruption, yet you may mightily curb it. 'Tis true this when done will not avail to ſave you, but yet ſuppoſe the leaſt, it will avail to mitigate your Puniſhment, and abate the degrees of Torment: And certainly that Man never had a right apprehenſion of Hell, who doth not account the ſtriking off the leaſt degree of Wrath infinitely more worth than all the pains and trouble of an endeavoured Mortification. And,

2. *Secondly*, Though you cannot mortifie Corruption without Grace, yet when you oppoſe it with the Power you have, God may give you in the Grace that you want. While Carnal you cannot pray, nor perform any other ſpiritual Duty in Grace, yet you may and ought to do it for Grace. So here though your ſtrugling againſt Sin be not Mortification without Grace, yet ought you to perſiſt in it that it may be Mortification through Grace. How know you but that Conflict which was begun between the Fleſh and the Fleſh, may end in a Victory of the Spirit over the Fleſh? Certainly it is far more probable that that Man ſhould obtain true Mortification who earneſtly ſtrives againſt his Luſts, than he who willingly yields himſelf up as a ſlave unto them. That's the firſt thing. Without Grace no one Luſt can be mortified, and yet wicked Men are not hereby to be diſcouraged in their Endeavours.

II. *The Influences of the Spirit neceſſary unto Mortification.*

Secondly, Another requiſite unto Mortification, is the influence of the Spirit of God, drawing forth this inward Grace, and acting it to the ſuppreſſing of ſinful Motions and ſinful Eruptions. And therefore the Text tells us, *If ye through the Spirit do mortifie.* Though Grace be wrought in the Heart, yet it is not in our Power to act it; but the ſame Spirit that implanted it, he alone muſt excite it, he muſt marſhal it and ſet it in aray; he muſt head it and lead it on, and under his Conduct it will certainly prove Victorious. I might here at large ſhew you what Aid, Force, and Recruit, the Spirit brings us in for our Aſſiſtance in the work of Mortification, that the Apoſtle ſhould here attribute it unto him. But I ſhall only briefly touch at this point and ſo proceed.

How the Spirit enables us to be mortified.

I. *By diſcovering the Sin that is to be mortified.*

Firſt, The Spirit diſcovers the Sin that is to be mortified, drags it out of its lurking Holes, ſtrips it naked to the view of the Soul, uncaſeth its Deceits, diſcloſeth its Methods, ſhews the Uglineſs, Deformity and Helliſhneſs of it, tells the Soul what a deſperate and ſworn Enemy it is againſt its eternal Happineſs, what an endleſs train of Woes, and Plagues, and Torments it draws after it: And hereby he highly exaſperates the Heart to a Reſolution, that ſince it is ſo opportunely delivered into its Hands, it ſhall no more eſcape alive. Now this Aſſiſtance unto

Mortification

Mortification the Spirit lends us as he is the Author of Conviction. *John* 16. 8. *He ſhall convince the World of Sin.*

Secondly, The Spirit doth inwardly and really by the immediate working of his own Power, gradually weaken and deſtroy the Habit and Principle of Corruption. He with his own Hands wounds the old Man, breaks the hard Heart, takes out the ſtony Heart, and gives a Heart of Fleſh. He burns up and conſumes all that Droſs and Corruption that lies in the Heart, and is therefore compared unto Fire. *Matt.* 3. 11. *He ſhall Baptize you with the Holy Ghoſt, and with Fire*; that is, with the Holy Ghoſt working as Fire, purifying and refining you as the Fire doth Metals; who is therefore called, *Iſai.* 4. 4. *The Spirit of Judgment and of Burning.* The Spirit of Judgment, that is, he judgeth between what is Fleſh and what is Spirit in the Heart, and ſeperates them, the one from the other; and the Spirit of Burning when they are ſo ſevered he preys as Fire on Stubble, upon that which is Corrupt and Fleſhly, till it hath conſumed it. 2. *The Spirit immediately by his own Power weakens and deſtroys Sin.*

Thirdly, The Spirit brings home and applies the Efficacy of the Croſs and Death of Jeſus Chriſt unto the Soul, in which there is contained a Sin-mortifying Virtue. Our old Man was crucified with him, and therefore it is mortified in us. The Inſcription on the Croſs might have been not only Jeſus, the King of the *Jews*, but Satan, Prince of this World, but Sin, that Tyrant of the Heart, are all here crucified. I might here inſiſt on that Influence that the Death of Chriſt hath upon the Death of Sin, both as the meritorious and as the protatartical cauſe of it; but this I intend at large to ſpeak of, on another Head. Now what a liveleſs thing were a crucified Chriſt, if the Spirit did not act him and bring him from the Croſs, nay, bring him with the Croſs into the Heart, and there conform it to the Fellowſhip of his Sufferings. Saith Chriſt concerning the Spirit, *John* 16. 15. *He ſhall take of mine and ſhew it unto you.* Indeed, whatever Power there is either in the Death, Reſurrection or Interceſſion of Chriſt to any ſpiritual End, it becomes effectual only by the Declaration and Application of it to the Soul by the Spirit. 3. *The Spirit applies the Death of Chriſt for the mortifying of Sin.*

Fourthly, The Spirit is both the Author and Finiſher of the whole work of Sanctification in us. We are ſaid *to be Sealed by him unto the day of Redemption*, *Eph.* 4. 30. Now what are the Effects of a Seal. 4.

Firſt, It gives Firmneſs and Stability to our ſpiritual Eſtate. Having received the Seal of the Spirit, we are inviolable, like that Book in the *Revelations*, which none in Heaven, or Earth, or Hell can break open. 1.

Secondly, It gives Security and Aſſurance concerning our eternal Eſtate. Receiving the earneſt of the Spirit, we alſo receive our Salvation ratified and confirmed to us as under God's Hand and Seal; But beſides this, 2.

Thirdly, A Seal imprints an Image upon the Wax, and receives the Impreſſion of it: And indeed this is that on which the two former depend. A Seal adds no firmneſs nor aſſurance to a Deed, unleſs ſome Impreſſion be thereby made. 'Tis but an airy Aſſurance, a void Evidence, an inſignificant Charter for Heaven which hath not on it the Print of the Spirit's Seal. Now the Impreſs of this Seal is the very Image and Superſcription of God, which when the Heart is like Wax made ſoft and pliable, is in a Man's Regeneration inſtampt upon it, and in the continual Progreſs of our Sanctification conformed more perfectly to the Similitude of God. This work of Sanctification which the Spirit begins and carries on hath but two parts; as the one is a living unto Holineſs, ſo the other is a dying unto Sin; ſo that if the Holy Ghoſt be a Sanctifying, he muſt alſo be a mortifying Spirit. The Image of God bares but this double Aſpect, the one towards Grace, which is freſh, vigorous and lively; the other towards Sin, which is pale, ghaſtly, and dying: And the ſame Spirit imprints both theſe at once upon the Soul, and therefore the Death of Sin is to be aſcribed to him no leſs than the Life of Grace. 3.

Now what abundant Support and Conſolation may we hence Reap. Are not your Hearts ready to fail and ſink within you, when you ſee ſuch cluſters of ſinful Thoughts ſwarming about you, ſuch violent hurries and cariers of ſinful Deſires and ſinful Affections, ſuch numberleſs Monſters of callow and unfledg'd Luſts. Such a crowd of grown and noiſom Temptations, able and well appointed for the Battle, ſuch Snares laid for you without, ſuch Treachery hatcht againſt you within? Do not your Hearts, I ſay, ſink within you when you conſider that you muſt

break through all these? Not as Men that run the Gauntlet, to receive a Scourge from one, and a Wound from another; but as Triumphant, as Conquerors, routing, scattering, slaughtering these Forces of Hell, and (what is worse) of your own Hearts. What Strength can you make? Will you muster up the Poverty, the Nakedness, the Weakness, the Langnishment, the Wounds of your Souls, to atchieve this great Enterprize by? Or will you bring forth and marshall your Graces? Why alas? Do you think to obtain the Conquest as *Jebusites* presumed by the blind and the lame, weak and imperfect Things; and yet besides these, what other Auxiliaries have you? What other besides these? Yes, the Spirit of God himself is pleased to enrol and list himself in this Warfare, and though we are Weak and have no Might against that great Company that comes up against us; yet not by Might nor by Power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord. What are the Deeds of the Body to the Power of the Spirit? What are Principalities, and Powers, and spirtual Wickednesses compared to that God who is far above all Principality and Power, who is the Spirit of Holiness? Go forth boldly therefore, and fight the Lord's Battles against these uncircumcised, though gygantick Lusts; the Sons of *Anak*, with whom thou seemest to thy self but as a Grashopper, rush on thee; yet the Sword of the Lord and of *Gideon* can destroy the whole Host of them. Wilt thou shrink from this Engagement when thou hast so much the odds of thy Corruptions; when the Spirit of God stands by to encourage thee, to help and assist thee? The Prophet tells the *Israelites*, *Isai.* 31. 3. *That the Egyptians Horses were but Flesh and not Spirit, and therefore their help was but vain.* I may tell you, your Enemies are but Flesh, *Fleshly Lusts that war against the Soul*; but your helper is the Spirit, and therefore their Opposition is in vain. Never yet was it known that that Soul who engaged the Spirit of God in the Quarrel, that ever he came off with less than a Victory. Though thou hast formerly gone out in thine own strength, and thereby betrayed thine own weakness, and hast got nothing but many a deep Wound, many a sad Fall, many a sore Bruise; yet now call in the Spirit to thine Assistance, he can root out and destroy every prevailing Lust, he can reinforce thy Scattered Graces, he can revive thy drooping and fainting Soul, he can strengthen thy feeble Knees, and thy weak Hands, and make thee more than a Conqueror. *Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creatour of the ends of the Earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? He giveth power to the faint; and to those that have no might he increaseth strength. Isai.* 40. 28, 29.

Thus you see wherein true Mortification consists, in the habitual weakning of the Principle of Corruption, and in the actual curbing of its Motions; and what is thereunto necessarily required, the inward Root of Grace, and the Influences of the Holy Spirit to draw it forth and act it.

The next thing that I shall proceed unto is, to lay down some Particulars where by you may examine and try your Mortification, whether it be right and saving. If you value eternal Life it self, you will likewise value that Light, though it be but in its first Dawn and weakest Gleanings, that shall discover your Interest in it. This Interest stands upon nothing more sure than our Mortification: *If ye mortifie ye shall live.* Yea, but we are in this Work subject to Mistakes and Errours, so that it is not a more difficult thing rightly to exercise it, than it is to know when we do so. Will it not be a sad and astonishing thing, when Men who have been Professours of Religion, Christians of no mean Account both in their own as also in the Eyes of others; yet shall at last be dragged down to Hell, and there be eternally Murthered by those very Sins, the Mortification of which they made their best and cleerest Evidence for Heaven? The Trial therefore being of so vast Concernment, I shall give it you in these following particulars.

1. *Trial of Mortification.*

First, Let thy contending against Sin be what it will or can be, yet if it be not joined with a sincere Endeavour after an universal Obedience unto God in the performance of Duties, it is not, neither can it be, true Mortification. This is that which many deceive themselves in, they find a perplexing Lust within, that troubles their Conscience, disturbs their Peace; the exceeding Guilt of it fills them with Bitterness, Dread, Horrour; and still it will be thus with them till they have beaten it down and subdued it; they vow, and pray, and watch, and strive against it; they cut off all Occasions that should draw it forth, all Provisions that should relieve and support it, and do whatsoever may be done towards the killing

killing of it; yea, but all this while they are negligent and careleſs in other Duties which are not of ſo immediate Concernment to that particular Luſt; they do not ſtrive to follow God in all his ways, if they think one Duty will do it, they neglect all the reſt: Let not ſuch Men think they do indeed mortifie any one Corruption. This is a very common Diſtemper, and nothing almoſt more ordinary, than for Men to ſtrugle againſt Corruption, and yet neglect Duty. If Vows, Purpoſes, and Reſolutions be in their Apprehenſions the moſt oppoſite means for the beating down of that Sin that diſquiets them, theſe they make and poſſibly keep them; but for other Duties, as Prayer, Meditation, Reading, the keeping alive an holy and ſpiritual Frame of Heart, and ſuch Duties as ſhould fill up the whole Courſe and Meaſure of Chriſtianity, theſe they live in a wretched neglect, if not contempt of: Let ſuch Men know that whatever their Succeſs in this way, may ſeem to be, yet they never truly mortified any one Corruption. He only is the mortified Man that labours and endeavours after univerſal Obedience. 'Tis not the vehement Oppoſition that you make againſt any particular Luſt, that argues you to be mortified Chriſtians, but rather the univerſal and general Frame and Temper of your Hearts towards Holineſs, And therefore ſaith the Apoſtle, 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. *Let us cleanſe our ſelves from all filthineſs of Fleſh and Spirit*; there's true Mortification, *Let us cleanſe our ſelves from all Filthineſs*, that is, let us mortifie in our ſelves all Sin and Corruption: Well, but how muſt this be done? Why ſays the Apoſtle, *Perfecting Holineſs in the fear of God*; that is, giving Holineſs all its parts, that it ſhall not be defective in any one Duty, then and not till then will Luſt be to any purpoſe mortified, when a perfect Holineſs is aim'd at and endeavoured in the whole Courſe of a Man's Life and Converſation. Now try your ſelves by this, when you are troubled with a perplexing Luſt, be it what it will, which for your own quiet, you muſt ſubdue, you uſe againſt it thoſe means and helps which you think are moſt directly deſtructive of it, this is well: Yea, but let me ask you, ſetting aſide that Corruption, Is not the general Frame and courſe of your Lives eſtranged from Communion with God, careleſs and neglectful of holy and ſpiritual Duties, vain, earthly, ſenſual, carnal; If it be, however thou may'ſt prevail over that particular Corruption, yet conclude upon it, thou knoweſt not what true Mortification means.

2. *Trial of Mortification.*

Secondly, That Mortification is not true nor ſaving that oppoſeth it ſelf againſt Corruption, only with the Exception and Reſervation of the one particular Sin. Never deceive your ſelves, though you ſhould have conteſted even all your days againſt all the Luſts your Hearts were ever conſcious unto, except one, you never mortified one. One Luſt that hath obtain'd a paſs from you to go too and fro unmoleſted, to deal and traffick with the Heart undiſturbed; will be as certain Perdition to your Souls, as if every Luſt that lies lurking within ſhould rage forth into act. In a Man, it's true, there are ſome ſuch Parts, that if you wound him there you need not wound him any where elſe; if you wound the Heart, you need not ſtrike the Head. But this Old Man hath no ſuch vitals, 'tis not ſufficient to deſtroy him, that you wound him in any one Part, but he muſt be made as our natural Condition is deſcribed, *from the Crown of the Head to the Soul of the Foot, full of Wounds and Bruiſes.* 'Tis in vain to cry with *Naaman, the Lord pardon thy Servant in this, or in that thing*, doſt thou know what thou craveſt? Why 'tis not this or that Sin alone that are unmortified, but all the reſt are as unmortified as theſe, and (ſhould God pardon theſe unto thee; yet) would as ſoon condemn thee. Now try your ſelves by this, when you go forth againſt your Sins to Battle; is there none that your Eye ſpares, nor your Heart pities? Doth the Sword of Mortification drink the Heart Blood of every Luſt, when they fly for ſhelter into your very Boſom? Can you rend them from thence, andſlay them before the Lord; when Corruption cries out, oh ſpare ſuch a pleaſing, delightful Luſt, ſuch an advantageous and profitable Sin; can you anſwer it with an holy Diſdain, were it yet more pleaſant, more profitable, yet die it muſt and ſhall? Can you then cut off your right Hand, when it is lifted up to plead for Mercy? Can you then pluck out your right Eye, when it ſheds Tears to move your Compaſſion? If ſo, this indeed is to exerciſe Mortification aright; Corruption muſt at laſt needs fall dead at your Feet, where there is no Part nor Member of it left wounded. But if in all thy dealings againſt Corruption, there be any one Sin that thou alloweſt and indulgeſt to thy ſelf, how great ſoever thy wreſtlings and contendings are againſt all other, thou never

never yet experimentally knewest what belongs to Mortification. One allowed Sin is Vent enough for the Body of Corruption to take breath at, and so long as thou permits it this breathing place, all Endeavours to destroy it are utterly frustrate and in vain.

3. *Trial of Mortification.* *Thirdly*, If thou wouldst judge of the Truth of thy Mortification, then see what those Arguments and Considerations are, whereby thou dost actually deal against thy Lusts. Now these Arguments belong but to two Heads; either they are Legal, and such as are drawn only from a sad Reflection on the end and issue of Sin, which is Shame, Death, Hell and Destruction. Or else they are Evangelical, taken from the Nature of Sin, as being a Transgression and Offence against a gracious Father, against a crucified and bleeding Saviour, against a patient and long-suffering Spirit, and many other like Aggravations which work kindly and ingeniously upon the Heart of a Child of God. Put it now to the question when a Temptation assaults thee, with what Weapons dost thou resist it, what Considerations dost thou over-awe thy Heart with? Dost thou only run down to Hell to fetch Arguments against Sin from thence? Canst thou no where else quench these fiery Darts, but in the Lake of Fire and Brimstone? Can nothing keep thee from Sinning but only the Whip and the Rack, Wrath, Vengeance, Horrours, and such dreadful Things, which while thy Conscience thunders in thine Ears, it makes thy Soul an Hell, and it self becomes thy Tormentour? If this be all, know that thy Affections are wofully intangled in the Sin, and thou art fully resolved upon the Commission of it, if there were no Punishment to follow. Thou may'st indeed by this means be frighted and scared from Sin, but never mortified to it. But now the evangelical Considerations which a Child of God makes use of to mortifie Sin by, though they work not with that Dread and Terrour, yet are they far more effectual; he sees Sin in its ugly Nature, in that spot, stain, and defilement that it would bring upon his Soul, and this causeth in him a true Hatred of it; he saith under a Temptation, what, shall I subject a noble and spiritual Soul made capable of enjoying the God of Heaven? Shall I prostitute it to the filthy Allurements of a base Lust? Shall I blot out and deface the Image of God instampt upon me, and degrade my self from the Glory of his Resemblance, to be conformable to the Devil? Can I commit this Sin which heretofore hath drawn Blood from my Saviour, and now seeks to draw Blood from my Conscience? Was not this the very Sin that squeezed clotted Blood from him, and was a full Load for God himself to bear? Did he die to free me from its Condemnation, and shall I upon every slight Temptation rush into the commission of it; is there any thing so attractive in it, as to counterpoise the infinite and unsearchable Love of Christ. No, Oh Lord! Thy Love constraineth me, I cannot do this thing and Sin against so free, so rich, so infinite Mercy and Goodness. Thus a gracious Heart argues against a Temptation, and prevails unto a true Mortification.

Objection. But may some say, may we not make use of Legal Arguments, of Considerations drawn from the Wrath of God, the Wages of Sin, the Everlasting Damnation to which Sinners are appointed to oppose against a Temptation to sin? Are these of no Efficacy unto Mortification?

To this I answer:

1. *Answer.* *First*, You may and ought in dealing against your Lusts to use such Arguments as these are: Why else doth our Saviour inculcate the Fear of God upon his Disciples, from the Consideration of his Wrath and Power? *Fear him who is able to destroy both Body and Soul in Hell Fire, yea, I say unto you Fear him.* And why doth the Apostle here in the Text threaten the believing *Romans* with Death if they live after the Flesh, unless these Considerations may be made use of even by gracious Souls against their Sins? 'Tis no other than a loose Notion to think the only Incentive to Obedience, and the only Check and Restraint of Sin, is the Consideration of the Love of God. 'Tis true, these Gospel Arguments are most prevailing and constraining, yet let not him with whom the Fear of God's Wrath hath no Sway to keep him from sinning think himself an high attainer; 'tis rather a stupidity, till we are got past all desert of Hell to be fearless of it.

Secondly, Though those Arguments and Legal Considerations, may of themselves prevail to keep us from the Commission of Sin, yet they cannot prevail to the Mortification of it. Where there are not other Considerations besides these working these never bring off the Heart, but only hold the Hands from Sin. Nay,

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if when a Temptation is ſtirring in the Children of God themſelves, they only anſwer it by theſe Legal Conſiderations, they dare not commit it for fear of Hell and Wrath hereafter, or of Shame here; and there be no Arguments drawn from the Love of God, and the Relation they ſtand in to him, from the Death of Chriſt, and the Obligation which that lays upon them to Obedience, from the Deformity of the Sin to which they are tempted, from the Repugnancy and Antipathy that is in their regenerate Part againſt it; the abſtaining from the Commiſſion of that Sin is not Mortification, but only Reſtraint, even in the Children of God themſelves.

Thirdly, Theſe Legal Arguments and Conſiderations, may be of great uſe and moment in a ſubſerviency unto the Mortification of Sin. 3.

Firſt, They may hold a Temptation or Corruption at a bay, till Goſpel Conſiderations come in to beat it down. Uſually the very firſt riſings of our Hearts againſt a Corruption is from the dangerous Conſequences of it from that Wrath and Vengeance that is due to it, and will follow upon it; now this ſtops the Sin and puts the Soul to a demur, and though this cannot deſtroy the Corruption, yet it holds it ſo long till the new Man calls in aid from Goſpel Arguments to mortifie it. 1.

Secondly, Theſe Legal Conſiderations when mixt with Goſpel Motives make them work more ſtrongly and more effectually unto Mortification. The Conſideration of the Infinite Wrath of God heightens and aggrandiſeth the infinite Love of God in redeeming us from it, and ſo makes it far more enforcing unto Mortification. 2.

Fourthly, 'Tis an ill ſign that that Heart is very much unmortified, where a Temptation or Corruption can break through all Goſpel Conſiderations uſed againſt it, and is ſtopt from breaking into act, only by Legal Arguments. When a Temptation to ſin aſſaults thee, thou runneſt it may be to the Love of God, to the death of Chriſt, to the ugly Nature of Sin, to be beautiful Nature of Holineſs, to beat it down by theſe (the beſt and moſt effectual) Conſiderations; if theſe do not prevail but the Luſt and Temptation ſtill tumultuates and is ready juſt to break forth into act, thy Heart is all on a Flame with it; and then poſſibly a thought of Hell, of Vengeance, of everlaſting Wrath, ſtarts up ſuddenly and quaſhes and quenches this Temptation as Water caſt on a Fire; if this be uſual with you, your Hearts are much unmortified, and your Affections ſtrongly engaged unto Sin. That's the third trial. 4.

Fourthly, A truly mortified Man ſees the great evil of and chiefly labours againſt thoſe Luſts, which others who act from any other Principle lower than true Grace, either take no notice of, or elſe do not oppoſe, and theſe are (1.) Inward Heart Sins, and (2.) Spiritual Wickedneſſes. This is a moſt ſure and infallable Character. 4. *Trial of Mortification.*

Firſt, A mortified Man ſets himſelf eſpecially againſt inward Heart Sins, againſt the Bublings of ſinful Thoughts, and the uproars of ſinful Affections, and the bent of ſinful Deſires; thoſe lurking and inviſible Luſts, which though an Hypocrite ſuffer, yea, though he foſter, yet may he have a very large Teſtimonial to his Saintſhip, to which almoſt all the World will be ready to ſet their Hands. Theſe doth a truly mortified Chriſtian principally complain of and ſtrive againſt; and in this indeed conſiſts the very Truth and Sincerity of Mortification. That what the Apoſtle ſaith, *Rom.* 2. 28, 29. *That is not Circumciſion that is outward in the Fleſh, but that which is of the Heart in the Spirit:* So I may ſay, that is not Mortification which is outward in the Fleſh, but that which is of the Heart in the Spirit. There may be a kind of dead Palſey and numbneſs ſeize upon the outward Members of the Body, when yet the Heart beats ſtrong and quick, and the Brain works with ſprightful and vigorous Motions and Conceptions; ſo truly is it in this caſe, the old Man may ſometimes be benumbed in his outward Limbs, and deadned as to the executive part of ſinning, when yet the Head may work buſily in moulding and ſhaping ſinful Objects, and the Heart may eagerly beat and pant after them. 'Tis uſually the higheſt reſult and upſhot of a wicked Man's Care and Endeavour, to keep Luſt from Boiling over, from raiſing Smoak and Aſhes about him; and if he can attain unto this, let the Heart be brimfull of Sin, let the Thoughts ſteep, ſoak and ſtew in malicious, unclean, worldly Contrivances and Deſigns, yet theſe inward Motions and Ebullitions, he laments not, he ſuppreſſeth not. Now though poſſibly it might ſeem an eaſy Task to mortifie 1.

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ſuch little naked, infant things as Thoughts are, that flutter up and down in the Soul, and that a ſlight ſtroak will ſerve to lay them dead; yet certainly, that Chriſtian who by experience knows what it is to deal with his own Heart, finds it infinitely more difficult to beat down one ſinful Thought from riſing and tumultuating within than it is to keep in many a ſinful Thought from breaking forth into act; ſo that here lies the very ſtreſs and hardſhip of Mortification, in fighting againſt ſuch Shadows, ſuch Apparitions, ſuch little Entities as Thoughts are Now there are theſe three things that make this ſo very difficult.

1. *Thee things make it difficult to mortifie our Thoughts.*

Firſt, Becauſe the firſt Bublings of theſe ſinful Emanations from the Fountain and Spring Head of Corruption is not in our Power to hinder. External Actions fall under Deliberation, and they uſually are ſifted by Cenſure, and guided by Advice and Counſel; and this gives us advantage, either to let them looſe, or to reſtrain them at our Pleaſure. But who deliberates of Thoughts, or conſults of firſt Motions? Theſe firſt born actings of the Soul fall not under any previous Conſiderations to examine or forbid them, and therefore it is not in our Power to make them good or evil, holy or ſinful, but according as the Habit and Principle within is, ſo they ſpontaneouſly ſtart up; holy Thoughts from a gracious Principle, and ſinful thoughts from a corrupt one. Nay, thoſe things that are the beſt and moſt effectual means for Mortification yet cannot keep down ſinful thoughts, they will ſwarm and buzze about the Soul in praying, in hearing, in the moſt holy and ſpiritual Duties that we can perform; and when we ſhould be wholly taken up in Communion with God, the whole Duty it may be is neceſſarily ſpent in fraying theſe away; and when we ſhould be intenſly and exaltedly ſpiritual, all that we can do, is but to keep our Hearts from being long together ſinful. It fares with us as it fared with *Abraham* when ſacrificing, *Gen.* 15. 11. The Text tells us, *when the Fowls came down upon the Carcaſs of the Sacrifices, that* Abraham *drove them away.* Theſe Fowls are our ſinful Thoughts, they fly in the Air at random, we cannot hinder them from lighting, and it may be on our Sacrifices too; all that we can do is to drive them away, that they may not devour, though they do and will pollute. The firſt riſe of ſinful thoughts we cannot oppoſe, their continuance and abiding we may; yea, we ought always ſo to compoſe our ſelves in ſuch a frame, as that Corruption may not occaſionally be ſtirred in us, yet is impoſſible altogether to keep our ſelves from the inward Motions and Eſtuations of it.

2. *Secondly*, Sinful Thoughts lie uneſpied and undiſcerned by our ſelves. How often do they ſteal away the Heart inſenſibly, and carry it very far unto ſinful Objects unawares? That when we reflect back to ſee the workings of our Thoughts, we wonder many times how and where they crept in; we find them very buſie, but when they got in we know not, no, nor how long they have continued; unleſs we keep a ſtrict Guard and a narrow Watch upon our Hearts, theſe ſubtle and deceitful Luſts will undermine us, get within and poſſeſs us e'er we can take notice of them. This is the continual vexation of the beſt Chriſtians, that even in Duties a vain and impertinent Thought runs away with their Hearts, that the Heat and Warmth of their Affections, the Life, Vigour, and Spiritualneſs of their Souls in Communion with God, is loſt oftentimes e'er they perceive it; they at laſt perhaps find out this thieving deceitful Thought, and mourn over it, but yet know not when nor how it entred, no, nor cannot track it ſo much as by any Footſteps. This lurking deceitful abode of an unperceived Thought, is or may be, the ſad and juſt complaint of every Soul among us. The Apoſtle cries out of it, *Rom.* 7. 21. *When I would do good, evil is preſent with me*; 'tis preſent here I find it, but how or when it roſe, that I know not. And then,

3. *Thirdly*, Tis very difficult throughly to convince Men of the great guilt and evil that there is in ſinful thoughts, and this alſo makes it ſo difficult to mortifie them becauſe they are but things of a ſmall and minute Being, therefore Men think they carry in them but ſmall guilt and little danger. Every Man that hath but a remnant of Conſcience left in him, will beware of groſs, black and griſly Sins, that carry the brand of Hell and Damnation viſibly ſtampt upon their Foreheads; ſuch as he who can without Reluctancy commit them, muſt needs own himſelf for the apparent Offspring of the Devil: But for an inviſible Thought, a Notion, an airy Idea, a thing next nothing, this certainly can hurt no one; by a malicious Thought I injure no Man, by a covetous Thought I grind nor extort from no Man;

Man; and what ſo great evil then can there be in this? 'Tis true indeed, wert thou only to deal with Men, whom thy Thoughts touch not, there were no ſuch great evil in them; but when thou haſt to do with an immaterial and ſpiritual God, before whom thy Thoughts appear as ſubſtantial and conſiderable as thy outward acts; then know that a Thought as ſlight and thin a Being as it is, is yet an hainous Provocation of his Majeſty, a wretched Violation of his Law, and will be (if not mortified) a fearful Damnation and Deſtruction to thine own Soul. This doth lie at the bottom of all that neglect that Men are generally guilty of in oppoſing ſinful Thoughts, they think them (which indeed is as bad a Thought as any other) harmleſs and indifferent things. As we uſe to call little Infants innocent Babes, though indeed they are born into the World with an Hell of Sin in their Natures. Some Men are apt to think the ſinful Thoughts which they conceive, and with which they travel, to be innocent infant things, though indeed every one of them be no other then a Firebrand of Hell. Some Thoughts we are wont to uſe and condemn as being impertinent; the Truth is, 'tis a name too ſlight and favourable, there is no ſuch thing as an impertinent Thought, no, there is not any thing in your whole lives of greater concernment, and weight, and moment than what your thoughts are; whatever they be, their Influence reacheth no ſhorter than unto what an Eternity of Life or Death extends to. Now if this perſuaſion did indeed take hold of Men, were it poſſible that they ſhould thus indulge themſelves in a vain, frothy, idle, nay, let me call them ſinful and pernicious Thoughts, Thoughts ſo effectually deſtructive? Were it poſſible that they ſhould ſo cloſely brood on theſe Cockatrice Eggs, which bring forth nothing but Serpents to ſting them to eternal Death? Were it poſſible that they ſhould roll and toſs a Sin to and fro in the fancy, and thereby recompence the Devil and their own Corruptions, for the ſquemiſhneſs of Conſcience in hindring the Commiſſion of it? Certainly herein Men bewray great unacquaintedneſs with Mortification, when as thoſe Sins that they dare not act, yet they dare with complacency and delight contemplate and feed upon in their own Thoughts. Turn therefore your Eyes inward; when the ſwarm of Luſts is up, and much noiſe and buzzing is made by Corruptions, by Temptations, which yet ſome external Principles will not ſuffer to break forth; where then do they flutter? Do they ſettle in the Heart? Doſt thou fire them there? Do thy Thoughts like ſo many Intellectual Bees fly abroad and ſuck ſweetneſs out of every ſinful Object, to lay and hoard it up in the fancy? Canſt thou for the ſatisfying of Conſcience, reſtrain the outward actings of Sin; and yet for the ſatisfying of Corruption, tolerate and allow the inward workings of it? Certain it is, thou never yet kneweſt what belongs to true and ſaving Mortification; and it were happy for thee if ſuch an imaginary Sinner might ſuffer only an imaginary Death.

But now a truly mortified Chriſtian, as he is watchful to keep Sin from breaking forth into outward act, ſo is he eſpecially careful to reſiſt and quel the Sins of the inward Man, the Sins of the Heart. And that,

Firſt, Becauſe he knows theſe are the Sins that are moſt of all contrary to Grace, and do moſt of all weaken and waſt it. Heart Sins lie as ſo many Worms beating and gnawing the very Root of Grace, when as outward Sins, any otherwiſe than as they proceed from the Heart, are but as Caterpillers that devour only the verdure and flouriſhing of Grace. How can Grace breath or ſtir in ſuch a crowd of ſinful Thoughts, and ſinful Affections that oppreſs it? How can it grow and thrive among ſuch multitudes of Weeds that choak and ſtarve it? There is no room for Grace to live, at leaſt not to act, till Mortification pulls up and throws out of the Heart all that traſh which before filled it. And then, 1.

Secondly, He knows likewiſe that when the Heart is brimful of Corruption, the leaſt jog of a Temptation will make it run over. And therefore, 2.

Thirdly, He looks upon it as the moſt eaſy and compendious way of Mortification to begin at the Heart. Thence it is that all the outwad Sins of a Man's Life and Converſation receive their ſupply. What ſaith Chriſt, *Matt.* 15. 19. *Out of the Heart proceed evil Thoughts, Murthers, Adulteries, Fornications, Thefts, falſe Witneſs, Blaſphemies.* Whence are the Streams ſupplied but from the Fountain? And if this be dried up, thoſe muſt of neceſſity fail. Thoſe Corrupt Streams that flow forth too apparently in Mens Actions, proceed all from that bitter Fountain that continually bubbles up in the Heart; and as the Exerciſe of Mortifi- 3.

cation dries up this Fountain, ſo the Floods of Ungodlineſs muſt needs run low by Conſequence. This therefore is very rationally the great and main care of a mortified Man, to keep his Heart clean from ſinful Thoughts, ſinful Deſires, and ſinful Motions and Affections, and therefore God calls upon *Jeruſalem*, *Jer.* 4. 14. O Jeruſalem, *waſh thine Heart from Wickedneſs, that thou may'ſt be ſaved*: That is, mortifie the Sins of thy Heart, that thou may'ſt live. Well, but what Sins are theſe? It is Intimated in the following words, *How long ſhall vain Thoughts lodge within thee?* How long? Truly they are likely to lodge for ever within; and they are never like to lodge only within, where all Endeavours of Mortification are only external and outward. 'Tis in vain to ſtrive to keep ſinful Thoughts within, unleſs we Endeavour alſo to deſtroy them within; they will elſe break forth notwithſtanding all the Care that is uſed in Reſtraint, and over-run the Soul with the guilt of ſome ſcandalous Conſcience wounding Sin or other. In your ſtrugglings therefore againſt Sin, and in your endeavours for the mortifing of it, look what it is that you chiefly reſiſt. Do you not content your ſelves that you have beaten Corruption from the Out-works into the very Fort; that whereas before it ſallied forth at pleaſure, waſted and havockt your Conſciences, gaſht and wounded your Souls even to the very Death, triumphed over you as conquered Slaves and Vaſſals; now it is pen'd up in a narrower room and compaſs? Do not you think it enough that you lay a cloſe Siege unto it by Conviction, Conſcience, Legal Terrours; and by theſe ſo ſhut it up, that though it may ſtir and tumultuate within, yet it cannot eaſily break forth to your diſturbance? Is not this Reſtraint ſufficient, but muſt you ſtill purſue it even into the very Heart, and when it hath hid it ſelf in a ſinful Thought, there ſtifle and kill it? This indeed is a ſign for good, that this great Work of Mortification is not only begun by you, but alſo brought to ſome Perfection. If I may be allowed ſo to expreſs it, the very Heart of Sin lies in the Sins of the Heart: And if we would indeed mortifie it, it is there that we muſt both aim and ſtrike. That's the firſt Part of this particular Trial. He that exerciſeth Mortification aright, doth principally ſet himſelf againſt inward and Heart Sins, which an unmortified Man takes leaſt notice of, and leaſt reſiſts.

2. *Mortification oppoſeth Spiritual Sins.*

Secondly, A truly mortified Man, is very careful and laborious in oppoſing and ſubduing ſpiritual Sins and Wickedneſſes. Spiritual Sins, you will ſay, why, are there any ſuch? Graces may well be termed ſpiritual, being the immediate effects of the holy Spirit of God; but are Sins become ſpiritual too? By ſpiritual Sins therefore I mean, ſuch as principally reſide in the more refined and exalted Part of Man, in the very flower and top of his Being, called therefore by the Apoſtle, *Eph.* 4. 23. *The Spirit of the Mind*; the Mind it ſelf is a ſpiritual Part, but here the Apoſtle makes this Mind double refin'd, and extracts a Spirit out of a Spirit. So that thoſe Sins that are chiefly converſant about the Mind, the Spirit of a Man, and have but little Commerce and Fellowſhip with that dull dreggy Part the Body, they are ſpiritual Sins: Such are Pride, Envy, Hypocriſie, Unbelief, Hardneſs of Heart, a ſlighting of the Tenders of Salvation made by Chriſt, a froward quenching of the good Motions of the Holy Spirit. Theſe are ſpiritual Sins, and theſe are the Sins that a Child of God bends his ſtrongeſt Endeavours againſt in the work of Mortification, and that upon a threefold account.

1. *Reaſon.*

Firſt, Becauſe theſe Spiritual Sins, though they are not of that groſs Scandal and Infamy among Men, yet they are Sins of the deepeſt and blackeſt Guilt and Defilement in themſelves and in the ſight of God. And therefore when Chriſt would rake up the very bottom of Hell; who lies there? Not the Swearer, not the Drunkard, not the unclean Perſon, not the Worldling, nor any ſuch groſs and brutiſh Sinners; but the Hypocrite, that ſpiritual, that refined and exalted Sinner. *Matt.* 24. 51. Could we ſee Impetency, Unbelief, Hardneſs of Heart, with the ſame Eyes that God ſees them, they would appear more ugly and deformed, than thoſe foul and notorious Wickedneſſes which cauſe an indelible Shame and Reproach upon the places where ſuch live who are guilty of them, and that becauſe they deface the choiceſt part of the Image of God, that wherein the Soul doth neareſt reſemble and tranſcribe its Original. This a gracious Heart in part diſcovers, it ſees ſomewhat of the loathſome Nature of theſe ſpiritual Sins, which before it did not, and therefore now ſo earneſtly oppoſeth them. And,

2. *Reaſon*

Secondly, Becauſe theſe ſpiritual Sins are the moſt dangerous and deſtructive

ſtructive of all others. I do not ſay that the groſs outward acts of Sin do not deſerve Hell; yes, they do, yea, and a ſcorching Portion of it too: Yet, I ſay, if any who hath been a Sinner, though too a very high degree of Scandal, doth eternally periſh; 'tis not becauſe of thoſe outward Sins meerly, but becauſe of Impenitency, of Unbelief, of Hardneſs of Heart, of ſlighting and undervaluing *Jeſus Chriſt*, and refuſing the gracious Terms of the Goſpel. They are only theſe ſpiritual *Sins* that do ſhut Men out of Heaven, and ſhut them up in Hell, and ſeal them unto everlaſting Condemnation: Groſs *Sins* do this meritoriouſly, but theſe alone do it eventually; theſe do certainly effect it as being *Sins* againſt the only Remedy appointed. And then,

Thirdly, Becauſe they are *Sins* that of all other are moſt like unto the *Sins* of the Devil. What are the *Sins* of the Devil? Not Intemperance and Luxury, thoſe ſwiniſh and brutiſh Luſts, wherein Senſualiſts wallow; theſe are not ſuited to the immaterial Nature of the Devil, and are ſo far below him that he can neither act nor reliſh them. But intellectual *Sins* that are ſtrained and clarified from ſuch feculency, as Pride, Malice, Hatred of God and Goodneſs, ſtoutneſs and ſtubbornneſs of Heart againſt God. Theſe are the *Sins* which this great and wretched Spirit doth with an implacable Rage and Spite eternally commit; and accordingly as wicked Men are helliſhly improved in theſe *Sins*, ſo do they nearer reſemble the Devil. And therefore a Child of God is of all others eſpecially watchful over, and induſtrious againſt theſe ſpiritual *Sins*. Now try your ſelves by this; you ruſh not poſſibly into the ſame exceſs of Riot with other Men, you reſiſt Temptations, and beat down Motions and Inclinations to outward, groſs, ſelf-condemning *Sins*: Yea, but did you ever ſee, did you ever ſtrive againſt the Pride, the Hypocriſie, the Unbelief and Hardneſs of your Hearts? Do you know what it is to maintain a War againſt theſe ſpiritual *Sins*? Can you abhor and reſiſt a Temptation to ſlight Chriſt, to grieve his Spirit, as well as to any outward ſcandalous *Sin*? If ſo, this is a good ſign that you do indeed rightly exerciſe Mortification. But if you are only cleanſed from the Pollutions of the Fleſh, and not alſo from the Pollutions of the Spirit? If while you war and ſtrive againſt fleſhly Luſts, theſe ſpiritual and goſpel *Sins* are harboured and neſtled in your Hearts, know aſſuredly that whatſoever ſeeming Victories and Conqueſts you may obtain over them, yet they are not mortified. 3. *Reaſon.*

Fifthly, Another mark for Tryal may be this; If *Sin* be mortified and dead in you, then you alſo are mortified and dead unto *Sin*. This you will ſay is very certain, but how ſhall we know whether we be dead to *Sin*? In anſwer unto this, I ſhall give you theſe two particulars to try it by. 5. *Trial of Mortification.*

Firſt, When there is little or no ſutableneſs betwixt *Sin* and thy *Soul*, then art thou dead unto it. Thou ſeeſt no Beauty, no Deſirableneſs, thou taſteſt no Sweetneſs, findeſt no Delight in it, this is to be dead to it; and accordingly as the degrees of this are, ſo art thou dying unto *Sin*. When the Appetite fails, and the Stomach nauſeates that Food which before pleaſed it; 'tis a ſign that the Man is ſick, and it may be a dying: So when that Appetite which before was greedy of *Sin*, and ſwallowed it down as a ſweet Morſel, comes not only to leave it, but to loath it; 'tis a good ſign that Man is *Sin-ſick*, *Sin* is in him decaying and dying. *I am Crucified to the World, and the World to me*, ſays the Apoſtle, *Gal.* 6. 14. So is a mortified Chriſtian crucified unto *Sin*, and *Sin* to him. What Delight or Pleaſure can any Object bring to a crucified Man? Truly when the *Soul* is once crucified unto *Sin*, every ſinful Object is like that Draught of Gall and Vinegar offered to Chriſt upon the Croſs, it hath nothing in it but Sharpneſs and Bitterneſs. Now try thy ſelf by this; is there no more agreeableneſs between *Sin* and thy *Soul*, than there is between a ſick and a dying Man, and the things of this Life? Canſt thou reject thoſe Temptations with indignation which before thou cloſedſt with, with eagerneſs? Doth thy Appetite, thy Will and Affections loath and nauſeate thoſe *Sins* which formerly thou ſwallowedſt down with Delight and Greedineſs? This indeed is a ſign thou art mortified and dead to thy *Sins*. But if ſtill thou findeſt as much Sweetneſs and Deliciouſneſs in *Sin* as ever, if thou hideſt and rolleſt it under thy Tongue as a ſweet Morſel, if ſtill it be agreeable and moſt pleaſing to thee, thou mayſt indeed be dead; dead, not unto *Sin*, but dead in *Sins* and *Treſpaſſes*. 1.

Secondly, If thou art mortified and dead unto *Sin*, thou art then enlivened and quickned 2.

quickned unto Holineſs. What ſaith the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 6. 11. *Reckon your ſelves to dead indeed unto Sin; but alive unto God through Jeſus Chriſt.* To be alive unto Holineſs, what's that? Why, it is to be lively in Holineſs; to have the Heart and Affections quickned to it, to be carried out ſtrongly and vigorouſly in it; this is to be alive. Certainly a lumpiſh, dull, heavy Profeſſour, that can hardly make a ſhift to jog on in a form of Religion, that performs every thing that belongs to Holineſs, without Life, Spirit and Vivacity, muſt be very much unmortified; he is not yet dead to his Sins, otherwiſe he would be more quick and lively in his Graces. 'Tis impoſſible that any Man can be thus twice dead; what, dead to Sin and yet dead to Holineſs too! No, the Death of Sin is the Life of Grace, and therefore where you find the one ſtrong and active, you may conclude the other is weak and languiſhing.

Now if the old Man be indeed crucified within you, theſe particulars of Examination do as it were ſhew you the print of the Nails, and of the Spear that wounded it; and they bid you thruſt your Hands into its Side, that you may be more certain of its Death, and in that certainty rejoyce. It were happy for us, if without ſelf-flattery we could from theſe things draw an Evidence of our Mortification; but it is to be feared, that they ſerve rather to ſhew us what a ſtrange thing it is in the World, yea, how much a ſtranger even in *Iſrael.* How few do at all reſiſt the ſwing and carier of Corruption; of thoſe that do, how few do it from a right Principle, and by right means? If perhaps ſome few ſuch there be (as certainly ſome ſuch there are, though but a few) yet even their ſtruglings and wreſtlings againſt Corruption are ſo impertinent and trifling, that did they not preſume them to flow from an inward Principle of Grace, they could not but be aſhamed either to think or call them Mortification. The generality and common huddle of the World do ſo ſecurely live after the Fleſh, as if they were always to live in the Fleſh, or as if they were already reſolved rather to be caſt into Hell with their old Man whole and entire, than to enter into Heaven halt and maimed: Yea, the very beſt Chriſtians do ſo live in the Fleſh, as being too well content that the Fleſh ſhould alſo live, move and act in them: They will not be ſo unhoſpitable to deſtroy that inmate of Corruption, though that lurk in them only to deſtroy them.

I ſhall not now lay Motives and Arguments before you, to preſs upon you this great Duty; the Text hath given us the moſt effectual and brief Compendium: *If ye mortifie, ye ſhall live; if not, ye ſhall die.* Life and Death is this day ſet before you, and what could be ſpoken ſo much, in ſo little. Certainly that Man may conclude himſelf to be already dead, whom the Conſideration of Life and Death doth not move nor perſuade. The Fleſhly liver he ſhall die. Is that all? Why, do we not ſee the moſt mortified Chriſtians die too? Doth not the original Curſe take hold of them both, and tumble them alike into the Duſt? Would not wicked Men be content, would they not wiſh, after they have been ſated and glutted with ſinning, to die away, and to lie for ever in a forgotten Darkneſs? What then is there in this dying that ſhould be of ſuch force unto Mortification? The mortified Chriſtian he ſhall live. Is that all? What, to live ſtill mortifying, ſtill contending and fighting againſt his Corruptions, ſtill ſighing and groaning under them in the Anguiſh and Bitterneſs of his Soul! Is there any ſuch encouraging Promiſe in this, that he ſhall ſtill live ſtrugling and combating againſt that which makes him weary of his Life, and even to long and pant after Death? Are theſe ſuch prevailing Motives to Mortification? No, the Senſualiſt ſhall die, but he ſhall die a never dying Life of Death. The mortified Perſon ſhall live; but he ſhall live a Life wherein there ſhall be no more need of Mortification, becauſe no more remainders of Corruption; then all Tears ſhall be wiped out of our Eyes, and all Sins wiped out of our Hearts. Now is the time of our Warfare, and every Battle that we fight is with confuſed Noiſe, and Garments roll'd in Blood: Then ſhall we for ever triumph and ſing an eternal Song of Victory, cloathed in Garments made white with the Blood of the Lamb. Now we are at a perpetual Diſcord with our ſelves, Thoughts bandying againſt Thoughts, Affections againſt Affections, Will againſt Will, and all within us in an Uproar and Tumult: But then an eternal Peace and Calm ſhall fill our Souls; not a Thought ſhall whiſper a Rebellion; the whole Tide and Current of our Wills and Affections with a full and undiſturbed Stream ſhall run into that boundleſs Ocean of

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all Felicity even God himſelf. But I muſt (though) loath leave the proſecution of this Argument.

And now let me ſuppoſe that the great Queſtion you would all ask is, What you ſhould do to mortifie Corruption, and how you ſhould ſtrive againſt it ſo as to obtain Conqueſt and Victory over it? For Direction therefore in this great Work, let me propound unto you theſe following Rules, each of which if rightly wielded, is enough to pierce into the very Bowels of Corruption.

Help to Mortification.

1. *Firſt*, Labour to get a full and clear ſight and diſcovery of that Sin, eſpecially which is moſt perplexing and moſt unmortified. He that would ſubdue his Enemy muſt firſt find him out, and conſider where his Strength lies, what Advantages, he hath got againſt him, the manner of his warring, *&c.* and accordingly prepare for Reſiſtance. This muſt be the Policy of every Chriſtian, he muſt keep Spies and good Intelligence in his Enemies Camp. Two things he muſt eſpecially know if he would ſubdue his Luſts.

1. *Firſt*, Wherein their great Strength lies, and what Advantages they have againſt him.

2. *Secondly*, He muſt always conſider the Ground and Cauſe of the Quarrel. As,

1. *Firſt*, The Guilt which it would bring upon him. And,

2. *Secondly*, The Danger it would bring him into if Committed. This will ſerve to kindle a wholly Anger and Indignation againſt Sin, without which this great work of Mortification can never go on proſperouſly.

1. *Firſt*, I ſay, ſeriouſly conſider wherein the Strength and Prevalency of thy Corruption lies from whence it hath its greateſt Advantage againſt thee; this will ſhew thee how thou ſhouldſt particularly apply thy ſelf to the Mortification of it. If it hath more than ordinary Strength and Power in thee, thy Endeavours to mortifie it muſt alſo be more than ordinary. If you ask, What are thoſe Advantages that do give ſo great a Prevalency unto a Corruption? I anſwer,

1. *Firſt*, Cuſtomarineſs and frequent Relapſes into the ſame Sins, eſpecially if they have been againſt ſtrong Convictions, againſt binding Vows and Promiſes, and manifold dealings of God both in Judgment and in Mercy. Though I am far from that deſperate rabbinical Conceit of the *Jews*, who hold the fourth Relapſe into the ſame Sin unpardonable; grounding themſelves upon *Amos* 1. where God threatens *Damaſcus*, *Edom* and *Ammon*, *that for three tranſgreſſions, and for four he he would not turn away their puniſhment.* Yet certainly if a particular Luſt, be it what it will, Pride, Malice, Uncleanneſs, Covetouſneſs, breaks forth frequently into act, forceth all thy Guards, beares down all Conſiderations that ſtand in the way to oppoſe it; I will not ſay thy caſe is deſperate, but yet 'tis very dangerous, and a ſad Symptom of a ſtubborn unruly Luſt that will not be mortified without extraordinary Pains and Care. Doſt thou find any ſuch old cankring Diſtemper within thee, ripened by long Continuance, and habituated by Cuſtom, that hath often choakt Conſcience, ſtifled Convictions, out-ſtood many diſpenſations of God? Know that the very Age and grey Hairs of ſuch a Luſt claim a Command and Authority over the Soul, and that it is a Task next to an impoſſibility to ſubdue it. *Jer.* 13. 23. *Can the Æthiopian change his skin, or the Leopard his ſpots? Then may ye alſo do good, that are accuſtomed to do evil.* 'Tis very hard to diſlodge a Luſt that pleads Preſcription for it ſelf, it hath had Poſſeſſion of the Heart Time out of Mind; can you ever remember when it had not? And therefore ſtruggles as for its lawful Right, and will not be ejected. And this is by ſo much the more dangerous, if it breaks out to the defiling and wounding of Conſcience, after deep Humiliation, bitter Repentance, ſerious Reſolutions, temporary Reformation; if it prevail againſt all theſe, what is there in the Soul that can reſiſt it? Every ſpiritual Diſtemper is dangerous, but Relapſes are commonly mortal and deadly; and are too clear Evidences, that when the Soul was at its beſt Eſtate, its Wound was healed but ſlightly, only skin'd over, while the Core of Corruption lay deep within, rankling and feſtring till it break out more incurably.

Now if this be the Caſe and Condition of any here, 'tis poſſible that as yet Grace way be ſtill in you, but it is impoſſible that it ſhould there remain unleſs you uſe extraordinary Diligence for the quelling and ſubduing this unruly Luſt that hath ſo often broken looſe.

Helps to mortifie cuſtomary Sins.

Now to help you in this (as indeed all helps againſt a Corruption ſo deeply rooted ed are too few) conſider theſe following particulars.

Firſt,

1. *First*, Think with your ſelves if your Natures be changed, your Cuſtoms alſo muſt be changed. 'Tis a moſt loathſom and monſtrous Mixture to have a new Nature and yet old Sins. Every Principle will act ſutably to it ſelf; if Grace be indeed in you 'twill not lie ſluggiſh and dormant; no, 'tis an active, vigorous and æthereal Being, it will certainly change the Courſe and Cuſtom of your Lives, it will make ſtrange Innovations antiquating old Cuſtoms, and bringing in new ones. Now urge this againſt a cuſtomary Corruption: How can I think my Nature is changed, if ſtill my Life and Actions be the ſame? I am not now the Man I was; and 'tis moſt irrational, that I, regenerate, that I, ſanctified and renewed, ſhould obſerve the Cuſtoms and Uſages of my ſelf unregenerate, carnal and prophane. And,

2. *Secondly*, Conſider that cuſtomary and ordinary Sins will call for, either extraordinary Wrath, or at leaſt more than cuſtomary Repentance. Certainly redoubled Sins will be puniſhed with more than a ſingle Hell; if they be pardon'd, 'twill coſt many a ſhower of repentant Tears. *Peter*'s thrice denial of his Maſter makes him weep bitterly.

3. *Thirdly*, Cuſtomary Sins carry in them an high Contempt againſt God himſelf. To ſin through ſurpriſal, inadvertency, or infirmity is incident to all Men, but to ſin the ſame Sin frequently, to make a cuſtom of it, muſt needs argue that ſuch a one ſlights and deſpiſeth God himſelf, he would elſe fear to provoke him the ſecond time by the ſame Sin. And,

4. *Fourthly*, Conſider Cuſtom in ſinning is the ready way to final Hardneſs and Impenitency. 'Tis this that turns the Heart to Iron, and the Brow to Braſs; makes Men reſolved to Sin, and impudent in ſinning. 'Tis this that Hoodwinks the Underſtanding, blunts the Edge of the ſharpeſt Convictions, ſeares the Conſcience, and brings a thick inſenſibleneſs upon that tender Faculty: This makes the groſſeſt and the vileſt Wickedneſs familiar to the Soul, ſo that many times Sins of the horrideſt and blackeſt Guilt are ruſht into without either Fear or Regard. And,

5. *Fifthly*, and Laſtly, Cuſtom in Sin will grow to a nature of ſinning, if not timely prevented by a ſevere Mortification. It will ſo inſinuate into the Affections, and wind and twiſt it ſelf about every Faculty of the Soul, that what at firſt was but Uſe, will in proceſs become Nature. You ſee then what a great neceſſity there is mightily to labour and ſtrive againſt theſe cuſtomary Sins, which are as a twiſted Cord very hardly broken. If a Corruption hath once ſetled into a Cuſtom, 'tis not an ordinary Endeavour that can then remove it. That's the firſt thing.

2. *Secondly*, As a cuſtomary, ſo a peculiar Sin requires a peculiar Mortification. 'Tis in vain to uſe common and ordinary Attemps againſt a proper Sin. And therefore *David* doth exult and glory in this as a great Atchievement, *Pſal.* 18. 23. *I kept my ſelf from mine Iniquity:* Mine Iniquity; not mine by Election or Approbation, as one pickt out from the reſt to reſerve for himſelf; no, but mine by a too conſtant and violent Bent and Inclination of my corrupt Heart.

Now certain it is that every one hath his peculiar Sin, a Sin that he may truly call his own, that is faſter rivetted and deeper rooted; yea, deeper rooted in his Soul than others are. I ſhall not now enquire whether theſe proper and peculiar Sins ariſe, either from the Craſis and Temper of the Body, or from a Man's Education, or from his Profeſſion and Calling; whenceſoever they proceed, if we would go on vigorouſly in the work of Mortification; theſe are the Sins we muſt eſpecially ſingle out and deal againſt. Yea, but you will ſay, how ſhall I know which is my peculiar Sin, that ſo I may ſet my ſelf againſt it to mortifie it?

To this I anſwer, Were it as eaſie to ſubdue it as it is to diſcover it, a great part of the Difficulty of Chriſtianity would ſoon be at an end. It is a Sin cannot long lie hid, 'twill betray it ſelf, if not to the obſervation of others, yet at leaſt to the obſervation of a Man's own Conſcience. If Conſcience ſhould ask you one by one, what is thine, and thine, and thine Iniquity? Every one would ſilently whiſper to himſelf, oh! Pride is mine, Hypocriſie is mine, Covetouſneſs and Worldlineſs is mine, Uncleanneſs is mine; and who among us is there that could not give an anſwer? Yet for farther Satisfaction, take theſe particulars.

Firſt,

First, That Sin doth moſt of all employ and buſie thy Thoughts, that's thy moſt unmortified and peculiar Sin. Thoughts are Surveyors for Luſt, that range abroad and bring in Proviſion for it. Obſerve now upon what Objects they pitch, mark how they work: Do thy Thoughts lie continually ſucking at the Breaſts of Pleaſure? Are they ſtill drencht and bath'd in carnal Delights? Voluptuouſneſs is thy peculiar Sin. Do thy Thoughts continually delve and dig in the Earth, and return to thee laden only with thick Clay? Covetouſneſs is thy peculiar Sin. Do they ſoar and tower up to Honours, Dignities, Preferments, and ſtill fill thee with Deſigns and Forecaſts how to raiſe thy ſelf to them? Pride and Ambition are thy Sins. And ſo of the reſt. 1. *That is our peculiar Sin that takes up moſt of our Thoughts.*

Secondly, The unmortified and peculiar Sin is always moſt impatient of Contradiction and Oppoſition. 2.

First, It cannot bear a Reproof from others. Let never ſo much be thundred againſt other Sins, this makes no Stir nor Tumult; but if the Reproof fall upon his Sin, you then touch the very Apple of his Eye, you then ſearch him to the very Quick; and this will cauſe ſome Commotion and Diſturbance within. Hence it is that many who come to the word of God, ſit very quiet under many a Reproof, and many a Threatning, becauſe they think theſe all fall beſides them: But if the Bow drawn at a venture wound them under the fifth Rib, if it ſtrike their peculiar Sin; oh! what muſtering up of carnal Reaſonings, and carnal Evaſions is there to ſhift it off. All this Stir and Buſtle doth but plainly ſhew where the Sore is: That's a galled Conſcience that will not endure to be wrung by a Reproof. 1.

And,

Secondly, As it cannot bear a Reproof, ſo it cannot brook a Denial when it tempts and ſolicites. Of all Luſts this tempts oftenеſt and moſt eagerly; other Corruptions are modeſt compared to this, and will often deſiſt upon a peremptory Denial; but this peculiar Sin grows wild and outragious, it will have its Courſe, or the Soul ſhall have no quiet, ſo that Conſcience is never harder put to it, than to ſtand it out againſt the Importunity of this Sin. That's the ſecond thing. 2.

Thirdly, That Corruption which every little Occaſion ſtirs up and ſets on work with more than a proportionably Violence, that is the moſt unmortified and peculiar Sin. By more than a proportionable Violence, I mean, when the Object, Temptation or Occaſion is but ſlight and inconſiderable, and yet the Luſt that that is thereby moved acts ſtrongly and impetuouſly. And therefore the Apoſtle *Heb.* 12. 1. Calls it *the Sin that doth ſo eaſily beſet us.* It ſtands always ready and prepared upon the leaſt hint of a Temptation to aſſault us, Now look what Corruption it is that doth moſt frequently interpoſe, that every little Occaſion ſtirs up and inflames to a greater heighth and rage, than a ſtrong Temptation would another, be it Paſſion, be it Pride, or any other, this is the moſt unmortified and peculiar Sin. 3.

Theſe may ſuffice, though others may be added, to diſcover what is our proper and peculiar Sin, the Luſt that is moſt natural and congenial to us. Now ſince theſe Sins have ſuch a great Advantage againſt us more than others have, they muſt therefore be more eſpecially oppoſed than others. *This kind* (to uſe our Saviour's Words) *goes not forth but by Faſting and Prayer*, and of the moſt earneſt Endeavours of that Soul who is deeply afflicted with their Power and Prevalency in him. I ſhall only here offer two or three Conſiderations that may poſſibly prove ſubſervient to the Mortifying of theſe peculiar Sins. *Helps for the mortifying of our peculiar Sins.*

First, Conſider it is no excuſe or extenuation of thy Sin, nor do thou look upon it as ſo, that it is natural to thee, that it is the Sin of thy Temper, Complexion, Profeſſion; but rather account this an hainious Aggravation, that makes thy Sin out of meaſure ſinful. Some are ſo abſurdly Prophane as to make the naturalneſs of a Sin an Argument to leſſen the Guilt of it; they are naturally paſſionate and peeviſh, naturally high-minded and ambitious, naturally voluptuous and ſenſual, and they cannot help it; 'tis fixed and rooted in their Temper and Conſtitution of Body, and therefore it's no wonder if it ſometimes breaks forth in their Lives, unleſs they could put off the outward Man as well as the old Man. Is this thinkeſt thou an excuſe? Tell me, is not a Toad therefore more loathſome and ugly, becauſe its very Nature and Temper is Venomous? And doſt thou think it a good excuſe for thy Sins that thou art naturally ſubject to them? Thou art therefore more loathſom in the ſight of God, whoſe infinite Holineſs 1.

ſtands

ſtands at as great an antipathy to a corrupt Nature as to a ſinful Life. And therefore we find *David*, *Pſal.* 51. 5. aggravating his actual Sins from this Conſideration, *That he was ſhapen in Iniquity, and conceived in Sin.* Certainly original Sin, is no excuſe, but rather an aggravation of actual; and the violent propenſions of a Man's Nature to one Sin more than another, is but an eſpecial expreſſion of original Corruption.

2. *Occaſions of Sin muſt be avoided.*

Secondly, Avoid eſpecially thoſe Occaſions that have an eſpecial tendency in them to draw forth thy peculiar Luſt. This as it muſt be obſerved in the Mortification of every Sin, ſo muſt it be moſt carefully heeded in thy dealing againſt thy proper Sin; becauſe it will take Advantage from every ſlight and trivial Occaſion to break forth and ſhew it ſelf in act; it watcheth all Opportunities, and a very little Spark will ſuffice to kindle this Tinder. Thou complaineſt thou canſt not ſubdue ſuch a Corruption, it will riſe and tumultuate in thee, it will ſtill break from thee; why, canſt thou ever expect it will be otherwiſe while thou heedleſly expoſeſt thy ſelf to ſo many Occaſions on which thy Corruption will take hold? Oh! how eaſie and comfortable might Chriſtians make this great work of Mortification if they would herein be watchful. Corruption would not ſtir, or if it doth, might ſoon be quelled, did not you your ſelves entice it out by giving it ſuch fair Opportunities to exert it ſelf. What ſaith the wiſe Man, *Prov.* 6. 27. *Can a Man take Fire into his boſom, and his cloaths not be burnt?* No, 'tis impoſſible: Yet truly 'tis as poſſible for a Man that carries the prepared Fewel of Corruption in his Heart, not to have it kindled and inflamed by his venturous running into Occaſions of ſinning. You do but hereby provoke and dare Corruption, which alas! is too apt to ſtir of it ſelf. Certainly he that will venture on a near Occaſion of ſinning, will venture on the Sin it ſelf; and if he be all his days vexed and perplexed by it, 'tis the fault of his own careleſneſs.

3. *Thirdly*, Conſider this, that proper and peculiar Sins do deſerve and call for proper and peculiar Puniſhments. Why ſhouldſt thou think while any unmortified Luſt is thine own, the Puniſhment of it ſhould not be thine own alſo? Is it reaſon that the Sin ſhould be peculiarly thine, and yet the Puniſhment of it Chriſt's? No, Chriſt never came into the World to take off the Guilt of that Sin by Juſtification, from which he doth not in ſome meaſure take off the Bent and Propenſion of the Heart by Sanctification. And,

4. *Laſtly*, Conſider if you are Saints, you your ſelves are not your own, and ſhall any Sin then be your peculiar Sin. 1 *Cor.* 6. 19, 20. *You are not your own, but you are bought with a Price: Wherefore glorifie God in your Bodies, and in your Spirits which are God's.* And ſhall we our ſelves be God's and yet any Sin be ours? What is this leſs than by a kind of Practical Blaſphemy, to make our Sins God's alſo. Such like Conſiderations as theſe are, ſhould be continually preſent with us, when we go forth againſt our proper Sins. It is not ordinary Endeavours that will ſuffice to mortifie theſe, they are ſo rooted in and interwoven with the very Principles of our Nature, that they are the very laſt Sins that will quit their hold, and that not without much difficulty and hardſhip. Thus I have done with the firſt Branch of this Direction, to take notice of thoſe Sins which have the greateſt Advantage and Prevalency againſt us, which are cuſtomary and peculiar Sins; and have given you ſome particulars to help you in the mortifying of them.

2. *Branch*

Secondly, The other Branch of this Direction is, to be continually pondering and weighing the Ground and Cauſe of the Quarrel. This will exceedingly animate your utmoſt Endeavours unto Mortification. 'Tis the Cauſe that inſpirits Soldiers: Tell them that they are to fight for Eſtates, Liberties and Lives, that whatever is dear to them, is laid at Stake, and pawn'd upon their Valour; this will ſharpen their Courage, yea, and their Swords two, and make every ſtroak laid on by ſuch Conſiderations fatal as Death. What can be more effectually preſt upon the ſpiritual Soldier to heighten and inflame his Courage? Tell him but the Cauſe he engatheth for, and he muſt be either very much a Coward, or elſe very treacherous againſt his own Soul, that doth not reſolve to ſtand it out to the utmoſt; 'tis for an everlaſting Kingdom, a Crown of Glory, a precious and immortal Soul, for eternal Life, for God himſelf, you are to fight for, and will you ſit ſtill and ſee all theſe loſt and taken from you? There's not a Corruption

or

or Temptation that aſſaults you, but ſeeks to deprive you of Heaven and Happineſs; and would ſpill the deareſt Blood of your Souls. A Chriſtians All, his neareſt Soul, his deareſt God, the rich and unconceiveable Glory promiſed him, the few precious Graces beſtowed on him to bear his charges till he hath attained it, are all here ſtaked down; this is the Prize you are to contend for: If you can ſuffer all theſe to be taken from you, and think them not worth the ſtriving for, you are beyond the Reach of a Provocation. Let the Devil and your own Luſts come armed againſt you with all the ſtrength and Rage of Hell; yet if you can but then keep up lively and diſtinct Conſiderations of the vaſt and important Concernment that depends upon the iſſue of the Conflict, it is impoſſible they ſhould ever prevail upon you to the Commiſſion of any deliberate Sin. Whenever therefore you are tempted, and find unmortified Corruption very violent, think ſeriouſly with your ſelves what it is you are ſolicited to do; Is it not to provoke your God, to betray your ſelves? Is it not to defile, nay to deſtroy your Souls? Now Sin and Satan are very earneſt to have me run my ſelf into Perdition; fain they would perſuade me to forfeit Heaven, and plunge my ſelf deep into Hell; they entice, they impel, they ſwell and tumultuate; but if I yield, what becomes of all my Hopes, of my Crown of Happineſs, and of my own Soul? 'Tis Happineſs is the Quarrel, and ſhall that be leſs dear to me than my Deſtruction is to Satan! Hath he cauſe to be ſo active and violent for my Ruin, and have I no cauſe to be induſtrious and vigilent for my Salvation? Shall I ſell away all the great and glorious Things of Eternity, at the cheap and low Price of a momentary Sin? Do but actually ponder and weigh theſe Conſiderations when a Corruption moves and acts in you, ſet them before you; ſay them to your ſelves and run them over in your Thoughts; and let me be bold to ſay, Sin then if you can. There are two Conſiderations eſpecially that will be of mighty Influence to the ſuppreſſing of a Corruption while it is tempting and ſtirring, and are the moſt available Helps to Mortification of all other.

Firſt, A ſerious Conſideration of the great Guilt that Sin will bring upon us. 1.
It muſt be the very firſt Work of that Chriſtian who will ſucceſsfully attempt the Work of Mortification, to charge a prevailing Luſt home with the full Guilt of it. I confeſs it is a ghaſtly Sight, a Spectacle full of dread and horror to view Sin in its proper Colours; but it is far better for thee to look Sin in the face when it tempts, than for Sin to ſtare thy Conſcience in the face when it terrifies. Carry always about you thoſe true Glaſſes both of the Law and Goſpel, that may repreſent Sin aright to you. When a gloſſing flattering Temptation ſhews it fair and beautiful, look upon your Sin, ſee whether it can hold up its face againſt the Law, when the Sovereignty, Holineſs, Severity, and piercing Power and Energy of it come all in againſt it. *By the Law*, ſays the Apoſtle, *is the Knowledge of Sin*, *Rom.* 3. 20. Awe thy Conſcience with the Authority of God ſtampt and imprinted upon his Law. Hath God the great Sovereign forbidden this by a Law, and ſhall not I ſtrive againſt it? Not to fight againſt this Sin were to be found a fighter againſt God. Provoke thy ſelf againſt it from the Holineſs of God revealed in his Law? Shall I commit that which for its Deformity and Uglineſs an Holy God hath forbidden in an Holy Law. The Law hath in it,

Firſt, Such a bright and clear Light that Sin cannot eſcape the diſcovery of it, 1.
it will make every ſpot in the Soul viſible; and thoſe Sins which through thoſe falſe Lights that Satan ſets up appear comely and well featured, when the Light of the Law ſhines into the Conſcience will then appear but one great miſhapen Blot. And,

Secondy, It hath in it ſuch an abſolute Command and Authority, that Sin can- 2.
not reſiſt nor eſcape the Power of it. It comes into the Conſcience in the Name of God, and makes as great a trembling in the Heart, when ſet home in the condemning Power of it; as it did in the *Iſraelites* when delivered in that dreadful Pomp from Mount *Sinai*. Now is this holy, cloſe, ſearching Authoritative Law to be broken, think you, at the Will and Pleaſure of every Temptation? Muſt we in every Paſſion (with *Moſes*) at every corrupt Motion and ſinful Inclination break theſe two Tables in pieces? Nay indeed, is it poſſible that while in a Temptation you are applying the Law, you ſhould then break it! No, certainly that Man is near to a moſt deſperate Hardneſs, who while he is looking upon the Holineſs, Authority and Divinity of the Law, while he is letting in

the convincing Light of it to diſcover the Guilt of Sin unto him, while he is diſcharging the dreadful Threatnings of it againſt his Sin, yet can then commit it; I ſay, he is near unto a final judicial Hardneſs.

When you have now a while contemplated the face of Sin in the Law, remove it to the Goſpel. If the Law break the Heart with Terrour, the Goſpel will melt it with Love. What! to Sin not only againſt the Authority of a God, but alſo againſt the Love of a Father; that Parent Love, from which proceeds all the good I enjoy or expect; that pardoning Love, juſtifying, adopting, and ſaving Love! Can I ſpurn againſt thoſe Bowels that yern and roll towards me? Can I ſin againſt that Grace and Mercy, which ſhould I ſin againſt, would yet ſtill tender me a Pardon? Can I be prodigal and laviſhing of that Blood of which Chriſt was ſo free himſelf? Shall I deſpiſe it or trample it underfoot, becauſe it flows in ſo full a ſtream? Shall I quench and ſadden the Holy Comforter, and return him Grief for all the raviſhing Conſolations I have been filled with from him? Is this the filial Diſpoſition, the Child-like Ingenuity of a Son, of a Saint? Theſe, O Chriſtian, are Conſiderations that muſt needs ſilence the moſt importunate Corruptions and Temptations, that they ſhall have nothing more to mutter. It is the Goſpel by which alone the Guilt of Sin is taken away, that doth thus aggravate that Guilt to ſuch an acceſs as proves a ſecurity from the committing of it. Tell me, did you ever know a Temptation prevail over you? Did you ever commit a Sin in your whole Lives, while ſuch Conſiderations as theſe were freſh and vigorous upon your Hearts? Nay, I know it is impoſſible: The Grace of God teacheth us otherwiſe; yea, it not only Teacheth us, but inforceth and conſtrains us otherwiſe. A Temptation muſt firſt thruſt theſe Conſiderations out of the Heart e'er it can prevail.

This therefore is the firſt means of beating down a Corruption by the Conſideration of its Guilt, comparing it both with the Law and Goſpel. What better Weapon can we have to fight againſt Corruption with, than *the Sword of the Spirit* which, *Eph.* 6. 17. the Apoſtle tells us, is *the word of God*: And *Heb.* 4. 12. he tells us, this *word is a two edged ſword*; the Law is one edge and the Goſpel another; and both theſe are powerful, ſharp and piercing, to the ſuppreſſing and mortifying of Corruption, going to the very Inwards and Heart thereof.

2. *Secondly*, Another thing that hath great Influence to the mortifying of Sin is, a ſerious Conſideration of the great Danger it will bring us into. It were ſad and dreadful, and enough to cauſe a trembling in us, If I ſhould only mention unto you the Danger of an enraged and diſtracted Conſcience, which God may let looſe upon you in all its Horrors and Affrights, when you let looſe your ſelves unto the Commiſſion of any known Sin; the Danger if not of an enraged Conſcience, yet of a ſeared Conſcience, which is worſe; the Danger of a judiciary Curſe and Tradition to be delivered up unto, and Sealed under Sin; that no Reproofs, nor Convictions, nor Judgments, nor Mercies ſhould ever more take hold, or make any impreſſion upon you. If I ſhould name no more, were not here enough to ſtop the Courſe of a prevailing Luſt? If yet you have any Tenderneſs left in your Hearts, any ſenſe remaining in your Conſcience, together with their Peace; had you rather hazard the loſs of theſe, than not gratifie a Corruption? Say to it, What Sin is there can bring me in ſo much Delight in the Commiſſion of it, as God may pour in Terrours afterwards? May not God make my Conſcience a Hell incarnate, and empty the Vials of his Wrath into this Veſſel, whilſt it is yet an earthly Veſſel? And ſhall I ever let a Hell break into my Soul, by letting a Luſt break forth? Urge againſt a Temptation that irrefragable Argument which all the Methods and Sophiſms of the old Serpent ſhall never be able to diſſolve to all Eternity. If I yeild, either my Conſcience will be ſenſible of the Sin, or not: If it be ſenſible, What is there in the Sin that can recompence this Trouble of Conſcience? If it be not ſenſible, What is there in this Sin that can recompence the ſtupidity and deadneſs of Conſcience? Still either way the Danger is ſo great, that the Devil hath ſcarce Impudence enough importunately to urge a Temptation upon that Soul, who ſhall urge this Conſideration upon it ſelf. But beſides theſe there is,

3. *Thirdly*, Another Danger, and that indeed which ſwallows up all the reſt, and that is the Danger of eternal Damnation. I have before ſhewed you how ſuch a Legal Conſideration as this is, may be, and is a fit means for Mortification. Now bring

bring and marſhal even this againſt your Luſts. Think you that a Temptation can out-face Hell it ſelf, and dare everlaſting burnings? Can it ſtand before a torrent of Fire, and Brimſtone? No, certainly this is the hardneſs and obdurateneſs of thoſe only who feel Hell's Torments, not to be deterred from Sin for fear of them. Now riſe up mightily againſt thy Luſts even from this Conſideration, ſhew them what they deſerve, no leſs than Damnation; from which, if any who give way to them at any time, are reſcued, it is only by the Sovereign and unaccountable Mercy of God: And thus while Satan caſts Fire, do thou caſt Firebrands. This is to make Hell his ſecond Torture, that as God makes uſe of it for his Puniſhment, ſo thou for his Defeat and Diſappointment.

Now for the Right managing of this Direction (for indeed much Care and Circumſpection muſt here be had) take theſe following particulars.

Firſt, Take heed, leſt through any deceitfulneſs of thy Heart thou excuſeſt and leſſeneſt thy Sin, when thou ſhouldſt be dealing againſt it by a vigorous Mortification. To take off any thing from your Apprehenſions of the Guilt of Sin, is to add to the Power and Strength of the Temptation. And therefore take it for a ſure Rule, that that Sin in which thou doſt not now ſee that black and horrid Guilt which formally thou haſt done, hath more Power over thee, and is more unmortified in thee, than ever formally it was. It is the common Method of Satan in the heighth and fury of a Temptation, to perſuade the Heart, either that it is no Sin, or elſe a ſmall and venial one, If this deceit prevail and take place, the Work of Mortification can never go on vigorouſly. Certain it is, that where the Guilt of any Sin is apprehended but ſmall, there the Endeavours againſt it will be but weak. And, 1.

Secondly, Beware of weakning and enervating Arguments drawn from the Deſert and Danger of a prevailing Luſt, by relieving thy ſelf with Thoughts of the Goodneſs and Safety of thy ſpiritual Condition. This is a moſt deſperate Deceit of the Heart, and a ready way to undo thouſands of Souls. Have you never found, that when you have made head againſt a Temptation by Arguments drawn from the Wrath of God due to it, and that eternal Vengeance that will follow? Have you never found your Corrupt Hearts replying upon you? Yea, but I am delivered from the Wrath to come, I am ranſomed from that Vengeance, my ſpiritual and eternal State is ſecured by the immutable Promiſe of God, and the immortal Seed of Grace; and therefore though I do commit this Sin, yet my Soul ſhall live? This is the common Fallacy of the Devil, thus to make preſumptious Applications of Mercy, Pardon and free Grace, to patronize the Allowance of Sin. If you thus argue, certain it is you can never make good Work of Mortification. 'Tis impoſſible to perſuade that Man from Sin by the Terrors of the Lord, who looks upon whatſoever is ſpoken of that kind, as not appertaining to him. And therefore conſider, 2.

Firſt, To encourage thy ſelf in Sin upon hopes of thy being in a State of Grace, is ſo rotten and unworthy a Principle, as is ſcarce conſiſtent with Grace. What is this but to make uſe of Grace againſt it ſelf, againſt the God of Grace, a meer turning of it into Wantonneſs, and ſinning that it might abound? Which of all things in the World is the moſt oppoſite and repugnant to the truly noble and ingenious Nature of a gracious Heart. And, 1.

Secondly, Conſider, If thou ſhouldſt be in a State of Grace, and ſtand accepted with God, yet thou canſt never know thy ſelf ſo to be; nay, thou haſt all the Reaſon in the World to judge the contrary, if this Conſideration embolden thee to ſin. What though the perſeverance of the Saints unto Glory be certain, yet are they to perſevere thereunto whatſoever Sins they commit? We find no ſuch Promiſe in the whole Tenour of the Covenant. It is therefore more unreaſonable and abſurd to conclude from thy Grace that thou may'ſt ſin without danger; than to conclude, becauſe thou makeſt uſe of ſuch an Encouragement to ſin, therefore thou haſt no Grace. And, 2.

Thirdly, Though thou knoweſt thy ſelf, by the higheſt Pitch of Aſſurance attainable to be dilivered from the Wrath to come, yet ſtill this Wrath is the due Deſert of thy Sin; yea, and will be the certain Puniſhment of it unleſs it be mormortified in thee. If ye, ye Elect, ye ſanctified and juſtified ones, *If ye live after the Fleſh, ye ſhall die*. We may and ought therefore to denounce Death and Hell, to the moſt aſſured Saint, if he doth not mortifie: For though God hath decreed 3.

to ſave all his Elect, yet he never decreed to ſave any of them but through Mortification. The Vanity of thoſe Men is in theſe our Days ſufficiently diſcovered, who would not have Believers take notice, nor make application to themſelves, of any thing that ſounds threatning and terrible in the Scripture, as being unſutable to their free and evangelical Spirit. Let ſuch know that in letting go ſuch harſh and ſevere Conſiderations, they loſe a great Advantage which they might have againſt their Luſts. The Holieſt on Earth, when God threatens Sin, ought to tremble; and whatſoever Judgment they paſs upon their Perſons, though they know themſelves to be Regenerate and Elect, yet this is the Judgment they ought to paſs upon their Actions, that if they be ſinful they are alſo damnable.

So that whatever thy Condition be, yet whenever Corruption tempts and troubles thee, oppoſe againſt its Prevalency and Seduction theſe affrighting Conſiderations of Wrath, Hell, and Vengeance: Thus follow and plie it, thus heap Coals of Fire upon its Head; throw a Hell between thee and thy Luſts; this if any thing will ſtop thee: But if thou canſt frequently wade through theſe unto it, if thou canſt commit it even while the Thoughts of future Wrath are hot and ſcorching, while everlaſting burnings are flaming and flaſhing about thee; this argues a wretched Obſtinacy in Sin, and is the ſad Symptom of a moſt dangerous, if not deſperate Condition. And thus I have done with the firſt Direction unto Mortification. We muſt be well acquainted, and have a thorough inſight into our Sins; both to know whence they have their great Strength, and alſo to know what the great Guilt and Danger of them is.

2. *Reſolution very helpful for the mortifying of Sin.*

Secondly, Another Direction, in brief ſhall be this: If you would effectually mortifie Corruption, then arm your ſelves againſt it with ſtrong Reſolutions, with Reſolutions free from Limitations, free from any ſecret Reſervations. The Apoſtle hath given us many a tried piece of Chriſtian Armour, *Eph.* 6. There we have *the Shield of Faith, the Sword of the Spirit, the Breaſt-plate of Righteouſneſs, the Helmet of Salvation*, and a compleat Panoply: But what are theſe, without Reſolution to uſe them? The Shield may ruſt againſt the Wall, and the Sword in the Sheath; Grace may lie ſluggiſh and unactive in the Soul, while Luſt tempts, ſeduceth and captivates, unleſs holy Reſolution rouſe it, arm it, and lead it forth to the Conflict. Wherefore is it that ſo many complain their Luſts and Corruptions are invincible, that they cannot ſtand before them? What's the Reaſon they are ſo often inſnared and ſo often captivated, but becauſe they do not put on the Reſolutions of Men nor Chriſtians? They are not reſolved to conquer; they do not fortifie nor ſteel their Hearts with abſolute and peremptory Reſolves, that notwithſtanding all the Advantages any Corruption hath gained againſt them, though it hath already frequently prevailed over them, though it daily and hourly tempt, entice, impel, yet they will beat it down and trample on it. Men are not thus firmly reſolv'd, but waver and ſtagger in their Purpoſes; and thereby give Satan Hope and Encouragement, while they thus fluctuate to aſſault and prevail over them. Were they once fully reſolved, they would not yield; and Satan who can do nothing againſt them without their own Conſent, would have but ſmall Encouragement to continue tempting; he would then ſay, it is in vain to lay ſiege to that Soul, his Reſolutions have fortified him and made him impregnable; not a fiery Dart will ſtick, but rebounds back as from a Rock of Adamant, and makes no impreſſions; he is grown obſtinate againſt my Temptations, and will hearken to none of my Suggeſtions; he will not ſtand ſo much as to conſider what a Temptation can ſay for it ſelf, but peremptorily refuſeth and rejecteth all; there's no hope left for me to prevail with ſuch a Soul. What *David* ſaith of his Enemies, *Pſal.* 118. 10, 11. *All Nations compaſſed me about; but in the name of the Lord I will deſtroy them: They compaſſed me about, yea, they compaſſed me about: But in the name of the Lord I will deſtroy them.* The ſame muſt we ſay concerning our Corruptions; though they beſet us round and compaſs us about, though they ſwarm about us like Bees; yet in the Name of the Lord, in the Aid and Aſſiſtance of the Holy Spirit, we will deſtroy them. You know what particular Corruption it is that doth moſt of all perplex and prevail over you; now take up fixed Reſolutions for the mortifying of that Sin. Oh! Never more will I give way to ſuch a Temptation; never more will I hearken to the Flatteries and Enticements of ſuch a Luſt; never more ſhall this break my Peace, wound my Conſcience, diſpleaſe my God: Now will I be revenged on it, and pour out the

Heart

Heart Blood of it before the Lord. Such abſolute Reſolutions will be of great Influence in the Work of Mortification. Yea, and though it may ſeem to be an old faſhion'd antiquated Preſcript, yet would it approve it ſelf to be of ſingular Uſe and Advantage, if we ſtrengthned ſuch Reſolutions againſt Sin by laying upon our ſelves ſome binding Vows and Engagements againſt them. See how ſtrongly *David* binds himſelf by an Oath, *Pſal.* 119. 106. *I have ſworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous Judgments.* *David* was reſolved to keep the Law of God; but leſt that Reſolution ſhould prove too weak, he ſtrengthens it with an Oath, *I have ſworn that I will keep them*; yea, and as if this Oath were not ſecurity enough, he backs it with another Reſolution; *I have ſworn, and I will perform it.* So do thou againſt thy Sins, reſolve and vow againſt them, enforce one by the other. Lift up thy Hands unto God, that in the Strength of Chriſt and the Aid of the Spirit, thou wilt never more yield to ſuch a Temptation, give way to ſuch a Corruption, commit ſuch a Sin. This, were it more practiſed among Chriſtians, would mightily promote the great Work of Mortification.

But you will ſay, What Benefit can there be in this? Alas! My Corruptions are ſo violent and outrageous, that they break through far greater Engagements than my own Reſolutions are; neither Law nor Goſpel can oppoſe them, they ruſh through Commands, Admonitions, Threatnings, Promiſes, and ſet all at nought; and ſhall I think then that ſuch weak and inſignificant things as Purpoſes and Reſolutions are of any Moment? *Objection.*

Be it ſo, that the rage of thy Luſts hath broken through all thoſe greater Engagements, and hath born down before it whatſoever either Law or Goſpel ſhould ſay to the contrary, yet now bring againſt it thy Purpoſes and Reſolutions; though there may be and is an Obligation of greater Authority from other Conſiderations, yet nothing carries in it an Obligation of greater Efficacy than theſe do. There is that Temper in every Man's Nature, that though he ſtrugle againſt an Engagement that the Authority of another impoſeth on him, yet he looks upon a voluntary Engagement that he impoſeth on himſelf, as moſt binding, ſacred, and inviolable. Certainly did you but thus bind your ſelves, and in a ſerious manner call God to witneſs and aſſiſt your Reſolutions, you would find that thoſe Corruptions which have broken through all other Conſiderations would have a ſtop put to them by this. *Anſwer.*

3. *Reſiſting the firſt Motions of Sin, a great help unto Mortification.*

Thirdly, Another Direction is this, Reſiſt ſtrongly the firſt Motions and firſt Riſings of thy Corruptions; cruſh them while they are in their Infancy, before they get to a Head, and gather Strength againſt thee. It is Folly to ſtay till thy Enemies are grown up: No, take the Offspring and Progeny of Luſt, while they are little, and deal with them as God threatens *Babel*, *daſh thoſe little ones againſt the ſtones.* Conſider,

1. *Firſt*, That there is not the leaſt and moſt inconſiderable ſinful Motion, that riſeth in thy Soul, but it tends to the very utmoſt Guilt, that that kind of Sin is capable of. Thou art deceived if thou thinkeſt it will ſtill be a weak, faint, languiſhing Conception: No, Corruption will lay in Proviſion for it and nouriſh it, till that which was at firſt but as a Grain of Muſtard Seed, the ſmalleſt of all Seeds, grow up and ſhoot forth great Branches, that the Prince of the Air may lodge in them. Thou mayſt eaſier ſet bounds to the flowing of the Sea, and in a Tempeſt command a Wave in the midſt of its ſwelling to ſtand fixt and not break, than to ſtop the Courſe of a growing Luſt; and to ſay to it, hitherto only ſhalt thou come and no farther; as far as Thoughts, as far as Delight and Complacency, but never ſo far as Act; 'tis impoſſible. The Cloud that at firſt was but an Hand's breadth, ſoon grew into a general Tempeſt. Truly a Luſt that at firſt ſeems no more, will, if not preſently ſcattered, ſoon raiſe a Storm and Tempeſt in the Soul, and what Aſſurance-Office will then ſecure him from making Shipwreck of a good Conſcience. Theſe ſmall and beginning Luſts, though they may ſeem harmleſs and innocent, yet if let alone, will ſtop no where ſhort of the higheſt pitch of Wickedneſs, and the loweſt place of Hell. An irreverend Thought of God, it would ſtop no where ſhort of profeſt Atheiſm and flat denying of God. An hard Thought againſt the People and the Ways of God, would ſtop no where ſhort of implacable Hatred and bloody Perſecution. An envious malicious Thought would run and ſeed up into

to Murther. Ask theſe Thoughts therefore whither it is they tend; what Period, what Iſſue they would have? Would they not end in Blaſphemy, in Atheiſm, in Uncleanneſs, in Oppreſſion, in Murther, in the fouleſt and moſt unnatural Sins imaginable? Nay, there is no ſuch little ſinful Thought, but that it would, if permitted, end in that unpardonable Sin, the Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt. And therefore with the ſame Indignation and Abhorrency that you would raſe againſt explicite and down-right Temptations to theſe Sins, with the very ſame Indignation and abhorrency riſe alſo againſt the very firſt Stirrings and Motions of thy Corruptions; look upon them as if they would accompliſh their very utmoſt Effect, as if they were ready to bring upon thee all that Guilt which they ſeminally contain in them. And this will be a good means to Mortification.

2. *Secondly*, Conſider, thus to oppoſe the very firſt Riſings of Corruption, will make the Work of Mortification more eaſy and delightful. It is hard and difficult to purge out the Dregs of a Corruption, that hath lain long ſetling in the Heart. It will by continuance wind it ſelf into the Affections, bribe and intangle them; and this will make the Work not only more difficult, but more irkſom and grievous. The farther the Stream runs from the Fountain, the ſtronger, the more rapid and irreſiſtible is its Courſe. So truly is it with Luſt; that which at firſt was but the weak Bubling up of Corruption, eaſily oppoſed and withſtood, if it run along in the Heart undiſturbed, will ſwell to ſuch a Torrent, as nothing can ſtand againſt it. Every Corruption hath a corroding Malignity, and though at firſt the Wound appear but ſlight, yet, if neglected, will bring the Soul into the ſame ſad Condition that *David* was in, when he cried out, *Pſal.* 38. 5. *My wounds ſtink and are corrupt, by reaſon of my fooliſhneſs.* Oh! It is indeed a fooliſhneſs that will coſt us bitter Repentance to dandle ſinful Thoughts, to trifle and dally it with ſinful Motions and ſinful Deſires; though they are but the firſt breathings of Corruption, the firſt ſproutings and buddings forth of the Root of Bitterneſs. Though now we ſee no ſuch great Guilt nor Danger in them, yet when theſe ſhall have exulcerated the whole Soul, and made it all over one running Iſſue of Corruption; we ſhall then ſadly complain of our groſs Folly, in ſlighting the firſt workings and ſtirrings of it. Well then as ever you would make good Work of Mortification, watch carefully againſt theſe and ſuppreſs them; obſerve where a ſinful Thought, where a ſinful Deſire doth but begin to heave and lift in thy Heart, and beat it down while it is yet an Embryo and an unſhap'd Birth.

4. *Direction unto Mortification.*

Fourthly, Another Direction ſhall be this; Set before you, and continually keep alive all thoſe Conſiderations that may encourage your Hearts, and ſtrengthen your Hands in the carrying on of this great Work. Many ſuch Encouragements might be propounded. As,

Firſt, Always keep alive a Senſe of God's Preſence with you, that he eyes and beholds you; this Apprehenſion, if continually kept up in its Life and Vigour, will have a mighty Influence into the Work of Mortification. Conſider.

1. *Firſt*, God eyes thee to obſerve thee how thou manageſt thy great Quarrel againſt Corruption. As ſoon as thou becameſt a Chriſtian thou becameſt a Champion; thou entredſt into the Liſt, and threweſt out a bold Challenge and Defiance to all the Powers of Hell, and the Luſts of thine own Heart. Not only Men and Angels, but God himſelf alſo looks on to ſee how thou wilt make good the Combat: And wilt not thou ſtrive and ſtrugle to the utmoſt, when God himſelf is a Spectatour? Wilt thou not ſhew thy Skil and thy Courage, and thy Reſolution then? Nay conſider, God is not only a Spectatour, but is deeply concern'd in the Iſſue of the Combat: They are his Battels thou fighteſt, his Cauſe thou maintaineſt, and if thou art conquer'd and captivated, he is diſhonoured as well as thou endangered: If thou art victorious, God the Father hath the Glory of the Efficacy of electing Grace; Jeſus Chriſt the Captain of our Salvation hath the Glory of the Efficacy of redeeming Grace, and the Holy Spirit hath the Glory of the Efficacy of his ſanctifying and ſtrengthning Grace; all which, are as it were engaged and pawn'd upon thy Mortification. Do but therefore think with your ſelves when a Temptation aſſaults you; now God eyes me to ſee how I will behave my ſelf againſt

againſt this Temptation, he eyes me to crown me, if Victorious; and ſhall I be any otherwiſe but Victorious while God looks on? Shall I ſuffer my ſelf to be foyl'd in his ſight, whoſe Cauſe I now maintain? No, God himſelf ſhall now ſee what himſelf hath given me Power and Ability to do. Did Chriſtians thus conſider the Preſence and Eye of God with and upon them, they would go forth more reſolutely unto the Work of Mortification.

Secondly, Conſider the Eye of Jeſus Chriſt is upon thee, not only to obſerve but to relieve thee, and to pity thee, while thou wreſtleſt not only againſt Fleſh and Blood, but againſt Principalites and Powers here on Earth, he in Heaven pities thee, his Compaſſions roll towards thee, he hath a Fellow-feeling of thy Miſeries and Infirmities. It is a moſt comfortable place, *Heb.* 4. 15. *We have not an High Prieſt that cannot be touched with the feeling of our Infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without Sin.* And that other place, *Heb.* 2. 18. *In that he himſelf hath ſuffered, being tempted, he is able to ſuccour them that are tempted.* Oh what abundant Comfort may we draw from theſe two Breaſts of Conſolation! Alas! A poor Chriſtian, whom Corruption within diſquiets, and Temptations without buffet; who is ſo cloſe beſet as to be at the very point of yielding; let him look upwards, and eye that Chriſt by Faith, who eyes him with Compaſſion. Thou thinkeſt thy ſelf deſerted and left to break through the Hoſts of thy ſpiritual Enemies as thou canſt, none to own thee, none to ſtand by thee; oh yes! Jeſus Chriſt ſtands by thee, he knows thy weakneſs, he ſees the Power of thy Luſts, in all Temptations he is tempted; and he who knows no Corruption in himſelf, yet feels the ſtirrings and the ſtrong workings of Corruption in the Hearts of his, and he will ſuccour and relieve them. 2.

Now what an Encouragement is this. Is there any Soul that would refuſe to war againſt his Corruptions under ſuch a Leader and Captain, who gives not only a Command to fight, but Might to ſubdue; who not only looks on the Agonies and Conflicts of his with Compaſſion, but relieves and ſuccours them with Power? That's the firſt encouraging Conſideration; conſider your ſelves as always in the Preſence and under the Eye of God, to obſerve to ſupport you.

Secondly, Conſider for your Encouragement, the certainty of Succeſs in the Work of Mortification. This Conſideration, if duly ponder'd, is of it ſelf able to outface all Difficulties. A Chriſtian's Victories have nothing of Chance in them, 'tis not to be aſcribed to the Fortune of the Day when he prevails: Succeſs is chain'd to his Endeavours, and unleſs he betray his own Soul, and will himſelf be vanquiſht, he cannot but conquer: And would you wiſh a greater Advantage than to have Succeſs at your Pleaſure? Victory it ſelf was never yet liſted under any but a Chriſtian's Command: Other Conquerours have found it very fickle and unconſtant; but herein is the Chriſtian more than a Conquerour, becauſe always ſure of Conqueſt, if himſelf pleaſeth. This indeed will coſt much pains, it will make the Heart pant, and the Soul run down with ſweat; Succeſs is certain, but not without your utmoſt Struglings and earneſt Endeavours. Let not lazy Chriſtians ever think they ſhall be more than Conquerours, while they uſe only drowſy and yawning Deſires, and wiſh that ſuch a Luſt were weakned, that ſuch a Corruption were mortified and ſubdued, but never rouze up their Graces againſt them; 'tis no wonder we ſee them ſo often foyl'd and captivated. Believe it, certainty of Succeſs is not entail'd upon thoſe weak Velleities and effeminate Wiſhes that are ſo frequent in the Mouths of many; Oh! That I were freed from the Power of ſuch a Luſt; Oh! That ſuch a Temptation might never more aſſault me; Oh! That I might live as free from Sin as the Angels do in Heaven: Truly theſe are but ſleepy and gaping Deſires, neither ſtrong enough to lift the old Man up to the Croſs, nor ſharp enough to pierce him to the Heart; Corruption though it be thus curſt will live long. If this were all you could do, truly God had call'd you forth to a very unequal Combat, even to deliver you into the Hands of your Luſts. Hath he beſtowed his Grace and his Spirit upon you for this? Was it only to make the Triumph of your Corruptions the more conſpicuous, and your Defeats the more ſhameful? Was it that you ſhould ſit ſtill, and by a wretched Sloth betray both your ſelves and them? No, certainly 2.

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they were given you to conquer, and there is no Corruption but they would conquer if you your ſelves would. It doth ill become a Chriſtian to whine and ſhrink at the ſight of that numerous Hoſt of Corruptions that incamp againſt him: Be but conſcious of thy own Strength, nay, rather of the Strength of God engaged for thee. Doſt thou not ſee more for thee than againſt thee? There's not one of theſe but thou may'ſt look upon as a dead Luſt, delivered into thy Hand for the Slaughter; and if thou ſuffereſt it to eſcape alive, God may ſay to thee as *Ahab* to *Benhadad*, *becauſe thou haſt let go out of thine hands, a Luſt that I appointed to utter Deſtruction, therefore thy Life ſhall go for the Life of it.* So then Corruption is in your own Power, it is delivered up to you to be mortified: Though it be in your Hearts to tempt and trouble you, yet it is in your Hands to ſlaughter it. Conſider but two or three things.

1. *Firſt*, Corruption be it never ſo ſtrong and violent cannot prevail over you, without firſt asking and waiting for the conſent of your own Wills. All its Victories are but precarious and beggerly Atchievements, gotten rather by Inſinuation, Flattery and Importunity, than by clear Force. It muſt ſolicite the Affections, cozen the Underſtanding, ask leave of the Will, e'er it prevail. And therefore the Apoſtle ſaith, *Rom.* 6. 13. *Neither yield ye your members as Inſtruments of unrighteouſneſs to Sin*; implying that if they do become Inſtruments to Sin, they are voluntarily yielded up unto it. Believe it, there's no force nor violence offer'd you, you are not compelled to ſin; all that a Temptation can do is to perſuade you, it cannot conſtrain you to ſin whether you will or no. When Corruption ſtorms moſt and ſwells higheſt, when Satan aſſaults you fierceſt, yet after all, you are free and at your own diſpoſe, eſpecially if ſanctified, and there is no deliberate Temptation unto Sin, but you may reſiſt it if you will; if you can but find in your Hearts to deny a Corruption, you do mortifie that Corruption. Now would you wiſh to deal with better Enemies than theſe are, that muſt ask us leave before they can hurt us; that muſt entreat and petition us to be wounded, to be captivated, to be abuſed by them? Truly ſuch are our own Luſts: As terrible and as dreadful as they ſeem to us, yet indeed they are the moſt contemptable, ſlight, impotent Adverſaries in the World, were we but true to our own Souls. But it's this that gives Corruption all its Power; you will ſin, you will yield to Temptations, you will betray your Souls, and then you cry out of the Power of Luſts; Oh! their irreſiſtable Violence, I cannot ſtand againſt them, they will break in upon me, they will prevail, they will be obeyed, and I cannot help it. They will, and thou canſt not help it! For ſhame, O Chriſtian, if thou wilt, thou canſt help it. Didſt thou ever ſin but that thou wert willing to it? Though there may be ſome Renitency and Reluctancy from Grace; in reſpect of which the Apoſtle tells us, *that he did what he would not do, yea, what he hated*, *Rom.* 7. 19. Yet there is alſo a voluntarineſs in every Sin; thou yieldeſt thy ſelf to it, and giveſt it leave to wound thy Conſcience, to ruin thy Soul, and thou wilt have it ſo. It is this is the Strength of Corruption, Men will be conquer'd and captivated by it. Never tell me your Corruptions are ſuch as you cannot ſubdue, there is no ſuch Corruption, the moſt prevailing, the moſt tumultuating may be mortified by you, if you your ſelves will. Now in a Temptation always think of this, why ſhould I yield? What reaſon is there? What excuſe can I have? I am not yet neceſſitated; I am not compelled to ſin; my Proviſion is not yet all ſpent; my Heart is impregnable unleſs I deſert or diſmantle it. I may if I will ſtill ſtand it out, and be certain of the Conqueſt: Shall I wilfully give up my Soul, my Darling to the Devourer? Shall I my ſelf open theſe everlaſting Gates at which Satan now knocks indeed, but cannot force? I can can chooſe whether this Temptation ſhall ever prevail; an abſolute denial, a peremptory no, would now ſilence it. Certainly did you but actually dwell upon this Thought in a Temptation, it would ſhame you from gratifying many a Corruption that now you do. And then,

2. *Secondly*, Conſider the prevailing Nature of Grace. It is from this that your endeavours after Mortification are accompanied with certainty of Succeſs. Grace is an immortal Seed that will certainly ſprout up and flour into Glory; it is a living Fountain that will certainly flow and bubble up into everlaſting Life;

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it is a Ray of heavenly Light that will ſcatter and triumph over Darkneſs, and wax brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. It is Immortal in a Seed, Victorious in a Spark, Triumphant in its Dawning. It hath a kind of Omnipotency in it. *Phillip.* 4. 13. *I can do all things through Chriſt ſtrengthning of me*; ſtrengthning me by his prevailing Grace: And no wonder, ſince it is a Particle of the Divine Nature it ſelf, 2. *Pet.* 1. 4. *That you might be partakers of the Divine Nature.* It is an indelable Flouriſh of the Divine Eſſence, which ſets the Gloſs of the Divine Attributes upon the Soul, and makes it of kin to God himſelf. Yea, take Grace when it is at the weakeſt, when this Dawn is clouded, when this Spark is twinkling, when this Seed ſeems unſpirited, yet then it is Victorious and Triumphant; *The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but always mighty through God*, 2 *Cor.* 10. 4. Now what an over-match is this for Corruption, to ſet Grace againſt Sin; why it is to ſet God againſt Satan, Heaven againſt Hell, Spirit againſt Fleſh. Now will you deſire greater Advantage than this is? Can you wiſh for greater Encouragement? Oh! how faint-hearted muſt they needs be, whom certainty of prevailing cannot animate to contend: Who would not fight that hath ſuch odds? Am I certain to prevail? Have I that Principle in me that will go forth Conquering unto Conquer? Will it aſſuredly crown my Soul with Victory, and I ſhall not bring it to the Trial? Here's now a Corruption moleſts me, ſhall I ſuffer it to captivate me while yet I have that Divine Auxiliary within, that if brought forth would certainly overcome it? Nay, I muſt detain this Grace in Unrighteouſneſs, I muſt depreſs it, I muſt keep it under by Violence, if I do not prevail by it. Nay, if I ſtrive not againſt my Luſts, I muſt ſtrive againſt my Graces; and what ſhall I take as much pains to commit a Sin, as would ſerve to ſubdue it? Oh Chriſtians! It is the greateſt ſhame in the World for you to be overcome and worſted; you that have ſuch an active victorious Principle, a Principle which you your ſelves muſt much wrong and injure, if it doth not always conquer; a Principle that riſeth with a natural and ſpontaneous Force and *Impetus* againſt Corruption, and if but owned, if but cheriſht; nay, if not reſiſted and oppoſed will certainly ſubdue it. What ſhall we think when we ſee ſuch as you foil'd, but that there is Treachery within? You conſpire againſt your own Grace, you keep it under, you check and curb it, would with a ſprightly and æthereal Impulſe ruſh upon and beat down the ſtrongeſt Luſts that oppoſe it.

Thirdly, Conſider, the greateſt Strength and Power of Corruption is already deſtroyed, before you are put upon the Mortification of it. It hath already loſt its reigning Power in you, and now it retains only its moleſting; it hath already loſt the Power of a King, and now it only retains the Power of a Rebel. Your old Man is already crucified, it now wants nothing but piercing: It is with *Abſalom* hung up, and wants nothing but to be thruſt through. So tender is our God of us that he will not venture us againſt Corruption while it is in its full ſtretngh. Alas! While Corruption is intire and unbroken, we are unable to graple with it, he himſelf therefore cruſheth the Head of this Serpent, and breaks the Teeth of this Lion; and when it is thus weakened, he calls upon us to deſtroy it. God might, if he had ſo pleaſed, at once have made a full end of Corruption; and in our Regeneration as perfectly have freed us from it, as we ſhall be hereafter in Heaven. No, but he would not ſo take the whole Work out of our Hands; we muſt exerciſe our Courage and our Reſolution againſt it, and therefore he ſo far weakned it, that it might not deſtroy us, though ſtill it be left ſo ſtrong and powerful as to moleſt and trouble us. So that you ſee in theſe three things, Succeſs is aſſured to your Endeavours: You cannot ſay Corruption is unmatchable in its Strength, irreſiſtible in its Violence, thet we cannot ſtand before it; no, you ſhall certainly prevail and overcome it, if you will but encounter it; and what an Encouragement is this. 3.

Thirdly, Another encouraging Conſideration is this, the longer thou continueſt mortifying the weaker will Corruption grow, and the eaſier thou wilt find this great Work to be. Would you be freed from the continual vexing Importunity of Corruption? It now haunts and dogs you, and clamours to be gratified in this and in that Sin, and you can find no reſt from it; be- 3.

ware how you go about to ſatisfie it; for believe it, that doth but the more inrage it. *Solomon*'s Inſatiables are moderate in reſpect of this, it ſtill cries give, give, and the more you give it, the louder ſtill and the more eagerly it cries. Have you not found that after yielding to this Importunity, Corruption hath been more fierce than ever before; it's an impudent Craver that knows neither Bounds nor Modeſty. You may as well quench Fire with Oil, as ſatisfie Corruption with ſinning; no, if you would in any meaſure be free from this perpetual trouble, uſe it frowardly; deny, reject it, ſpurn this Body of Sin and Death; this at laſt will diſcountenance and diſcourage it from tempting; it will at laſt leave following thee as one inexorable. Truſt the Experience of the Children of God in this particular, they will tell thee, that ſuch and ſuch a prevailing Luſt that did uſe perpetually to perplex and diſquiet them, which they feared they ſhould never maſter; yet by often vexing, croſſing and contradicting of it, they have at length tamed it, it being brought under command, and made ſubject to Grace; and that though indeed there would remain ſtill ſome grudgings of the Diſtemper, yet it hath been leſs frequent and leſs violent in its working. Conclude upon it that this thou alſo may'ſt attain unto. Doth any imperious Luſt perplex and trouble thee? Believe it, through the daily Exerciſe of Mortification thou wilt ſo tire it out and ſpend it, that though it may murmur and repine ſometimes, and grudge that it is not ſatisfied; yet it ſhall ſeldom prevail to diſturb thy Communion with God, and never ſo far prevail as to deſtroy thy Peace and Comfort. Then,

4. *Fourthly*, Conſider that there is in the Exerciſe of Mortification (though it be ſo ſharp and ſevere a Duty) an inward ſecret Satisfaction of Soul, that doth more than recompence all the Pains and Difficulty. There is a hidden Complacency even in cutting off of Right Hands, and plucking out of Right Eyes. There is a double Nature in every Child of God, the divine Nature, and the corrupt Nature; and that which is a Torment to one is a Pleaſure to the other. The divine Nature takes as much Pleaſure in mortifying a Corruption, as the corrupt Nature doth in gratifying of it. I wonder therefore how rational Chriſtians are to be deterred from the Work of Mortification by the harſhneſs and painfulneſs of the Work. If you have no Nature in you but corrupt, how are you Chriſtians? If you have, think you it is not as painful and as harſh to your new Nature that you yield to a Luſt, as it is to your corrupt Nature that you oppoſe and mortifie it? Yes, the new Nature groans and ſighs, and mourns in ſecret within when you ſin againſt it; oh! But it leaps for Joy, it ſprings and exults in the Heart when you diſappoint a Temptation, and prevail againſt Corruptions; it ſmiles upon you when you return red from the Slaughter. I appeal to Experience, tell me, have you not found more raviſhing Joy and Pleaſure in that ſtill inſinuating ſoft Delight, that ſpils it ſelf ſilently through the Soul, while you have been vigorouſly ſtrugling againſt your Corruptions, than ever you found in yielding to them? Though the conteſt be troubleſom, yet what a calm follows when Grace obtains the Victory, not a ruſle, not a wrinkle upon the Face of the Soul; oh! how ſweetly doth it then enjoy both it ſelf and its God, it twines about him, cloſely embraceth him, claſpeth Hands with him, and then follow thoſe unexpreſſible mutual Congratulations for the Succeſs. Oh! my Soul enter thou into this Joy. If Luſt prevail, the Pleaſure may blaze high, but it is impure, dreggy, mixt, and hath in it more of the Sting than the Honey, beſides thoſe many thouſand Stings it leaves behind in the Conſcience. Now baffle a Corruption by that very Argument that it doth chiefly make uſe of. What is that which Luſt uſeth to plead when it tempts? Is it not Pleaſure? This is its moſt taking Bait: Well then, when it tells thee thou ſhalt have ſo much Pleaſure in it, 'twill bring thee in ſuch an over-flowing Meaſure of Satisfaction and Delight: Oh! then anſwer it; yes, I can have better Satisfaction, and more ſincere Delight in mortifying of it, that will bring me in pure Spiritual, clarified Joy, and ſhall I forego this for the muddy, impure, ſhort Blaze of ſinful Pleaſure? Thus encourage now thy ſelf unto this great Duty.

Fifthly,

Fifthly and *Laſtly*, Conſider for thy incouragement that this Work of Mortification is but for a ſhort time, for a few ſtormy Winter Days that will ſoon be blown over. Though it muſt be a conſtant Work while it laſts, yet it is not to laſt long. Death at laſt will come in for our Relief. Look how the ſcorched Traveller longs for a Shade to reſt in, ſo doth a truly mortified Chriſtian long to repoſe himſelf in the Shadow of Death; there he ſhall lie free from the ſcorchings of Temptations, and the heat and ſwelter of Corruption. It will not, it cannot be long e'er it ſhall be ſung over us, your Warfare is accompliſhed. Though now we are kicking againſt the Prickles, yet we ſhall ſhortly be crowned with Roſes. Our Comfort is, that not a Corruption ſhall enter into Heaven with us, there to tempt or moleſt us. And therefore we ſhould not faint nor be weary; though our Work be ſharp, yet it is but ſhort, and our Reſt is everlaſting. 5.

Now be continually arming and ſtrengthning your ſelves with ſuch encouraging Conſiderations as theſe are. You will find them to be of very great Moment and Influence in the carrying on of the Work of Mortification. That's the fourth Direction.

Fifthly, Another Direction ſhall be this, if you would mortifie your Corruptions, then labour to improve the Death of Chriſt unto the Death of Sin. There is Vertue in the Blood of Chriſt to ſtench the bloody Iſſue of Corruption: He was wounded and crucified for Sin, and Sin was wounded and crucified with him. And thus Chriſt doth by a holy kind of Revenge repay his Death upon the old Man that put him to Death. And therefore ſays the Apoſtle, *Rom. 6. 6. Our old Man is crucified with him, that the Body of Sin might be deſtroyed.* And in the former verſes he ſpeaks of *being baptized into the Death of Chriſt, and planted together into the likeneſs of his Death.* All which intimates the Death of Sin to be inflicted by the Death of Chriſt. Look as *Moſes* healed the Bitterneſs of the Waters of *Marah* by caſting a Tree into them; ſo truly that bitter Fountain of Corruption, which always ſends forth bitter Streams is healed by the Tree of the Croſs. Make it therefore your daily exerciſe to bring the Croſs of Chriſt into your Hearts, to nail and faſten your Luſts unto it, and you ſhall quickly find them languiſh and expire. If you ask what Influence the Death of Chriſt hath into the Death of Sin. I anſwer, it hath mighty Influence eſpecially theſe two ways. As it is the meritorious Cauſe of, and as it is the moving Cauſe unto Mortification. 5. *The death of Chriſt a means to mortifie Sin.*

Firſt, The Death and Croſs of Chriſt is the meritorious Cauſe of Mortification. Then was the Death of Sin procured and purchaſed. We ſhould always have lived Vaſſals and Bond-ſlaves to our Luſts, ſtill ſubject to them, and kept under by them, but that Chriſt by dying hath redeemed us from their Power, and hath laid in ſtore for us that Grace whereby we are enabled to reſiſt and prevail. Believe it, there is not a Victory that you obtain but it coſt Blood, not your own indeed, but the precious Blood of Jeſus Chriſt. What a Privilege hath a Chriſtian in this? He conflicts, and conquers, and triumphs at the expence of another's Blood. There's not a Temptation you reſiſt, nor a Corruption you ſubdue, but the Grace that inables you hereunto is the purchaſe of your Saviour's Death. By Death he deſtroyed him that had the Power of Death. By Faith therefore draw continual Supplies from the Death of Chriſt: Tell him how Rebellious and Head-ſtrong thy Corruptions are grown, what Tumults and Uproars they make in thy Heart. Tell him it was one End and Intent of his Death that they might be deſtroyed in thee. Beg of him Relief and Strength againſt them; plead with him, that ſince he hath procured the Death of Sin at ſo high and dear a Rate as his own Blood, he would not ſuffer it to live unmortified in thee. Chriſt by his Sufferings hath procured Grace ſufficient to make us more than Conquerours: Now it is the Skill and Art of Faith to derive from this full Treaſury, Supplies for Mortification. 1.

Secondly, The Death of Chriſt hath a mighty Influence into our Mortification, as it is the moving Cauſe unto it. Certainly if you do but ſeriouſly reflect upon the Death of Chriſt, and conſider that all the Pains, Wrath, and Curſe he then underwent was to free you from your Sins; it cannot but imbitter your Hearts againſt it: What! Shall I ſuffer Sin in me that would not ſuffer Chriſt to live in 2.

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the World? Was he crucified for it, and ſhall not I be crucified unto it? Oh! ſay concerning thy Corruptions, it was this and that baſe Luſt of mine that kill'd my Saviour; it was this and this Sin that ſqueez'd ſo much Gall and Wormwood into the bitter Cup of his Sufferings; I ſee them ſtained with his Blood, they look guilty of his Death; and ſhall I lodge in my Heart the bloody Murtherers of my Saviour? No, their Blood certainly ſhall go for his. This Conſideration, had I time to preſs it upon you, would be of great Moment unto the Exerciſe of Mortification.

Thus I have at large handled to you this great and important Duty of Mortification. 'Tis not that which concerns only ſome particular Chriſtians: 'Tis not that which is to be exerciſed only at ſome particular and eſpecial Seaſons: 'Tis not that which conduceth only to the Ornament and Flouriſh of a Chriſtian? No, it is that which is the very Life and Power of Chriſtianity, without which whatſoever Profeſſion you glitter in, and dazle the Eyes of the World with, it is but empty and hypocritical. If any of theſe Truths have taken hold upon your Conſciences, beware how you ſhift them off, leſt with them you together ſhift off eternal Life, and judge your ſelves unworthy of it. I know it is indeed a hard Duty, and I have endeavoured to arm you againſt that Prejudice; but pray tell me, is it not more hard to periſh? Is it not more hard to lie in Hell for ever? Though it be pleaſing to Fleſh and Blood to live in Sin, and to give Corruption Scope to act unoppoſed and unreſiſted: Oh! But think, will it be pleaſing to Fleſh and Blood to lie for ever ſcorching in eternal Burnings? Never flatter your ſelves, you or your Sins muſt die; *If you live after the Fleſh you ſhall die.* If after all that hath been ſpoken you will yet indulge your Luſts, and yield to Temptations, and give your ſelves over to the ſwing of your Corruptions; believe it, theſe Sermons will riſe up and witneſs againſt you at the laſt Day, and leave you without excuſe. You have been told what the Duty is, how neceſſary; the way and means how you ſhould perform it: And oh! That theſe things might never be objected againſt you for your Condemnation! Oh! That they might become effectual to promote that great Work in you, till that Promiſe be fulfilled to you in the Text, *If you mortifie, you ſhall live.*

FINIS.

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